



COUNTY

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023

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LOOKING AHEAD AT THE 2023 VETO SESSION



Counties Count!



A Message from the President

By: Matt Prochaska, Kendall County Circuit Clerk

State legislatures often prioritize statewide standardization as a remedy for localized issues, inadvertently sidelining the fact that county officials are more familiar with the intricacies of the challenges faced by their communities. Their proximity to these challenges equips county officials with a pragmatic understanding of the dynamics at play, enabling them to make well-informed decisions that directly address local concerns.

Preserving the authority for localized decision-making, specifically at the county level, results in better public policies and more responsive government. It empowers communities to propose and effectuate solutions to local problems more effectively. It is obvious that many issues in Cook County are not the same as those facing Hardin County, nor are the issues in Washington County always commensurate with those of Kendall County. Upholding local control ensures that counties can adopt policies that suit their specific needs, rather than adhering to a uniform approach imposed by levels of government further removed from local constituents.

At the county level, governments can fine-tune public services to suit the specific needs of their communities. This extends, but is not limited to, zoning, public safety strategies, regulations and infrastructure development.

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) plays an important role as a bridge between county officials and state policymakers. We not only identify problems and craft solutions for counties, but we are dedicated to strengthening our relationships and communication with legislators about what is important to counties and why.

In the coming months, ISACo will be launching new initiatives to educate county residents and legislators about the role and importance of county government in Illinois. These initiatives will seek to build strong and effective relationships with our partners in governance at the state level. They will also affirm the importance of maintaining flexibility as a prerequisite for counties to best fulfill their responsibilities to serve local residents.

If your county is not yet a member of ISACo, I invite you to join us and help tell the county story. It's a great story that must be heard.

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A Message from the Executive Director

I hope you enjoyed the summer months and successfully navigated some of the hotter days. Perhaps some of you even visited Springfield to attend the 2023 State Fair.

ISACo spent the summer monitoring actions taken by Governor Pritzker on legislation pertinent to counties approved by the General Assembly. The Governor signed 561 bills into law, issued amendatory vetoes on three bills and issued full vetoes on another three bills. Additional information about the vetoes relevant for counties and the upcoming fall Veto Session is available in the legislative update included in this edition of the *County Quarterly*.

I'm pleased to announce that ISACo has undergone a staff expansion. In August, both Nekya Hall and Tiffani Homer joined our team to build upon the services offered to Illinois counties. Nekya is our Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager and Tiffani is our Member Services and Communications Manager. Both positions are new to ISACo. Nekya and Tiffani work out of our Springfield Office and will apply their talents toward the achievement of our mission to provide excellent service to counties. You can learn more about Nekya and Tiffani in this *County Quarterly*.

On the topic of expansion, we also welcomed Carroll County as our newest member. ISACo continues to grow beyond our initial 11 counties and we greatly appreciate and value each of our now 30 member counties.

Several of our member counties, along with a few others, attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference in Travis County, Texas (July 21-24). NACo offered a wide array of educational sessions and ISACo partnered with our friends at the United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) to hold a dinner for Illinois conference attendees. The dinner, attended by more than 80 people, was sponsored by our valued corporate partner Nationwide.

During the NACo Annual Conference, Will County Board Member Denise Winfrey completed her one-year term as NACo President. Denise provided exemplary leadership as NACo President and was a persistent advocate for her Resiliency, Inclusion, Solvency and Empowerment (RISE) initiative. As NACo's immediate Past President, Denise will remain a member of NACo's Executive Committee into July 2024.

NACo has several policy steering committees that help shape public policy on a national level. ISACo is responsible for recommending Illinois county officials and staff for appointment to those committees. If your county is a NACo member and you have interest in serving on a NACo committee, please feel welcome to contact Tiffani Homer at thomer@isacoil.org.

As always, please let us know how we can serve your county. Thanks.



Please feel welcome to contact me at
(217) 679-3368 or
jmccoy@isacoil.org
if I can be of assistance.
It is an honor to serve you. Thanks.

A Look Ahead

at The Veto Session

By: Nekya Hall, Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager

The 2023 fall Veto Session will be held on October 24-26 and November 7-9. Governor Pritzker issued several vetoes and amendatory vetoes, and the General Assembly is expected to act on each. This article discusses legislation vetoed by the Governor and legislative reports published by ISACo.

Total Vetoes

Right to Privacy Act

SB 1515 amends the "Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act" and is intended to increase protections for workers, but due to "irreconcilable drafting errors," Governor Pritzker vetoed the bill. In his veto message the Governor stated his belief that the bill will have an adverse effect on the workers it seeks to protect.

Nuclear Power Plants

SB 76 is intended to remove the moratorium on new construction of nuclear power plants to allow for the construction of nuclear reactors in Illinois. Governor Pritzker vetoed the bill. In the Governor's veto message, he opined that vague definitions in the bill will open the door to the rapid increase of large-scale nuclear reactors that are expensive to build and cause excessively high ratepayer-funded bailouts. Additionally, the Governor opined that the bill provides no regulatory protections to address the health and safety of Illinois residents who live and work near these new reactors.

Amendatory Vetoes

Omnibus Property Tax Legislation

HB 2507 address issues surrounding property taxes, including important property tax relief for surviving spouses of first responders. The Governor issued an Amendatory Veto due to a change added to give private nursing homeowners in Cook County a property tax break. That break is intended to pass the tax burden to Suburban Cook County homes and small businesses, with the most impact felt in the South Suburbs. The Governor is concerned that changes to property taxes on homeowners may increase costs for residents and put local school funding at risk.

Public Private Partnership Projects/Local Retainage Policy

HB 2878 address procurement issues that allow for the creation of public private partnerships (P3s) with counties, municipalities and any other unit of local government without proper oversight in place. Governor Pritzker believes a lack of oversight puts the state at a greater risk of project failure by decreasing competition and reducing the opportunity for public input currently required under state law during the P3 project planning and implementation process. For this reason the Governor issued an amendatory veto.

Energy Legislation

HB 3445 is an omnibus energy bill that makes changes to the Adjustable Block Grant program to make it more available to public schools, requires the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) to conduct a study evaluating several policy proposals, amends the law regarding siting for renewable energy projects, requires the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to conduct a thermal energy network workshop and gives existing utility providers the right of first refusal over new transmission projects in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region. Governor Pritzker issued an Amendatory Veto due to the right of first refusal language inserted by Senate Amendment 4 that will increase costs for ratepayers by giving current utility providers in the MISO region a monopoly over new transmission lines. The Governor believes that eliminating the competition will cause rates to increase in the MISO region, where there is currently over \$3.6 billion in planned transmission construction in the Ameren service territory.

In addition to the vetoes and amendatory vetoes discussed, ISACo will monitor new bill introductions and legislation assigned to committees.

ISACo Publishes Public Acts and State Mandates Reports

Our *2023 Public Act Report* and *2023 State Mandates Report* have been published. These reports provide a general overview of the more consequential and county-relevant legislation approved during the legislative session of the 103rd General Assembly. Both reports are available at www.isacoil.org.

ISACo Staff Expansion

To enhance service to our members as we continue to grow and expand, ISACo is pleased to announce the additions of Nekya Hall and Tiffani Homer to our team. Each was hired to fill newly-created positions with ISACo. Meet Nekya and Tiffani below.

Nekya Hall - Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager, nhall@isacoil.org

Nekya is the Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager with years of legislative experience working alongside the state legislature. Nekya is from Posen, Illinois, and a former resident of Cook County. Nekya now resides in Sangamon County. She attended Southern Illinois University-Carbondale and earned a degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice with a double minor in forensic science and psychology. During her matriculation she interned with the Illinois House which catapulted her career in public policy.

Nekya has extensive experience in public policy, budget, legislation and engagement with key legislators and staff. During her tenure with the Office of the Speaker and the Illinois Secretary of State, she gained a comprehensive understanding of research and policy. Nekya is excited to use her expertise to serve counties. In her free time, Nekya enjoys spending time with her friends and family, creating balloon art and reading.

What's a fun fact about your county that you would like to share with readers?

A scene from the blockbuster movie, *Legally Blonde 2* was filmed at the Illinois State Capitol in 2003. The Illinois state Capitol was chosen for this scene due to the House chamber resembling the US Capitol's the most at the time.

Welcome Nekya!



"I am very excited to join the ISACo team and look forward to the knowledge I will gain from working with counties and officials."

Tiffani Homer - Member Services and Communications Manager, thomer@isacoil.org

Tiffani is originally from Ashland, Illinois, and is a proud resident of Cass County. Tiffani attended Illinois College and earned a bachelor's degree in Communication and Rhetorical Studies with a minor in history. During that time, she interned at a local radio station, where she was introduced to the world of breaking news. After graduating from Illinois College in 2018, she would pursue a master's degree in the Public Affairs Reporting Program at the University of Illinois- Springfield. The Public Affairs Reporting Program (PAR) is a one-year, professionally oriented master's degree program that trains students to become journalists who produce news coverage about government, politics and other public affairs. She later interned at ABC NewsChannel 20 in Springfield, Illinois, and gained experience reporting statehouse news. In her free time, Tiffani enjoys spending time outdoors, collecting vinyl records and listening to podcasts.

What's a fun fact about your county that you'd like to share with readers?

Cass County is home to the Jim Edgar Panther Creek State Fish and Wildlife Area. The state park has over 16,000 acres of land for hiking, fishing, hunting, camping - you name it.

I look forward to spending my time there this fall whenever the leaves change!

Welcome Tiffani!



"I'm thrilled to return to Springfield and be able to help empower county members and officials through my communication skills."

ISACo Discusses Wind and Solar Policy

with Will County Legislative Committee

By: NACo Staff

On Tuesday, September 5, ISACo Executive Director Joe McCoy and Legislative Advocacy and Research Manager Nekya Hall participated in a meeting of the Will County Legislative Committee concerning P.A. 102-1123. This law was enacted on January 27, 2023, to restrict county authority over the siting of wind and solar facilities. Director McCoy provided the legislative history of the new law and highlighted ISACo's opposition throughout the legislative process to the restrictions on local authority.

In addition to participating in the conversation, ISACo provided a memorandum to Committee members outlining the legislative history, the proponent's intent behind the legislation, a list of bill opponents and a letter sent to Governor Pritzker by ISACo requesting that he veto the provisions that restrict local control and create impractical timetables for hearings and decisions. This memorandum is available on ISACo's website at isacoil.org.

ISACo looks favorably on efforts to incorporate renewables into the mix of energy options for Illinois. All aspects of the policy that pertain to local zoning, however, should respect the opinions and desires of locally-elected officials and their residents.

ISACo Congratulates the April NACo High Performance Leadership Academy Graduates from Illinois.



The April cohort joins over 10,000 graduates and current participants from across the country benefitting from the 12-week online program enabling existing and emerging county leaders to achieve their highest potential.

- Alejandro Benitez, Appraisal Director, McHenry County
- Antoinette White, Grounds and Natural Resources Division Supervisor, Kendall County
- Betty Duncan, County Board Member, Peoria County
- Jean Glorch, Chief Deputy, Assessments Office, McHenry County
- Katie Deane-Schlottman, County Board Member, Will County
- Stefanie Wiencke, Environmental Education Manager, Kendall County
- Terri Cooke, Assistant Operations Manager, Will County
- Vince Logan, County Board Member, Will County

Please visit www.pdaleadership.com to learn more about the High Performance Leadership Academy.

Does Your County Have a Problem Requiring a Legislative Solution?

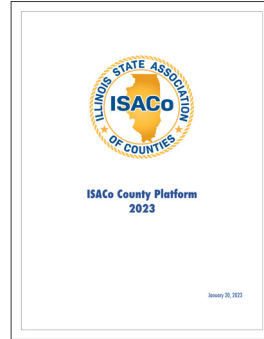
ISACo is working to develop the Association's legislative agenda for 2024.

If your county has an idea for a legislative proposal, we'd like to consider it!

Proposals ultimately approved by the ISACo Board of Directors will be included within our 2024 *Illinois County Action Program* (ICAP). Your idea(s) should be sent to info@isacoil.org. Please explain the issue to be addressed and what the recommended solution would be.

Additionally, ISACo will be considering amendments to our *County Platform* for 2024. Please review the 2023 *County Platform* and send any suggestions for additions/changes to info@isacoil.org. Proposed changes will be considered by the Legislative Committee and Board of Directors.

www.isacoil.org



News & Views e-Newsletter Subscription



Are you receiving our
ISACO NEWS & VIEWS
e-newsletter?

If not, please check your spam folder to make sure our newsletter is not being blocked. Otherwise, please e-mail Tiffani Homer at thomer@isacoil.org with a request to be added.

Don't miss out on these valuable ISACo updates!

ISACo Corporate Partners Thanks for Your Support!



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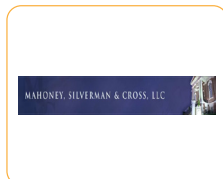
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Become an ISACo Corporate Partner!

ISACo's Corporate Partner Program was established to provide a forum for companies and organizations to build relationships with county officials while supporting the important work of ISACo.

The program offers five options for corporations and organizations to become associate members of ISACo while receiving benefits for this status.

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