



# MIDWEST AREA BULLETIN

Volume 2, Bulletin 2

## AREA EXECUTIVE

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## ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE

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## MWA COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### Awards

Kathy Balbough, OH

### Benefits

Jon Williams, WI

### Emblems

Tina Young, MO

### Legislative

Kay Lumsden, MI

### Membership

LeAnn Oltmanns, IL

### NAFEC

Mary Roberts, IA

### Negotiations

Sara Bateson, IL

### Programs

Jamie Garriott, IN

### Publicity

Teresa Holmquist, MN

### Scholarships

Charlene Stone, OH

## MWA Executive

**Chris Hare** [chrishare05@gmail.com](mailto:chrishare05@gmail.com)

Greetings from the Midwest Area.

Would you be working for FSA if you were not privileged to have annual or sick leave? What if Program Technicians were only Grade 3's and CED's grade 9's? Grade 8 KEY PT's, are you all members? How about the return of time off awards or cash awards? Whether you knew this or not, NASCOE was the driving force of these, and many more benefits. Were you hired in the past four years? Without NASCOE, you may not be employed today with FSA. We could be 815 FTE's less and \$61 million less to work with.

I ask myself, why are we not 100% membership? As a current member, are you promoting to your coworkers about our accomplishments? The common responses I hear as to why some are not a member are:

1. "I don't believe in unions".

My response: **GREAT! WE AREN'T A UNION! We are a membership.**

2. "I didn't know about NASCOE."

My response: **"Talk to your coworkers or state officers."**

3. "What has NASCOE done for me personally?"

My response: **"Check out the webpage NASCOE through the years. (Or reread my first paragraph above for a few examples.)"**

4. "Why should I join when I already get the benefits as a non-member?"

My response: **"Because there is STRENGTH in numbers and you would like to KEEP those benefits, don't you? These benefits are not guaranteed."**

I know, I know, I am preaching to the choir with promoting NASCOE, but is the choir promoting NASCOE to their co-workers who are non-members? Maybe this is the bulletin you, as a member, print out and discuss at lunch with your co-workers. Many of our non-members are new or uneducated about NASCOE. Many don't realize our benefits must be negotiated each year.

In today's environment, and the horizon is unknown, the more members we have the stronger our voice is to Washington D.C. Silent members are welcome! Support our cause to represent all employees. What about supporting our pioneers who formed NASCOE to get you the benefits you are reaping today. I work with some amazing ladies who remember the times of no leave and having to take leave without pay (LWOP) to stay home with sick children. They remember this, and appreciate the time off we have. I was hired after this, but listening to the stories of employees who remember the

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

times of less benefits make me appreciate the ones we have.

Another thing I would like to address is the role of the County Committee system and the role of the District Director. The County Committee system needs to stay in place. This system is unique to our agency, and I feel strongly one reason our agency is recognized as the “face of the government”, All employees need to know the importance of this system and how it benefits our agency operating this way.

Does your County Committee know about NAFEC, and the value of their membership? Are they members of NAFEC? They also have a voice! In the scheme of things, NAFEC may even have a stronger voice than NASCOE! If you really think about it, the FSA office is the County Committee’s office. They employ the CED. The CED, then employs / supervises the PT’s. The District Director, is the liaison between the County Committee and the State Committee. The District Director is not the direct supervisor of the CED. The duties of the District Director are spelled out in FSA Handbook 16-AO Paragraph 111.

It was a very productive year so far. I know Missouri is working very hard to host the 2017 National Convention. If you haven’t yet, please make sure you get your registrations in to them by July 15, 2017.

I look forward to seeing you all in St. Charles in August.

Have a great summer.

Christopher L. Hare

NASCOE Midwest Area Executive

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## *MWA Alternate Executive and NASCOE Legislative Co-Chair*

**Jackson Jones, Missouri** [want2c\\_bass@hotmail.com](mailto:want2c_bass@hotmail.com)

I was recently asked by a CED with two new millennial employees what is NASCOE doing now? How does the work we are doing now effect these employees now and in the future. The nonmember employees had grown tired of hearing about NASCOE's past accomplishments and what had been done to benefit our current members in the past, and wanted to know how their membership would benefit them directly.

At first glance, this looks like selfishness on their part, but if you really analyze this attitude it is pretty genius. How many of us would purchase investments if we had no idea what the potential return on investment could be. Can you really blame a person for asking how membership directly benefits them before just blindly handing over 5, 6, 8 or 10 dollars a pay period to join some organization?

The struggle is millennials cannot be recruited in bulk, but rather have to be treated as individuals, with individual ideals, and ideas on a personal level. Going forward we must do a better job of getting in contact with our newer employees on a personal level and doing a better job of explaining how individuals benefit, rather than how we as a whole benefit.

So how do we do this? Well the most important point that I would have is to start early. We need to be in front of new employees within a month or even a week of becoming an employee. We need to make them feel like the center of attention, and important by accentuating their talents and abilities as well as how they can grow and gain satisfaction with in NASCOE.

We need our state presidents and membership chairs looking for opportunities to get in front of new employees during the onboarding process, learning about them and speaking to them directly rather than state trainings where they are just a member of the crowd.

We need to be demonstrating that NASCOE can provide opportunities that are more difficult for nonmembers, like participating in leg conferences, not just meeting but building relationships with administrators, deputy administrators, and other national office staff, gaining name recognition in the national office that could provide future career advancement.

We need to be presenting the FSA-444 form to the new employees as a pathway to their future and not a roadmap from our past to their present. We must physically place an FSA- 444 application in their hands as a golden ticket and ask them directly if they are willing to unlock the possibilities and see how far they can go.

Presidents and membership chairs should encourage all members new and old to pay by automatic withdraw, don't give new members the option to forget to mail that check. And every year we should be reviewing the list of members to ensure that no one has been promoted and that everyone is paying the correct amount of dues and follow up with any member that has fallen off your membership rolls in the past year.

The most important takeaways are to ask new employees to become members quickly. Treat them like individuals. Get them involved. Get a signed 444 out of their hands as quickly as possible and get that to your membership chair. Membership chairs get the 444 to your state office quickly and get the dues withdraw started as soon as possible. Your membership roll needs to be maintained almost monthly. We can't take these facts for granted or our membership numbers will fall.



58<sup>th</sup> NASCOE CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

August 2-5, 2017

Embassy Suites, St. Charles, MO Telephone: 1-800-560-7782 Group Code NAS

PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE AT [www.mascoe.org](http://www.mascoe.org)  
FOR CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

<b>Name:</b> _____	<b>Guest:</b> _____
Check One: Delegate <input type="checkbox"/>   Member <input type="checkbox"/>   RASCOE <input type="checkbox"/>   NAFEC <input type="checkbox"/>   Honorary Member <input type="checkbox"/>   District Director <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Address:</b> _____	
<b>e-mail:</b> _____	<b>Cell Phone:</b> _____

Please choose ALL EVENTS that you plan to attend—even if it is FREE! Honorary Life Members and guests under age 13 may attend the Convention free as our guest. Your registration is essential so that we can be prepared.

DATES/TIMES	EVENT	COST/ PERSON	# ATTENDING	TOTAL \$ DUE
POSTMARKED BY JUNE 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	REGISTRATION	\$45		
POSTMARKED FROM JUNE 16 <sup>th</sup> – JULY 15 <sup>th</sup>	REGISTRATION	\$55		
POSTMARKED AFTER JULY 15 <sup>th</sup>	REGISTRATION	\$65		
WED, August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8.00am – 4.00pm	ANHEUSER BUSH BREWERY & GATEWAY ARCH DOES NOT INCLUDE LUNCH Many options at Laclede's Landing	\$40 adults \$25 kids		
WED, August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 7.00am – 4.00pm	MONSANTO RESEARCH CENTER & PURINA FARMS <i>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED AT BOTTOM OF NEXT PAGE*</i> Includes Lunch *Limited to the first 50*	\$40 \$25 kids		
WED, August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8.00am – 4.00pm	AUGUSTA WINE TRAIL Includes Lunch *Limited to the first 50*	\$65		
WED, August 2 <sup>nd</sup> 8.00am – 4.00pm	GOLF OUTING Includes 18 holes, cart, & lunch	\$90		
Thurs. August 3 <sup>rd</sup> 6.00 – 11.00pm	SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION & DINNER Entertainment to follow	FREE		
Fri. August 4 <sup>th</sup>	RASCOE LUNCHEON	\$30		
Fri. August 4 <sup>th</sup> 6.00 – 11.00pm	HISTORIC DOWNTOWN ST. CHARLS PUB CRAWL	\$10		
Sat., August 5 <sup>th</sup> 6.00 pm – 7.00 PM	SOCIAL HOUR	CASH BAR		
Sat. August 5 <sup>th</sup> 7.00pm – 12.00am	NASCOE BANQUET Dinner, Awards, & Entertainment	\$50		

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Must submit Parental Consent Form for any and all Youth Activities.  
(Form available at [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org) or at Convention Registration Desk.)

Youth Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUTH ACTIVITY DATE/TIME	YOUTH ACTIVITY	COST PER PERSON	# ATTENDING	TOTAL \$ DUE
WEDNESDAY Aug 2 <sup>nd</sup> 6:00-10:00 pm	Movies/Games/Swimming	FREE		
THURSDAY, AUG 3 <sup>rd</sup> 8:15 am – 4:30 pm	St. Louis Zoo Lunch included	\$25		
THURSDAY, AUG 3 <sup>rd</sup> 6:00 – 11:30 pm	Painting Party Onsite, Snacks Included	FREE		
FRIDAY, AUG. 4 <sup>th</sup> 8:15 am – 4:00 pm	City Museum & Butterfly House Lunch included	\$25		
FRIDAY, AUG. 4 <sup>th</sup> 6:00-10:00pm	Movies/Games/Swimming Onsite, snacks included	FREE		
SATURDAY, AUG 5 <sup>th</sup> 8:15 am – 12:00 pm	Magic House Lunch included	\$15		
SATURDAY, AUG 5 <sup>th</sup> 5:00 pm – 12:00 am	Movie Night Onsite, dinner & snacks included	FREE		

## PURCHASE YOUR 2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION T-SHIRT

Adult \$11 ea. Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Kids \$8 ea. Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ Quantity \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

PURCHASE YOUR 2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION DISC OF PICTURES @ \$20 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

2017 NASCOE NATIONAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Monsanto requires the name, residential address, and email address for each tour participant. Under age 12 not permitted. Please provide the required information below.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM THE AIRPORT  
**WILL NOT BE PROVIDED. HOWEVER, YOU CAN RECEIVE  
A DISCOUNTED RATE BY BOOKING THROUGH BEST  
TRANSPORTATION AT:**

<https://gobestexpress.com/reservations?code=NASCOE2017> 314-222-5300 \* 877-STLGOVAN (785-4681)



SEND REGISTRATION & CHECK  
PAYABLE TO NASCOE TO:  
Debbie Leeper  
23 West Main St. Kingston, MO  
64650-9174

QUESTIONS:  
Randon Leathers (573)619-3950, [rleathers@hotmail.com](mailto:rleathers@hotmail.com)  
Connie Gibson (636)358-4147, [c.gibson61@gmail.com](mailto:c.gibson61@gmail.com)  
Debbie Leeper (816)586-2711, [debbie.leeper@mo.usda.gov](mailto:debbie.leeper@mo.usda.gov)  
4/19/17



## Awards

**Kathy Balbaugh, Ohio**    [littleone9699@gmail.com](mailto:littleone9699@gmail.com)

The Awards committee implemented a new online nomination system for 2017 and it has gone over very well! While there were a few minor issues, which are always excepted with something new, I feel it was definitely easier and encouraged people to do more than 'think about' nominating someone! In the MWA alone, we received TWENTY total nominations in the categories of Service to NASCOE, Service to FSA/Agriculture and Service to Community. This is wonderful to see so many people nominate their colleagues for their hard work both on and off the job!



Applications for nominations had to be submitted by January 1, 2017. I then forwarded the applications on the appropriate states for judging. On February 2, the state winners were sent on to the Area judges and those winners were selected and sent on to the National judges by March 1st. Congratulations to all the State and Area winners!!

I would like to challenge each state next year to have AT LEAST one nomination in each of the three categories! Start thinking about it now; I'm sure we all know someone who excels at work, in NASCOE, and around their community!

At the state level, certificates are awarded to employees who have accumulated 1,000, 1,500, and 2,000 hours of unused sick leave. Also, plaques are awarded to employees who have accumulated 2,500, 3,000, and 3,500 hours and above of unused sick leave. State chairs can contact me with their state's information and I can mail the certificates to them, and also provide them information for ordering plaques.

If you have any comments, suggestions, or need more information please let me know!

Kathy Balbaugh  
MWA Awards Chair  
[littleone9699@gmail.com](mailto:littleone9699@gmail.com)

## Midwest Area Award Winners

### Distinguished Service to FSA / Agriculture

Steve Abbas, Iowa. Steve was nominated by Mary Roberts.

### Distinguished Service to Community

Nicki Miranowski, Minnesota. Nicki was nominated by Liz Ludwig.

### Distinguished Service to NASCOE

Kay Lumsden, Michigan. Kay was nominated by Rose Marie Gallagher.

## Benefits

**Jon Williams, Wisconsin** [jonwilliams321@hotmail.com](mailto:jonwilliams321@hotmail.com)

The last few months have not brought us any new benefits through NASCOE but the NASCOE benefits Chair is working with the Membership and Publicity Chairs to provide updated information on benefits and make them more accessible to the membership.

All members should have received a NASCOE membership card which lists a few of the benefits along with the NASCOE ID required for enrollment into the WorkingAdvantage discount program. If you have not received your membership card your State benefits chair and President have the NASCOE ID. They can provide it to you once membership is verified. Several members have contacted me asking about the discounts through working advantage and have been very satisfied with those discounts.

Dillard's Financial Solutions (DFS) is the NASCOE Primary benefits provider. While they primarily focus on retirement planning they do offer many other products and services. You can find a list of services on Dillard's webpage:

<http://dillardfinancialsolutionsinc.com/nascoe/benefits/>

DFS also provides additional support to state associations such as printing services and financial contributions when invited to participate at conventions.

Members are able to obtain insurance and financial planning services from other vendors and States may invite them to state conventions however, if DFS feels these vendors are in violation of the contractual agreement with NASCOE they will not be obligated to provide financial support to the state association

NASCOE was also able to acquire a discounted membership to AirMedCare Network. The \$10 membership provides excess to the air ambulance providers and services affiliated with the network.

I encourage all NASCOE members to take advantage of the various benefits available and also let us know of other benefits you may be interested in obtaining. If anyone has questions regarding the information on benefits please contact me and I will do what I can to answer those questions.

Submitted by  
Jon Williams  
MWA Benefits Chair  
[Jonwilliams321@hotmail.com](mailto:Jonwilliams321@hotmail.com)

or

[Jonathan.williams@wi.usda.gov](mailto:Jonathan.williams@wi.usda.gov)



## Emblems

**Tina Young, Missouri**     [tina.young.98@gmail.com](mailto:tina.young.98@gmail.com)

My name is Christina Young and I work in the Macon County FSA office in Missouri. I am so excited to be serving as your new Emblems Chair. I have worked for FSA and been a member of NASCOE for almost 15 years. I have served on the NASCOE's state board for 2 years and am pleased to take on the Emblems Chair for the Midwest Area.



In the last few months I have been working with the State Chairs to get them Emblems ordered for their State Conventions. It is important for each state to have Emblems represented as the money received from Emblems sales goes towards the respective state scholarships and National scholarships.

We are excited for State Conventions as it is my understanding that we have some great new items to show off! Don't miss out on seeing what's new.

If anyone in the Midwest Area has any questions regarding Emblems don't hesitate to drop me an email, and I will be sure to get you an answer. It is my pleasure to be serving you all as Emblems Chair.

A collage of various FSA and NASCOE merchandise. It includes a black V-neck sweatshirt, a black tote bag with the FSA logo, a white t-shirt with "# Thank a Farmer" and a map of the US, a grey t-shirt with "Farm-er ('fahr-mär): noun 1. A person who is Outstanding in his field.", a blue t-shirt with "LIFE IS BETTER on the FARM" and a tractor graphic, a blue long-sleeved shirt with the FSA logo, and a man wearing a blue long-sleeved shirt.

Visit the [NASCOE Gear](#) page to order your FSA / NASCOE Emblems!

**8% of all sales go to the NASCOE Scholarship Fund**



## Scholarships

**Charlene Stone, Ohio** [charstone65@gmail.com](mailto:charstone65@gmail.com)

The Scholarship committee implemented a new online nomination system for 2017 and it has gone over very well! While there were a few minor issues, which are always expected with something new, I feel it was well received. In the MWA, we received 39 total scholarship applications in these categories:

Traditional – 23

Open/Continuing – 10

Member/Continuing – 3

Associate – 1

Grandchild – 2

Application had to be submitted by January 1, 2017. I then forwarded the applications on the appropriate states for judging. On February 2, the state winners were sent on to the Area judges and those winners were selected and sent on to the National judges by March 1st. Congratulations to all the State and Area winners!!

If you have any comments, suggestions, or need more information please let me know!

Charlene Stone

MWA Scholarship Chair

[charstone65@gmail.com](mailto:charstone65@gmail.com)



## Legislative

**Kay Lumsden, Michigan** [kay.lumsden@yahoo.com](mailto:kay.lumsden@yahoo.com)

### PAC:

I have an updated listing of PAC contributors from each state. I will forward them to each State President and Legislative Chair. These should be utilized by each state during their State Conventions and Area Rally's. The Legislative Team's goals are to increase our contributors in each state to reach 10% of our membership. Or, if a state is already at 10% of their membership as contributing, then we want to try and increase it by another 2%. Typically, we have the same dedicated people attending the state conventions...so please utilize these reports and discuss the PAC with those members that are not contributing. It is such an important part of our legislative process.



### LEGISLATIVE:

In November, the Presidential election proved to be very interesting. With Congress back in session for the 115th Congress, most of the early business has been administrative housekeeping, which will be followed immediately by debate on Obamacare, reduction of burdensome federal regulations, job creation, the tax code, the debt limit, foreign policy and a continuing budget resolution that expires in March. Sonny Perdue's name has been tossed around as the main candidate for the Secretary of Agriculture but has not yet been confirmed.

NASCOE's legislative priority is going to be focused on building relationships as new faces arrive in Washington. With 50-60 new members of Congress elected this fall, the Legislative Committee will need to begin educating these new members on the role of NASCOE, FSA and production agriculture. It is important we begin the process of building relationships with our local representatives and their staff as soon as possible, with a priority on members of the Agriculture and Agriculture Appropriations committees.

### SED's:

SED's are appointed by the President based on recommendations from the senior senator in power. If there are no Republican senators, then the recommendation would come from the senior House republican. The list of recommendations is compiled and vetted by the White House Ag Liaison and the top candidate from each state is then appointed by the president. Because priority is given to cabinet level positions, lower positions such as Administrators and SED's will come later, after the secretary has been confirmed by congress.

### STC's:

The process of how someone can apply for a STC position is in 16-AO (Par. 37, I believe). The STC positions are appointed by the Secretary of Ag. The current STC's have been extended until new STC's are appointed or the end of the year, whichever comes first.

### CR:

The Continuing Resolution (CR) goes to April 28th. There has not been much mentioned about what is expected at that time.

### HIRING FREEZE:

As you are all aware, we are in a hiring freeze. Again, not much is known about how long this will be or how it will affect us.



## Membership

**LeAnn Oltmanns, Illinois** [loltmanns2@gmail.com](mailto:loltmanns2@gmail.com)

I'm LeAnn Oltmanns and it is my pleasure to be your MWA Membership Chair. I have been a PT in Lee County Illinois for just a little over 30 years and a NASCOE member the whole time. When I first started I was approached by CED and senior PT about becoming a member. I thought okay, if you say it's the thing to do, I'll join the club and I did. It wasn't until several years later that I really realized how important NASCOE is to my job and my pay and benefits. With that realization came the knowledge that it's the membership that makes NASCOE so strong.



Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc., our Benefits Provider knows that membership is important for NASCOE too. They are offering a special membership drive. The state with the highest increase in new members, including associate membership from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 will receive a \$1,000 award sponsored by Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc. The state president will receive a plaque on behalf of his or her state association, presented by the NASCOE President at the Nation Convention. A traveling trophy will also be presented to the state to have for a year. Each year the winning state will have their name engraved on the trophy.

Earlier this year we surveyed all the states in the MWA to see how many offices have 0 NASCOE members in their counties. Illinois has seven, Indiana has 7, Iowa 1, Michigan 3, Minnesota 2, Missouri 6, Wisconsin 7 and Ohio has 0 offices without any NASCOE members. Way to go Ohio for having members in each of their 61 COF's! Out of 593 total offices in the MWA only 34 offices have no membership. Now that we have identified these COF's we need to have contact with them to see why they don't have any members.

I'd like to give a HUGE shout out to all the state Membership Chairs on being the 1st Area in the nation to have all of our state's dues submitted for the 1st AND 2nd quarter reporting periods. And when asked to help out providing information they are quick to respond! Thank you so much!





## *Midwest Area Rally Minutes*

MWA Rally

Marriott at the University of Dayton

March 31 and April 1, 2017

The Mid West Area Rally (MWA Rally) opened with a Welcome from Ohio Acting SED, David Drake. Mr. Drake welcomed everyone to the convention and spoke of agriculture highlights in the State of Ohio and how this is a great time for the FSA and USDA. Following Mr. Drake's welcome Amy Morman provided the Invocation which was then followed by the Presentation of Colors. The Colors were presented by the Combined Honor Guard of the VFW West Carrolton & American Legion Kettering & Miamisburg Post. After the presentation of colors, the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem introductions for special guests was given by Chris Hare, MWA Exec. Chris introduced Wes Daniels, NASCOE President; Dennis Ray, NASCOE Vice President; Curt Houk, NASCOE Treasurer; Mark VanHoose, past NASCOE President; Shelly Odenkirk, past NASCOE Treasurer; and John Lohr, past NASCOE President. Next Chris gave introductions to all of the MWA committee chairpersons: Kathy Balbaugh, Awards; Tina Young, Emblems; Kay Lumsden, Leg; Mary Roberts, NAFEC; Charlene Stone, Scholarships; and Teresa Holmquist, Publicity were all present at the Rally. John Williams, Benefits; Jamie Garriott, Programs, LeeAnn Oltmanns, Membership; and Sara Bateson, Negotiations were not able to attend the Rally. Chris proceeded to introduce two other special guests: Nancy Best, Acting SED from Indiana and Jim Zumbrink, Ohio STC. After all introductions were made the Rally proceeded with roll call of Delegates. Delegates from each state are as follows:

Illinois	Debbie Staley	Tony Augustine
Indiana	Dawn Hummel	Leah Hood
Iowa	Jennifer Comer	Judy Dameron
Michigan	Benita Meekoff	Kay Lumsden
Minnesota	Kayla Mattson	Kevin Beekman
Missouri	Jared Singer	Jessica Claypool
Ohio	John Gaynor	Dennis Stryker
Wisconsin	Jake Bourget	Tom Oasen

The Rally proceeded with a short talk from Vickie Bretz from GEHA (government employee health association). Vickie highlighted the 3 major insurance plans that GEHA offers. She also spoke about how GEHA is willing to sponsor employee events such as an office's Weight Watchers meeting or a Walk Challenge. Vickie encouraged everyone to contact GEHA for more information.

After GEHA spoke Chris Hare proceeded to introduce Ohio Secretary, Amy Morman and Ohio parliamentarian, Mark VanHoose and asked for a motion to accept the agenda for the MWA Rally. Jennifer Comer moved to accept the agenda as presented and Kevin Beekman seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion passed.

*(Continued on page 13)*

*(Continued from page 12)*

Nancy Best from Indiana was introduced as our next speaker. Former CED in IN, IN Administrative Officer and currently Acting SED for IN Nancy spoke about how things were in IN. Nancy shared that IN has stayed plenty busy. They are currently working a Cost Share revamp. They are offering a follow up to last year's Business File 101 with Business File 201. And they have also been working with Dillard's Financial in providing Retirement Training for all employees. She commented that these trainings they are doing are all done at the district level to help keep cost down for the State.

Next on the agenda was the Ohio State Committee. Jim Zumbrink, current committeeman and Darke County farmer was the only STC member present. Jim spoke to the group briefly on their continued appointment until President Trump can get his people in place. The STC is conducting business as usual. Jim was very thankful for his time on the STC over the past several years.

Following Jim's talk, Chris Hare invited Kathy Balbaugh up to talk to all of our First Timers to a Rally and told them about the First Timers contest. The First Timer with the most points collected (by asking attendees for their signature) and finding the one person in the room that had the answer to Kathy's secret question would win \$100!

As our day continued Chris Hare and Jackson Jones, MWA Exec and MWA Alternate Exec respectfully, introduced themselves and spoke briefly on their role in NASCOE. Followed by Chris and Jackson was NASCOE President Wes Daniels.

Wes introduced the national team and thanked them all for what they do and the time they put into NASCOE. Wes thanked OASCOE member and past NASCOE President Mark VanHoose for his guidance when Wes first came on the national Exec Board while Mark was NASCOE Vice President and NASCOE President. Wes spoke on the transition that we are currently going through. He reminded all that the same thing happened 8 years prior when President Obama was first elected. Hunter Moorehead, our legislative consultant, is working hard for us every day. Wes passed on to all attendees that there is a lot of positivity in the 2018 Farm Bill hearings. He encouraged all to keep working hard and to keep doing our job. Wes let everyone know that he and the Executive Board will be heading to Washington DC the following week for annual Negotiation meeting with management. The Exec Board has 27 items to present for Negotiations. At this time Wes asked anyone in the room to raise their hand if they could retire today – 7 attendees raised their hand; then he proceeded to ask how many people could retire in the next 5 years – several hands were held high. Wes continued to speak about his concern with what FSA is doing to plan for the future to prepare for the many who will be retiring soon. Wes stated that he is waiting for a new Secretary of Agriculture to be seated so that things can start moving forward. Wes went on to talk about office closures and how there is language in the current Farm Bill that states “no office closures”. NASCOE is aware that there are some offices that do truly need to be closed but that language was put in the 2014 Farm Bill to protect us. DC was closing offices without consulting with anyone and that needed to stop so we asked for the “no office closure” language to be added. Next in his talk Wes spoke of the County Committee and how vital it is to our organization. Wes remarked that there are

*(Continued on page 14)*

*(Continued from page 13)*

probably updates that need to be made to the COC system but we need them to remain. He reminded all in attendance that the COC is the supervisor of the CED and COF. Wes asked the crowd how the COC can be trained better – his answer is to get the COC and the District Director together more often so that the COC can be kept up to date. In closing Wes spoke of the NASCOE attorney and how all employees should remember that this is available to them. The NASCOE VP deals with all NASCOE attorney issues but he knows that Dennis Ray stays very busy with this. There are more issues out there than anyone is aware. Wes stressed that it is important to follow rules, to do our job correctly but it's also important to utilize this benefit if ever necessary.

Our next speaker was NASCOE Vice President Dennis Ray. Dennis started out his talk with the following quote: "If you don't have a seat at the table then you are probably on the menu". Dennis passed on that NASCOE has worked hard to have a seat at the table and they will continue to work hard on our behalf. Dennis reviewed how NASCOE is involved through several task forces and work groups. The following were highlighted in his talk: 2 CP rewrite – ACRSI Task Force which Curt Houk, IA, led; IT Steering committee – Krystal Radar, TX is a part of; Counter Skills Training Task Force, represented by Samantha Garrison; PT Reclassification, chaired by Mark VanHoose; a work group is being formed to review the fact that COC is getting bypassed in Handbooks; Shared Management Task Force; and a Task Force to rewrite the National Convention handbook. Dennis encouraged anyone that may be interested in joining a Task Force or getting more involved by sitting on a committee to PLEASE let your Area Exec or Alt Area Exec know your interest. Dennis followed up by talking about workload. It is very important that you record your time accurately in Web T&A. Dennis touched on the benefit of the NASCOE lawyer. He re-iterated what Wes said about doing our jobs correctly and following the rules but if you need assistance with an issue in your office contact NASCOE so that you can be set up with the NASCOE attorney and to please not wait until the last minute. In closing Dennis reminded everyone of the importance of joining the PAC and also becoming a member of NAFEC as an associate member. His final statement was to personally invite everyone to come to MO for the 2017 national convention!!

Our day continued with Jackson Jones, MWA Alternate Exec. Jackson spoke on how to become a member of NASCOE and then how to become an active member. Jackson's talk focused on millennials and how their thought process is different from that of the majority of the current federal workforce. Jackson explained that millennials want to know what NASCOE is doing for them NOW – they do not care what NASCOE did years ago. This is very smart on their part and we need to be ready to explain these things to them quickly after they start working for FSA. Jackson encouraged everyone to ensure dues are being paid correctly every year and also to review membership roles yearly if not monthly.

After Jackson completed his talk Chris Hare came back to the podium and shared the following story analogy written by IL CED, Debbie Staley. This story can be found on the back page of this bulletin.

*(Continued on page 15)*



(Continued from page 14)

Next on the agenda were our guests from Washington DC, Chris Beyerhelm, Acting FSA Administrator and Brad Karmen, Acting Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs. Administrator Beyerhelm addressed the Rally first. Points of Administrator Beyerhelm's talk are as follows:

- Week 10 of transition to Trump Administration. Minimal policy changes. This happens every 4 to 8 years and we also survive. Reminded all to keep doing our job at the COF level and all will be good. Always reminded the group of the following: "don't believe everything that you hear or read. Be Patient."
- Rural America elected President Trump and FSA is the front line to rural America.
- FSA invested \$22 billion in rural America in 2016 (via various program payments).
- We must sell ourselves. We need to be excited about what we do.
- Hiring – good and bad. Before the freeze was put into place FSA was at 98.5% of their ceiling, which is the closest he has ever seen.
- New HR director Tom Mulhern. Mr. Mulhern is working hard on succession planning and on make employees feel valued.
- Workforce Engagement – Employee Viewpoint Survey – thank you for taking the time to complete. A few years ago FSA was the 174th best place to work and then we moved up to 74th place and now we are in 2nd place. Something awesome that came out of the Survey was Blazing Our Way to Rio. FSA has 10,000 employees nationwide and over 5000 employees took part in this event.
- Spoke of the Administrator Award. Mr. Beyerhelm is trying to boost this and make everyone aware that it is out there and urge everyone to nominate someone for this award annually.
- MPS1 contract going out MPS2 contract coming in. MPS2 has improved greatly. Machines will not all be the same for every office. Machines will be tailored for every office.
- IT - Great strides have been made in this area. No major issues for quite some time. We are now providing more bandwidth. Darren Ash does a great job understanding the impact a bad IT system has on our Agency.
- IT Steering Committee – next meeting coming soon. The committee is working on a refresh plan for equipment.
- How we discover there is a problem in the system is very old school. Darren Ash is putting together a Dashboard that would show you right away how the software is working so it could help alleviate some frustration.
- Bringing Handbooks up to date. Stay current by using the SharePoint site.
- One newsletter instead of multiple newsletters will be starting soon!
- Budget – 2016 budget was \$1.6 billion. 2017 Continuing Resolution stays the same as previous year but consider the fact we came into 2017 with \$30 million in debt. . Proposed 2017 budget lowers USDA by 21%. This is just a starting point – a lot will happen between now and the time the budget is completed. Hard decisions will need to be made. Until we know the 2017 budget we will need to slow down some current wants such as IT and hiring.
- Mr. Beyerhelm says he is committed to cash awards.

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

- Bridges to Opportunity (BTO) – congress kind of pushed this to get it out earlier. He hopes to see the positive it can bring. 1 million receipts have been issued this year. IT IS providing a benefit!!
- Mr. Beyerhelm closed with repeating the presentation he gave in DC for Women's History Month, earlier in March. It was a great presentation about the important women in Mr. Beyerhelm's life.

Up next on the Agenda was our second DC guest, Brad Karmen. Highlights of Mr. Karmen's presentation are as follows:

- Mr. Karmen started off by explaining to everyone that FSA is very valuable and important to USDA. There are not many layers between his office and the COF.
- They are working closely with Trump appointees. Our work continues no matter what!! FSA's work is not party labeled – it needs done no matter who is in office.
- Mr. Karmen stated that everyone is waiting for the day our new Secretary comes on board. There are several items they are ready to speak to the new Secretary about, some of those are:
  - CRP acreage cap; ARC/PLC yield info; and MPP – why do they have to pay and they get no money
- Mr. Karmen is aware that the IT budget is a major topic with many.

We then broke for lunch. Following lunch we heard from Ty Christiansen from JM Marketing. Ty reviewed some of the services that JM Marketing offers to NASCOE members. After Ty's presentation the Question and Answer portion of the day started with Chris Beyerhelm, Brad Karmen, Wes Daniels and Dennis Ray. Q&A notes are provided by Jackson Jones, MWA Alternate Exec.

**Q: MPS II Some offices are only going to have one multi-functional machine we believe we need two printers in case one breaks down. Black and White printers appear to have higher initial cost and costs us as much money or more than a color machine.**

*Chris:* When you start testing and putting them in action you find out about the glitches. There will be changes. We have more printers than people at FSA. Part of it is that we are not going to have a printer at every desk.

*Wes:* if you are having major issues, they are having issues with no printer working in an office and wrote a letter to MGT and got NASCOE involved, Buddy Bice got involved and got that situation taken care of. When Buddy got involved it got done and fixed. We were really appreciative of his involvement.

*Chris:* remember my talk about administrative awards and Buddy Bice.

**Q: Just a comment, we are one of the offices with the Xerox, it will come on the copier display that we are out of ink, and we call the company and there is a 10 to 12-day lead time to get replacement supplies. That is a big problem when we are doing certification and can't print.**

**Q: 2014 farm bill procedures were delayed in coming out. With NAP, we were offering buy up. We had a producer that purchases buy up for quality, had a loss and we figured**

(Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16)

**the payment, the new handbook was released and in the new handbook we realized that he was caught in a loophole. My producer asked for relief, it has been sitting in DAFFP, can you sign the bottom of that request.**

*Brad:* I won't look at anything till my staff looks at it first, as soon as I get back I will look at it.

*NASCOE member:* We owe this producer 954.00 and I would like to pay him. I have lots of names on emails today I have a face. Will you look at it?

*Brad:* bring it to me.

*Brad:* Discussion on late handbooks, we had the LFP program out in 60 days. A lot of times we get unrealistic demands on us, we will get the handbook on us such and such date, we are told to get the handbook out first. When we are told to get the program out, and we get it out sometimes without the hand book.

I told you I would give you an example of an unrealistic deadline, I just got an email this morning and had 70 minutes to get a report to the Whitehouse on the wildfire loss. We beat the deadline today by 2 minutes.

*Wes:* we may have not gotten the handbook timely but we had a lot of good notices and had a lot of good information timely, we had to correct some stuff after the fact, but to implement the program and get it done when we did we did pretty good. WE had more face to face training than we had in the last few years.

*Brad:* with popcorn yields you do have a valid point it did take us a while.

**Q: Over the years we see the COC role reduced and the authority lessened, and we have seen a few things like CRP-1 approval taken away from COC and given to the CED, we have now seen that with the organic program with authority not given to the COC. It is nice to have the COC how does the no see the COC and why are these changes coming up**

*Brad:* I have had this conversation with Wes not even 1 1/2 hour ago. No deliberate attempt to diminish COC authority. We can take a look at these and put those back in when we need to. We looked at the organic but if there are some issues we can take a look at it again

**Q: Since we are in a hiring slush, we have 3 COTS that have been done with training since last fall, now they are just in a county office. Can we request a waiver to get them in an office?**

*Chris:* we are expecting when April 22 comes around the Hiring slush will be over and we expect that promotions and reassignments will be allowed. If you send in a waiver by the time it would be too late.

**Q: Regarding COC roles and responsibilities can you expand what you see in the supervisory role with COC CED?**

*Chris:* I don't see any change in that it is not up to discussion as far as I know. I don't anticipate any change.

**Q: I have a PT, the CED screwed up and missed a promotion and was 8 months late, we realize what happened, did the promotion to go to from 5 to a 6. With producers, we give them a chance to appeal. For our staff, there is no avenue for appeal. In some time in the future, and if something happens and we happen to miss a date, hopefully we can**

(Continued on page 18)



(Continued from page 17)

**go back and make it right. Because this 8-month delay will affect every promotion from now on.**

*Chris:* yeah, I agree with you not sure if there is a law, I will check in to it.

**Q: Crop insurance, a new producer, comes in wishes to get crop insurance, have to have done a 1026 by June the year prior, if you miss it you are going to miss your subsidy. Most of those producers are our youth, if they miss that day by two days they are getting hammered and they are the ones that can't afford it. There is not real reason for that June 1st date.**

*Brad:* Yes, this was written into the farm bill RMA customers have to be in compliance with sod/swamp. This department spent more outreach to reach customers who have crop insurance. We did that, CO's did that, RMA did that, some customers still complained that they missed the date. It came up just last week, par 340 B 6cp, there are options for relief that can come up to Brad, there have only been 50 maybe 100 and we have approved 99% of them.

**Q: RMA is just saying we are not going to do anything with them.**

**Q: Leasing security assessment, one of the findings has to do with the structure, they are recommending we have an alarm system, panic buttons, and some of these pieces of equipment are quite large and recommended it be put into our next lease. Is the landlord going to be charged with doing this or is the agency going to do something? Or how much is going to be the responsibility of the landlord?**

*Chris:* I'm not sure I will have to check. First time I have heard about panic buttons. If that is the case I would think that the land lord would pay for it and we would be charged for it too. Most people are not thinking that FSA is not a big sky scraper where there are thousands of people, ill check into it some more.

**Q: I went through the same review, they considered us a high crime area, they recommended we have a fence around our area.**

*Chris:* that was the county where I got my start, I can't believe that is a high crime area.

**Q: Dairy, authorities, I was wondering why it was such a disaster, I had 1300 dairies, I really took the heat. I said since the beginning, all they had to do is consider the producers who feed their own corn. If they would put a floor under the price of corn it would have been a much better program. Is that something that can be done.**

*Brad:* Congress would have to do that. If you look at the language there are a lot of words for MPP, if you boil it down it is a payment formula, it is basically a math formula and the sec Ag has no authority to deviate. At the 11th hour of the farm bill they had to cut the benefits the proponents said that if they would restore what they initially wanted they would like it a lot better. If I name off three or four things that everyone is asking for it would cost an additional 4 billion or 5 billion.

**Q: Why are neglecting our internal software, like the 681-1 we are doing it manually while spending so much money on BTO, not that we want to put BTO on the back burner, but we need to take care of our internal software. ACRSI, some of our software has glitches and we have to go back and fix it.**

(Continued on page 19)

(Continued from page 18)

*Chris:* We literally had a meeting a month ago, there are different branches of IT we literally had to go in and say what is a priority and what is not, due to lack of funding, that is what that steering committee is for, Whether it is BTO or whatever something has to go. Some of the things we think would be an easy fix takes 40 hours and thousands of dollars, we have to figure out what our priorities are we had a \$100 million in wants and got \$25 million to spend. .

**Q: We recently got a response to stop using Ask FSA we can't get an answer from our STO so what are we supposed to do?**

*Brad:* So, I will talk to my staff when I get back, we obviously need to get you folks answers, we have DAFP calls, we have Ask FSA, get me the email from your STO and I'll get you an answer.

*Chris:* we have 12,000 employees, From the national office, down to SEDs down to DD's and they are supposed to tell COF's but sometimes it gets lost, if that is happening in your state, let us know we will talk to DAFO and we will remind them of their responsibilities. I was just telling leadership yesterday that even though I tell the 100 people in this room we haven't told everyone.

**Q: We have 24 hours to respond to producers by our PP but why don't STO's have that same responsibility. Before the internet, we had snail mail and handbooks, now we have 30 avenues of information. How do we streamline our information?**

*Chris:* Great points, we are going to try to do one newsletter. We literally get orders that you will get that program by this date, we will do better.

**Q: Does IT receive training when we get like a new phone system how to install, service. I have not been able to send a fax from my computer for 6 months. They have taken control of my computer for 3 hours at a time and my fax to mail was still not fixed. They did an upgrade of our phones I set up my voicemail and I can't get in to it. We have to go to continuous training, does our IT have to go to training so we are not dead in the water.**

*Chris:* First answer is our IT system is really about 5 systems, we have a tendency to lump it all together. Yes, they are supposed to have training. I find we have people problem a lot of the times, I think you are having a people problem. Email me and give me the information, and we will take care of it. Darren Ash has created a wonderful relationship that we take responsibilities.

We expect great customers and I tell my direct reports that we expect great customer service to our internal customers. If someone is calling you with a problem, then we need to get with them ASAP.

*Brad:* if I respond to all the emails I get then I wouldn't be getting my other duties done. So, I have to triage.

**Q: Employee has been acting, was not upgraded to a 9 like she was supposed to, DD sent in the form, but was rejected because of the freeze.**

(Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

*Chris:* Without the details, I can't do it but it makes sense to me that we could do that, if you can send that information to me if it was before the freeze we should go back and get that done make that right.

*Wes:* If you are not getting answers from your STO, you can send them through us brad and Steve are pretty good to get back to us, I know Steve and some of his staff have been pretty good to get answers.

*Chris:* some of the emails we get look like it took them 15 minutes to type. We need to streamline our questions, think about how we work a little smarter. Example when you buy something from the store it has small directions on it. We should use that as an example.

**Q: We have the exact same case about the RMA 1026 customer my staff and I feel really terrible. My case he canceled his policy. In some ways, it was a hardship he was in a bad truck wreck. If the SED's could bundle these up and send them up.**

*Chris:* breaking news security reviews, chief security offices, someone got over zealous these are options, if some office thought we needed a panic button we could but it isn't required

**Q: MPSII, do we have to use a link pass card to make photocopies?**

*Chris:* not sure but I believe the answer is no.

**Q: We are in a C/R till 4/28 just wondering what Hunter Moorhead thinks about where we think we are going to land for 17 going into 18.**

*Wes:* until the committee brings it out for a vote, no one can predict what is going to happen. Everyone is worried about the sec Ag. HM told us almost daily that he thinks we are going to be in good shape, we just need to do a good job educating, like MGT is doing. When you look at the Farm Bill talks even the media is saying that FSA is doing a good job with the programs, we are being a recognized we think that will have an impact in the budget debate. We think that there will be cuts, but we will certainly do all we can do to tell our story. We will be on A/L to go to the hill next week, but we need to go into the process.

*Chris:* there will be a notice come out related to ARS, it doesn't measure the work we don't do or the work we do past our tour of duty. As supervisors, we are not supposed to be encouraging our employees to work past our tour of duty. I had some folks run some reports. There are a whole ton of folks logging way more hours than they are activity. Notice is going to say 'you got to stop doing that'. You are recognizing you are allowing people to work past their tour of duty. I get it but we got to stop doing that - having a record of it. We have gone to the Hill 3 years in a row asking for more help. They are saying that we are not getting complaints - you all are getting stuff done. Things are not going to get done till people start complaining.

**Q: My comment to my staff is there is no more free time, it has hurt us in the past. Where does leadership put the priorities? And that is where the answers are going to have to come from. OPM has now updated RIF program but we have not been hearing anything from leadership. We need to hear from leadership more.**

*Wes:* we have sent two reports out through the database saying be concerned, but don't panic, since the president's request. We will continue to send out updates if there are changes. We just don't know what will happen. We have no idea how congress is going to vote or move. We

(Continued on page 21)



(Continued from page 20)

have limited somewhat to help control the panic. An employee had worked 32 years, and has worried for that entire time about RIF's and cuts and his advice was keep working and one day you will be eligible to retire too. Every day I have more work to do than I can shake a stick to do. We were worried about work do you all have enough to do. Be proud of who we are. We are important. We sometimes do not want to admit it but we put a lot of money in rural America. And we work our tails off. I don't think we are anywhere near close to panic.

*Chris:* USDA 21% cut FSA 10% they have recognized FSA Is important.

**Q: I get more done when the door is closed, how do we handle that? Comp time, if I don't stay late and go home I will be further behind tomorrow.**

*Chris:* only suggestion I have, maybe take turns having an office shut day, where one employee can just turn a blind eye to everything else going on in the office for their day.

*Wes:* Chris Hare is chairing a task force, and if you can send him an email reminding him of that.

Following the Q&A session, OASCOE President Charlene Stone introduced the OASCOE Board and all OASCOE committee chairs. Dennis Stryker – Treasurer and CED Director: Michael Strode – 1st VP and CED Director: Sandy Wright – 2nd VP and PT Director: Amy Morman – Secretary and PT Director: Tina Karr – Benefits chair: Kathy Balbaugh – Awards: Annette Purkey – Membership: Mark Van Hoose – Legislative: Michelle Stahl – Programs: Kelly Durbin – Scholarships: Director: Mandy Hull – Emblems: John Gaynor – NAFEC and CED Director: Ashley McCurdy – PT Director: Jill Ritchie – CED Director: Marie Marty – CED Director.

Next on the agenda was Kay Lumsden – MWA Legislative Chair and PAC coordinator. Kay spoke about the email that will be coming out to all State Presidents and Leg chairs asking for info on local legislators. Please complete that and get it back to Kay as quickly as possible. PAC – MWA has 181 PAC contributors. We need to grow this number so we can grow our PAC.

Jim Zumbrink was then introduced as a representative for NAFEC. Jim encouraged everyone to become an associate member of NAFEC. He was excited to share that in January and February NAFEC picked up 100 new members!

Ruthie Ritchie – retired OASCOE member and active member in RASCOE. Ruthie introduced a video on RASCOE that was recently put together and encouraged everyone to become a RASCOE member once they become retired.

With closing remarks for the day Chris Hare pointed out that there are 2500 FSA employees in the MWA and 2000 of those employees are NASCOE members. A motion to adjourn for the day was made by Judy Dameron and seconded by Jennifer Comer. All were in favor and the motion passed.

The MWA Rally was reconvened on Saturday, April 1 2017 at the Marriott at the University of Dayton. Chris Hare, MWA Exec started out the morning by re-introducing the MWA chairpersons and thanking them for their time and dedication.

(Continued on page 22)

*(Continued from page 21)*

The Awards presentation was next on the Agenda. MWA Awards were as follows:

Distinguished Service to FSA and Agriculture was presented to Steve Abbas, Iowa. Steve was nominated by Mary Roberts.

Distinguished Service to Community was presented to Nicki Miranowski, Minnesota. Nicki was nominated by Liz Ludwig.

Distinguished Service to NASCOE was presented to Kay Lumsden, Michigan. Kay was nominated by Rose Marie Gallagher.

Ohio Awards were presented to the following:

Distinguished Service to FSA and Ag was presented to Anita Green, Auglaize County. Anita was nominated by Bonnie Greve.

Distinguished Service to Community was presented to Sandy Wright, Brown/Clermont County. Sandy was nominated by Denise Simpson.

Distinguished Service to NASCOE was presented to Shelly Odenkirk, Wayne County. Shelly was nominated by Charlene Stone.

Scholarships were awarded for both the MWA and Ohio. MWA scholarship award winners were:

Claire Eggerman, Traditional scholarship \$1500

Jessica Brough, Ohio – Member Continuing Ed Scholarship \$250

Makenzie Thorp, Ohio – Open Continuing Ed Scholarship \$250

Lane Wolfe, Missouri (to be judged at National

Jacob Feldman, Associate (to be judged at National)

After Scholarships were handed out the Missouri delegation made a presentation for this year's National NASCOE convention.

Missouri's presentation was followed up by Presidents Reports, and they are as follows:

IL – Debbie Staley

IN – Dawn Hummel on behalf of Jamie Garriott  
182 Full time members, 6 associate

IA – Jennifer Comer

IA started a Director – At – Large position. IA has 9 districts and each district has 1 PT director and one CED director the odd number districts elect 2 at-large directors and the even number districts elect 2 at-large directors. This is new for them and they are hoping for good results. IA will be hosting the 2018 MWA Rally!

MI – Benita Meekoff

72% membership and their convention is coming up on April 30

*(Continued on page 23)*

(Continued from page 22)

**MN - Kayla Mattson**

MN is sitting at 85-90% membership. They have made arrangements with STO to that STO puts out a memo for every new hire so that it is easier for MNASCOE to keep track of new employees.

**MO - Jared Singer**

MO is staying very busy with 2017 NASCOE national convention at this time.

**OH - Charlene Stone**

90% membership

**WI - Jake Brouget**

WI is currently very low on membership. They are working hard at correcting that. April 21 is there state convention.

Committee Reports followed State Presidents reports and they are as follows:

**Awards** – Kathy Balbaugh reported that MWA received 20 nominations for DSA awards. This was up from 11 in 2016. She challenges every state to have at least 1 nomination in each category for 2018.

**Benefits** – Jon Williams was unable to attend the Rally but passed along some information to Chris Hare. Chris reported that Dillard's regional or area retirement trainings have been a big hit with the states that have done them. They have received very positive feedback. There is some talk going on about a NASCOE credit card that would benefit NASCOE and possibly its members. Still in the works!!

**Scholarships** – Charlene Stone reported that a total of 39 applications were received for 2017 scholarships. This year's process was streamlined and seemed to work very well.

**Emblems** – Tina Young presented that Emblems sold over \$750 at the Rally!! She reminded everyone that 8% of sales goes back to NASCOE scholarship fund.

**Legislative** – Kay Lumsden referred to her talk the previous day for most all Leg news. She encouraged everyone to know their Legislators and to build a rapport with them and she also encouraged everyone to join the PAC and reiterated how important it really is to FSA.

**Membership** – Leeann Oltmanns reported that there are 35 offices in the MWA with 0 membership. She set a goal to get that number down to 25 by 2018.

**Negotiations** – Sarah Bateson was unable to attend the MWA Rally but reported through Chris Hare that she was getting ready for Negotiations next week.

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

**Programs** – Jamie Garriott was unable to attend the MWA Rally but reported via Chris Hare. 102 submissions nationwide for 2016 and 52 of those came from the MWA!! Jamie challenges each state to submit at least 10 items through Program submission.

**Publicity** – Teresa Holmquist shared a Power Point on how to “Follow” NASCOE when you visit the nascoe.org website so that everyone can stay “in the know”. Teresa presented some information on a MWA website. This website would allow each MWA state to have a page on the website so that states would not have to create their own website. This website would use WordPress and it is very easy to use.

**NAFEC** – Mary Roberts presented numbers on how states line up with NAFEC associate members. IA – 77; IL – 67; IN – 12; MI – 18; MN – 13; OH – 70; WI – 20 and MO – 31. Mary also reported that JM Marketing does all of our NAFEC work for free. She also reminded everyone that associate member dues are \$20 / year (if you write a single check for the year) or you can complete a 444 and it will be \$26 / year (no less than \$1 can be deducted via a 444).

Judy Dameron, IA moved to accept all Committee Reports and Tony Augustine, IL seconded the motion. Everyone was in favor and the motion passed.

Following the Committee Reports Candidacy Announcements were received. Announcement for NASCOE President was made by current NASCOE VP Dennis Ray, MO. Announcement for NASCOE VP was made by Curt Houk for Brandon Wilson, KS. Brandon was unable to make it to the MWA Rally at the last minute. Announcement for NASCOE Secretary was made by Tammy Eibey, IA. Announcement for NASCOE Treasurer was made by Curt Houk, IA. Announcement for MWA Executive Director was made by Chris Hare. Announcement for MWA Alternate Executive Director was made by Jackson Jones, MO.

This concluded the 2017 MWA Rally. Adjournment was motioned by Debbie Staley, IL and seconded by Kayla Mattson, MN. All were in favor and motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charlene Stone, OASCOE President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amy Morman, OASCOE Secretary





## NAFEC

**Mary Roberts, Iowa**

[lazydaneacres@gmail.com](mailto:lazydaneacres@gmail.com)

The MWA has lots of opportunity to grow our NAFEC membership, so as you make plans for your association for the coming year don't forget about the resources that are continually being made/updated to help aid you in those efforts. Remember that growing our associate membership is just as important as our increasing our regular membership. Here are a few of those resources and tools/ideas that have helped develop some states.



- Work with your SED to get an appointed person to discuss NAFEC at your COC orientation training.
- Utilize Power Point Presentation with your COC at a monthly meeting or orientation training. If you haven't already done so, please share at your next meeting.
- Administrator's welcome message that can help be an ice breaker for NAFEC discussions.
- Conference calls coordinated by Area NAFEC chair and Area Exec to answer any NAFEC questions and assist with starting the discussion about NAFEC and its benefits.
- Educate your membership the relevance and importance of NAFEC!
- Be prepared with application and 444 to signup COC members and employees.

As Billy Denison, National NAFEC Chair stated in his pre-negotiation meeting response "Our County Committees bring a vitally important perspective to the many conversations we have with management. They have been elected by their neighboring farmers and ranchers to represent them in FSA policies and matters, to select and supervise the CED, and many times, NAFEC is able to assist those COC members with positive and/or quicker changes. As we begin seeing new appointments of SED's, State Committee's, and at FSA's headquarters over the next several months, it will be very important for COC members to "be at the table", to start establishing those necessary relationships. NAFEC is in a great position to help COC's do that, but our COC's will only hear about NAFEC, and what they can do with and for them, if WE each do our part in getting them information about NAFEC."

Your NAFEC leadership has started out this year working with Management to ensure that issues affecting the structure, strength and integrity of the COC system of governing remains strong, intact and continues to grow. NAFEC leadership had the opportunity to attend the NASCOE Pre-Negotiation meeting held in Alexandria, VA, January 14-15 of this year. NASCOE's NAFEC committee chair, Billy Denison was in attendance to bring current issues forward to Management and to make sure that the concerns of the COC and NAFEC membership are included in the negotiations. Since returning from the January Pre-Negotiation meeting the NASCOE NAFEC Committee has been actively at work assisting NAFEC in the following areas:

- Working with JM Marketing to update NAFEC's web-site with all of the updated documents, posting letters, and keeping the website current with accurate resources and information.
- Assisting NAFEC with articles and information for their upcoming newsletter.
- NAFEC Membership Drive – In December & January NASCOE's NAFEC Committee were able to update and distribute various NAFEC documents to the states in order to get the information down to the COC members.

There has been a lot of work put into NAFEC/NASCOE relationship and want to thank those leaders that took active roles in developing NAFEC membership within their states. I look forward to hearing any

*(Continued on page 26)*

(Continued from page 25)

new ideas regarding growing membership as well as answering any questions you may have. If you have questions or need any assistance with a plan please don't hesitate to drop me an email at [showangus@yahoo.com](mailto:showangus@yahoo.com). Also, use the NAFEC website as a tool in your journey and I encourage state presidents to appoint a State NAFEC chair if you haven't already. Thank you to all states who currently have someone appointed. NAFEC has lots of opportunities for their members, such as JM Marketing products, Scholarship opportunities, and endless networking.

In closing, thank you for supporting NAFEC and I look forward to working with you in the future. A special thanks to Chris Hare, Jackson Jones, and Billy Denison and our NASCOE officers for their leadership and passion for agriculture and NAFEC.

Respectfully,

Mary Roberts  
NASCOE's MWA NAFEC Chair



### ***Website tip: Negotiations***

Do you have an item that you would like to submit for consideration for negotiation with management? Submissions can be made at any time using NASCOE's simple to use online submission tool.

Visit <http://nascoe.org/forms-downloads/negotiations-submission/>

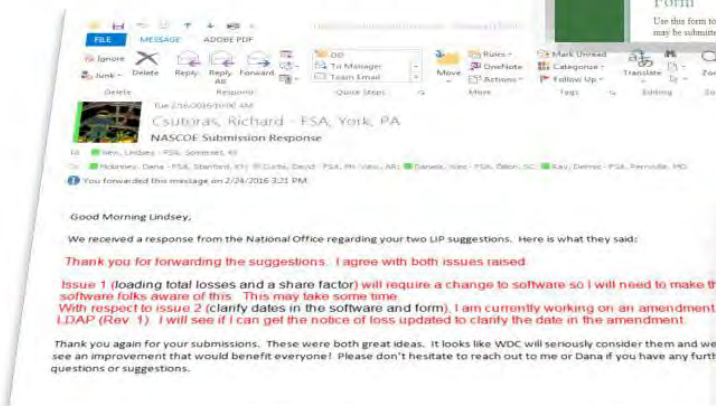


## NASCOE can take your PROGRAM EFFICIENCY SUGGESTIONS directly to the National Specialists!

Have a solution to a program or software problem or inefficiency?

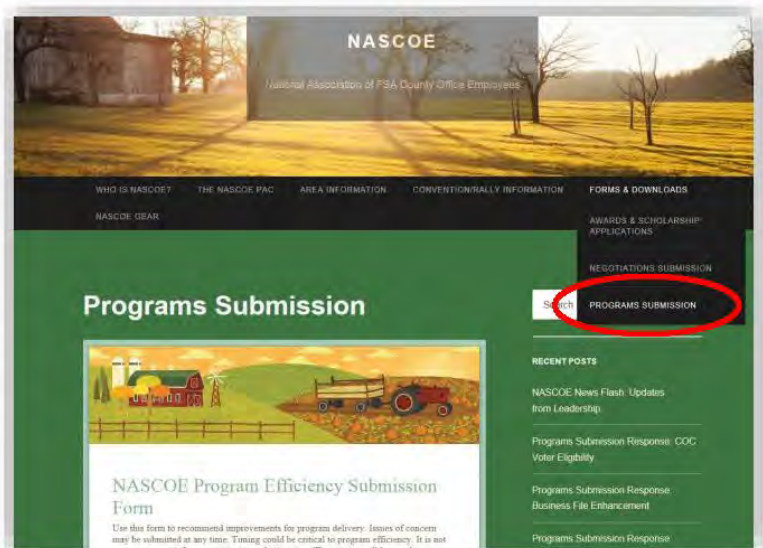
**1** Visit [nascoe.org](http://nascoe.org) and submit your idea through the Program Efficiency Submission Form.

**2** A state, area, or national programs chairperson may contact you for further clarification of the problem/solution, and will keep you informed of their communication with WDC!



**3** Once the National Programs chair has consulted with the National Office, the response will be shared on the NASCOE website.

Programs suggestions can be submitted on work time and NASCOE has the ability to work on these ideas year-round, not just at negotiation time. Send in your ideas as soon as you think of them. NASCOE wants to see prompt results when it comes to your ideas for how we can improve the way we do business!





## Programs

Jamie Garriott, Indiana [jamieupdike@hotmail.com](mailto:jamieupdike@hotmail.com)

Program submissions are at record number so far, 53 for the year compared to a total of 94 last year. Of those 53, 19 have been returned with responses from DC, 6 saved for negotiations, and 10 not submitted. The MWA is leading the way in submissions so good job! Each person who submits a suggestion is getting an email from me acknowledging we received it.

Please make sure your committee information is up to date on the MWA contact info. I will be sending out an email to the area program chairs with a flyer on how to submit and other information. I am also working on a document that is compiling the submissions and answers I have received so far. I know these are posted on the National website; however having them all in one document can be useful. Once the MWA website is up and running they will be posted on there.

If there is something you would like me to do for your state please let me know.



Do you have an idea to  
make our jobs more efficient?

Submit your idea to:

<http://nascoe.org/forms-downloads/programs-submission/>

## MWA Rally and Conventions

### 2017 NASCOE Convention

August 2 - 5 St. Charles, Missouri

### 2018 MWA RALLY – IOWA

TENTATIVELY March 22-24, 2018

### 2018 NASCOE Convention

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

## Publicity

**Teresa Holmquist, Minnesota** [resarae@gmail.com](mailto:resarae@gmail.com)

As discussed on the January 25 conference call, a MWA state has approached MWA Exec Chris Hare regarding difficulty finding and keeping a state webmaster. The idea of each state having their own page on the MWA website that they could maintain has been researched and a proposal developed.

A Midwest Area Website is being designed to meet the following needs:

- A way to increase member engagement in association activities
- An easy way to keep members up-to-date with the most current NASCOE and state association information
- An easy-to-learn, easy-to-use website that can be personalized and updated by each state with their state association information and news, without the cost of purchasing their own website.

States were given the option to “buy-in” to the website. States that chose to “buy-in” will have a customized state page will have designated users that will be able to update information on their states page on the Midwest Area Website. The MWA Publicity Chair would provide training to State Association users.

States that choose to keep their own state website will still have a page on the website, but would not have the option to have a designated user and customized content. The page would include state leadership and committee chairs as well as a link to their current website. Changes to the state association pages would only be able to be made by the MWA Publicity Chair, Area Exec or Alternate Exec. Events held within the state would be advertised on the events page

The new Midwest Area Website will be found at the following address:  
[www.midwestnascoe.org](http://www.midwestnascoe.org) and is expected to be live in early July.



## NASCOE & Midwest Area State Websites



### Illinois

<http://www.iascoe.com/>

### Indiana

<http://www.indiananascoe.org/>

### Iowa

<http://iascoe.org/>

### Michigan

<http://www.mascoe1.org/>

### Minnesota

<http://www.mnascoe.org/>

### Missouri

<http://www.mascoe.org/>

### Ohio

<http://www.oascoe1.org/>

### Wisconsin

<http://www.wiwascoe.org/>

### Midwest Area

[www.midwestnascoe.org](http://www.midwestnascoe.org)

### NASCOE

<http://nascoe.org/>



# Home on the Riverbank Analogy

by Debbie Staley, IL IASCOE President

**Picture this: You purchased a quaint little home on the riverbank. You loved your home and most of the time the river would rise and fall without notice. However, one day your home is threatened by a flood and a team rushes to the aid to save, not only your home, but everyone that lives on that riverbank. There were many helping, i.e. Neighbors, community members, even strangers not from your area came to aid for all those who would be affected, and all the time, YOU choose to sit on the porch...admiring their hard work.**

**You, of course, are benefitting from their hard work even though YOU did not contribute to it.**

**Let's be honest, don't you want to be a part of the work and not a porch potato? Your home is like your career, the river rising and falling is much like our benefit issues that come up in Washington, some are noticed and, again, many are not.**

**NASCOE is much like the workers; there are many involved, some you know and many you do not know. Regardless, there is a team of workers putting in long hours, phone calls, many miles in travel and other ways to calm the waters or sandbag the issue and potentially work for something new in all of our interest.**

**The point here is we are ALL recipients of the hard work, big and small! Being a part of the work is good for you and good for NASCOE.**

## **Membership is the Strength of our Association!!**

**Benefits were never a given for our predecessors and as a member, you have the assurance that the state and national leadership and its members are constantly monitoring discussions that could affect the benefits that we currently value.**