



Capitol Connection E-Newsletter- June 2016

State News and Policy

- **Sixty-Seven Bills Go Into Effect on July 1st that Impact County Government**
- **New Provisions on Property Tax Penalties and Interest to Take Effect July 1**
- **2017 County Budget News: COLAs and Longevity Increases**
- **Georgia EPD Proposes New Regulations on Dam Safety**
- **State DOR Working to Streamline Alcohol Licensing**
- **Attorney General Opines on Campaign/Disclosure Fees and Fines under Ethics Act**

Federal News and Policy

- **Prospective EPA Rules to Have Huge Impact on Counties with Wastewater Treatment Facilities**
- **Register for NACo Virtual Town Hall Series on the Opioid Crisis**

Reporting Requirements

- **DCA Wage and Salary Annual Survey Due this Month**
- **Annual CVIQG County Budget and Audit Submission Requirements**

County Facts

- **2014 Summary of County Revenues and Expenditures**
- **Local Sales Tax Map By County**

State News and Policy

Sixty-Seven Bills Go Into Effect on July 1st that Impact County Government

ACCG has prepared the following [list of bills](#) that go into effect on July 1, 2016 that may have an impact on county government as indicated by the ACCG policy staff. Please review this legislation with your county attorney to determine whether any action is needed on behalf of your county to comply with these laws.

New Provisions on Property Tax Penalties and Interest to Take Effect July 1

During the 2016 legislative session, the General Assembly passed HB 960, a portion of which changed how interest and penalties are applied to delinquent property taxes. To learn more about this change, please click [here](#).

HB 960 also affects the distribution of penalties on delinquent property taxes collected by the county for itself, the Board of Education, and any municipalities and independent school districts within its borders. To learn more about this change, please click [here](#).

HB 960 takes effect on July 1. Please contact your county attorney with any questions regarding this legislation and its implications.

2017 County Budget News: COLAs and Longevity Increases

County budget officers trying to calculate 2017 salaries for county elected officials and appointed magistrate judges need to take into account the increases in salaries that will become effective on January 1, 2017. Click [here](#) for details regarding the increase in cost of living allowances (COLAs) and longevity.

Georgia EPD Proposes New Regulations on Dam Safety

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) of the Department of Natural Resources has just issued notice of proposed amendments to the Rules for Dam Safety. These changes are important to Georgia counties that own Category I Dams, calling for routine inspections, follow-up actions if necessary and requiring the creation of emergency action plans. EPD initially issued this public notice in August, 2015, but has since revised the proposed rule after receiving significant feedback.

EPD is accepting comment, which can be e-mailed to EPDComments@dnr.ga.gov, until July 14, 2016. For the official notice, synopsis and actual proposed amendments please see "[August 2016 Proposed Amendments to Rules 391-3-8](#)".

State DOR Working to Streamline Alcohol Licensing

The Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) has revised the state alcohol license procedures to better accommodate alcohol license applicants as well as local governments. Starting on March 1, 2016, the DOR began a process of issuing temporary distilled spirits retail consumption dealer and retailer licenses, after a preliminary review, which are valid for 120 days while the Department completes its normal application review. For more information, please click [here](#).

The DOR has also revised its alcohol licensing procedures for special events. For a summary of this process and additional information, please click [here](#).

ACCG is currently working with the DOR to explore whether state and local alcohol licensing procedures can be better integrated and streamlined. ACCG will be soliciting county feedback in this process. If your county has suggestions for improvements, please contact Todd Edwards, ACCG, at tedwards@accg.org.

Attorney General Opines on Campaign/Disclosure Fees and Fines under Ethics Act

Attorney General Sam Olens has recently opined that Georgia County and city governments may issue notices of fees due for late filings for campaign contribution disclosure and personal financial disclosure reports; however, local governments are not authorized to enforce other provisions or Georgia's ethics

Act or retain any portion of the late fees and fines imposed. For additional information, please see [here](#).

Federal News and Policy

Prospective EPA Rules to Have Huge Impact on Counties with Wastewater Treatment Facilities

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed new rules that would have a direct impact on the environmental quality programs, agricultural chemical distributors, utilities and water-wastewater treatment systems.

This affects local governments on two different levels:

1. As owners and operators of publicly owned water-wastewater treatment facilities, local governments would be regulated through new requirements on facilities
2. Regulated facilities would be required to consult individually with emergency managers on a yearly basis for notifications and tabletop exercises, and every five years for field exercises

The new rules would place greater responsibility on local governments without providing the necessary funding.

NACo, the National League of Cities and U.S. Conference of Mayors plans to meet with the White House's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on the cost implications of the new rule. NACo needs county officials' input to help determine if their county would be affected or not. For further details on this subject, click [here](#) to read the entire article published by NACo. Visit the NACo website at www.naco.org for more information.

Register for NACo Virtual Town Hall Series on the Opioid Crisis

The National Association of Counties (NACo) has organized a series of virtual town halls in June to address the local response to the opioid crisis that has swept the country.

The Treatment Town Hall will take place on Thursday, June 16 at 2:00 p.m. This meeting will discuss the treatment of people addicted to opiates. Representatives from the National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors will be on site.

The Public Safety Town Hall will commence on Thursday, June 30 at 2:00 p.m. This meeting will talk about the overall safety of the public and community wellness. Representatives from the National District Attorneys Association and Major County Sheriffs' Association will join.

To register for one or both of the Town Halls click [here](#).

Reporting Requirements

DCA Wage and Salary Annual Survey Due this Month

Each year, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) collects wage and salary survey information from counties and cities. The information collected is used by local governments and other organizations for compensation studies, budget preparations and other purposes.

An overview of the type of information generated by this survey can be found [here](#) and instructions on how to search and compare this information can be accessed [here](#). This year's survey is due by **June 30, 2016** and can be completed online by logging in through the [DCA website](#). A sample survey form is available to view [here](#).

If you have any questions about the survey or need assistance in completing it, please contact DCA.Research@dca.ga.gov.

Annual CVIOG County Budget and Audit Submission Requirements

Routinely referred to as the HB 122 requirement, counties have been required to annually upload audit and budget information through the TED Center on the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) [website](#) since 2011. All budget documents are required to be submitted within 30 days of adoption. All audits are required to be submitted after the close of the fiscal year at the same time they are sent to the state auditor. The legal reporting requirements for these submissions are set forth in O.C.G.A. § 36-80-21. For information on how to upload audit and budget documents, follow the directions after logging in through the [CVIOG website](#). A username and password is required to access the system. All technical questions on how to upload documents should be directed to CVIOG at 706-542-2736.

There is also an annual reporting requirement for asset forfeitures that must be submitted to CVIOG by January 31st of each year for the previous calendar year. Unlike the budget and audit requirements, which must be completed by the county governing authority, asset forfeitures must be reported by local law enforcement agencies and are routinely submitted to CVIOG through the Prosecuting Attorney's Council (PAC). For additional information on the asset forfeiture reporting requirement, visit the [PAC website](#).

County Facts

2014 Summary of County Revenues and Expenditures

ACCG created a PowerPoint presentation summarizing fiscal data on all counties based on the local government finance survey results collected annually by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The data is from FY14, which is the latest data set available for all counties. The presentation can be accessed [here](#).

Local Sales Tax Map By County

ACCG created a map displaying local sales tax information for all 159 Georgia counties. The map was created from information obtained through the April 1, 2016 Sales and Use Tax Rate Chart provided by the Georgia Department of Revenue. The map can be viewed [here](#).