



MIDWEST AREA BULLETIN

Volume 2, Bulletin 3

AREA EXECUTIVE

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ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE

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MWA COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2017-2018

Awards

Kathy Balbaugh, OH

Benefits

Jon Williams, WI

Emblems, Scholarships

Tina Young, MO

Legislative

Kay Lumsden, MI

Membership

LeAnn Oltmanns, IL

NAFEC

Mary Roberts, IA

Negotiations

Debbie Staley, IL

Programs

Jamie Garriott, IN

Publicity

Teresa Holmquist, MN

MWA Negotiations Consultant

Debbie Staley, Illinois gogodeb@hotmail.com



I was asked to represent the Midwest area as the negotiation consultant. What an honor and what a responsibility! This includes working with the NASCOE officers, going to Washington D. C., meeting with USDA Department heads, yes, the people who sign our Notices, and speaking on behalf of the employees of FSA. The negotiation team met, every item submitted was reviewed, discussed, researched, studied, and assigned, in order to select the most important and the best negotiable items.

First of all, let's put politics aside! I know, you're thinking, this is Washington D. C. where there are some sharp political divisions. However, we understand that negotiation is an essential skill in today's workplace. Our ability to negotiate effectively is vital to the success of our organization.

So, let me take you into the Williamsburg Room, inside the Whitten Building, where we sat around a beautiful table that has an awesome history all of its own. The meeting commences and the items that were slated for "negotiation" had been sent in to Management so that the departments they pertained to could read through them and have a chance to respond appropriately. We have those responses and the Negotiation Team spent one day meeting to review their responses, prior to our meeting with Management, to decide if the response would satisfy members or if we need to pursue it further.

We met with FSA Management; the Acting Administrator, DAFO, DAFP, OCIO, OBF, etc. Throughout our meetings, Management appeared willing to hear from the field. It was apparent that those NASCOE negotiators that preceded us had worked hard to pave the way for NASCOE and Management to come together and work toward resolutions. They understand that we can help them make our Agency a better place, because "we" are the front line of the FSA work place. They know that a retirement surge is coming, that Temps should have SCIMS access, and that our County Offices need staffed to implement our programs productively and service our producers efficiently. Secretary Perdue's vision for USDA is to be the most effective, most efficient, and the best managed department in the federal government.

We discussed the Leave Policy in the 17-PM, Para 161 G. However, the response we received from HRD was a little vague so it was decided that we see if they would expound on their answer a little further. Brad Karmen, Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, states that our negotiation

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request (i.e. NASCOE Position) is constructive and responsible. He believes it will be included in the change environment with the evolution of FPAC. This will be taken to the Business Center as part of the standardizing. Now, I know that seems like a bunch of mumbo-jumbo but in plain words it's a v-i-c-t-o-r-y for the employees. NASCOE will watch for this change.

There were several topics of negotiation and to go over all of them would take more time than you are willing to read over. The one topic I do want to touch on is CRP. CRP is a program that has developed into a monster since the development of MCM's! You know it, I know it and every CRP PT knows it! But when CRP came up in the negotiation meeting, the department staff wanted to know FROM US! What kind of flexibility could they give us in the FSA-848 process and what suggestions could we give them regarding the FSA-848's and acquiring the obligation information associated with a CRP contract. There were 3 CRP PT's in the room and each one of us had ideas to offer. Management recognizes that they have a valuable resource available to them. We could help them understand the end product, help them develop ways to get the information that they need but in ways that could simplify the process.

One of the 10 Commandments of Negotiation is "Never Forget this is an Ongoing Relationship". Even though you want to get as much as possible in negotiations, always behave in a professional manner. Your Negotiation Team followed the 10 Commandments, served membership with honor and continued to smooth out the path for those who follow!



Official Photo courtesy of the Office of the Deputy Administrator for Field Operations.

NASCOE Officers, Execs and Negotiations Team with FPAC Undersecretary Bill Northey

Wes Daniels (SC), NASCOE Past President; Debbie Staley (IL), MWA Negotiations Consultant; Linda Treese, Acting Deputy Administrator for Field Operations; Jay Goff (OK), Southwest Area Exec; Janae Prescott (ID), NWA Negotiations Consultant; Steve Peterson, Acting Administrator – Farm Service Agency; Jessi Colgrove (NE), Northwest Area Exec; Dennis Ray (MO), NASCOE President; Brandon Wilson (KS), NASCOE Vice-President; Bill Northey, USDA Under Secretary Farm Production and Conservation Mission Area; Curt Houk (IA), NASCOE Treasurer; Michelle Stahl (OH), NASCOE Programs Committee Chair; Richard Csutoras (PA), Northeast Area Exec; Tracy Wilson (OK), SWA Negotiations Consultant; Jessica Walls (WV), NEA Negotiations Consultant; Marcinda Kester (FL), NASCOE Secretary; Sabrina Conditt (AR), SEA Negotiations Consultant; Mike Mayfield (TN), Southeast Area Exec; and Chris Hare (IN), Midwest Area Exec.

MWA Executive

Chris Hare chrishare05@gmail.com

Leading the Way to an Even Better Midwest Area

Greetings Midwest Area! What a productive last month NASCOE has had! Your NASCOE Leadership has been working hard for its members! Starting off with our successful Midwest Area Rally in Des Moines, Iowa. I feel that the VTC call with Under Secretary, Bill Northey was flawless! A huge thanks to Jeff Tibbles and Randy Tillman for taking care of the IT and making this happen. Followed by another great Q & A with FSA's Acting Administrator, Steve Peterson. A big thank you to IASCOE for hosting the 2018 MWA Rally, to our Area Committee Chairs and their proxies (you know who you are), and to everyone that attended.



During the week of April 2, NASCOE's Executive Committee and Area Negotiations Consultants traveled to Washington D.C. for the 2018 Negotiations Meeting with Management. I hope you enjoyed reading through Debbie's Negotiations report. The Midwest Area was well represented and I was very impressed with all of the first timers who attended and presented to Management our negotiation items. I personally feel this is my favorite part of NASCOE. Being able to sit across the table and negotiate items face to face with management. Hey Midwest Area, D.C. gets it. They listen and they too feel our pain and frustrations as well. I was told by a few that we met with, this was some of their favorite things to do as well; speak, listen and negotiate with the field office employees.

At the Saturday morning MWA Rally business meeting, Jackson stated that the Post Rally bulletin will be more focused on state reports. Since Negotiations was a week after the Rally, I wanted to combine our Rally business, Negotiations update, and State reports in one bulletin. Please take the time and read this bulletin. One of the best things about this organization, is sharing ideas and using other state ideas to promote and support membership within another state. Your Post Rally MWA Committee reports are online. Please go to <http://midwestnascoe.org/> to review the hard work and great things your MWA Committee Chairs have been up to.

I have received many compliments in regard to our Saturday Leadership Break Out Session Jackson and I provided at the MWA Rally. It was suggested I broadcast this in a way that all members can read since everyone can benefit from this. So here we go:

Welcome to the 2018 MWA Rally Leadership Break Out Session.

As the MWA Executive, I have been contacted by many members in regard to issues they are having within their states and even their own offices. I have come to realize that the commonality of many of these issues is lack of respect, misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities, and even holding grudges. I find myself reminding members/ employees that we all deserve to a happy working environment. We are very lucky to have these jobs and benefits. No one should ever dread going to work. I also remind those who contact me that the requirements of PT position descriptions is different than those of a CED's position description and that co-workers, no matter if they are fellow PT's or a CED and PT; we need to respect each other, compromise, and work together.

During my tenure as the Midwest Area Executive, I have seen a lot of great things our membership has to offer. When I think about the strengths of our area, I think of the unity, the dedica-

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tion and hard work of everyone, the ideas of how each state delivers our message, and the passion. The passion for this organization is rewarding. Beyond words. When I look at the weaknesses of our area, I also think of the passion. It's funny how one of our greatest strengths is one of our greatest weaknesses. Sometimes we forget how strong our passion is for this organization. This strong passion can be perceived in ways that they were never meant to be. Whether you're a state officer, state committee chairperson, or a regular member, we are all leaders. I tend to ask myself "Are we working smarter, not harder? Are we giving our new officers, new board of directors, committee chairpersons, or even our new employees the information they need to do their respective duties? Are we being proactive rather than reactive?"

Another thing I have noticed as the Exec, is that each state has a divide. Whether its north/south, east/ west, or even northwest/southeast, as leaders we have to find a way to unite everyone to strengthen our organization. To date, there have been over, 4,200 Program Technicians who have attended the Program Technician Skills for Success Enhancing the Future, and over 2,000 Managers trained in the National Leadership Training- Influencing Excellence: Effective Leadership at FSA. Our national leadership has spent time and money to make the best of its employees. I have heard many of the techniques that employees are learning can be used not only at the office, but also in their personal lives, including NASCOE.

Let's face it, we are all human and we will never make everyone happy. We cannot change others, but we can change how we react to them. Through the Leadership Break Out Session at the MWA Rally and this bulletin, I want to cover a few items that hopefully can resolve the frustrations and divides within states (and even offices) and bring everyone back to the united front we are ... NASCOE and FSA.

Leadership:

Whether you realize it or not, you are always communicating. Whether it's verbal, non-verbal (body language), or written we have to keep in mind that if we are awake, then we are communicating. Respect each other. Listen to what others have to say. You might have a good idea, but maybe someone else's idea might be a better way of doing business. Give credit and accolades to those who deserve them.

Communication:

Lack of communication can cause uneasiness, frustration, and even anger. Good communication is the key to recruiting and maintaining membership. It's important to recruit new members. However, it is also important to keep current members informed and included as well. Our voice only gets stronger with more membership. At the MWA Rally, it was refreshing to listen to the reports of what each state was doing to communicate to members and nonmembers within their states. It was so refreshing I didn't really have to cover the communication portion of the Leadership Break Out session. Many states are already using email distribution lists, conference calls (using freeconferencecall.com or Google Hangouts), Facebook, e-news, and now the MWA Website. As soon as you have an association meeting, get your minutes to your members. Let them see what your state association is doing for its membership.

Training and Education:

When you have new officers, board of directors, or committee chairs take the time to train them. Review what the roles and responsibilities are for the positions. Many times, I hear of

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frustrated leaders because someone has taken a role in their state but they aren't as engaged as they should be.

At the MWA Rally Leadership Breakout Session, I handed out a packet of handbook references. These were common references I felt that all state associations needed to be made aware. Many phone calls and emails I have received in regard to how to handle certain situations revolve around these paragraphs. Please take the time to review these references. The packet contained:

- 16-AO Par. 111
- 27-PM Par. 453A
- 27-PM Par. 454
- 27-PM Par. 53
- 27-PM Exhibit 8

Delegation:

State Presidents are you effectively delegating and working with your Vice President's? Are you working toward a smooth transition when your term is over? Your state association is too large for one person to handle. Delegate to those around you. Empowering and engaging your officers, committee chairpersons, and others will strengthen your association.

Self-Analyze:

How many times have you had a great idea, but when it came to reality it didn't go as planned? When this happens to me, I find I would ask myself, "what did I do wrong"? "How could I have handled this better"? "How can I fix this"? When I make a mistake, I tend to self-analyze and then seek input, if needed, to make sure I don't make that same mistake again. It's ok to make mistakes. We are human. Apologize. Learn from them. Don't pass it off as someone else's fault... You're a leader, own it. Then, apply what you have learned and think about that prior to implementing the next plan.

As I sit here today and contemplate the last year and a half of my tenure as your MWA Executive, I realize that all the items I listed above, I might have known about before serving as the Exec, but I actually have learned or enhanced these abilities while being your Exec. Working with Jackson has been an honor. We have as much in common as we do in differences. I could not have asked for a better Alternate Executive. I truly cherish his respect. It was told to me after the rally, that "Jackson and I work really good together and set the tone for our area". While this makes me smile, I tribute this allowing our Committee Chairs and State Presidents to do their jobs, and to our communication between each other. We aren't afraid of being honest with each other. We aren't grudge holders. It's nice to know we share the same agenda. Jackson and I are here to serve you, our membership.

With that, I hope you take a few of these items or techniques and utilize them. Look forward to going to work and serving the American Farmer and supporting NASCOE. We are all in this together. I thank everyone for their support and dedication to NASCOE and keep on promoting our association to all of our non-members.

MWA Rally Notes

March 23 – 24, 2018

Des Moines, Iowa

The 2018 Midwest Area NASCOE Rally was held on March 23 and 24, 2018 at the Downtown Marriott in Des Moines Iowa. MWA Executive **Chris Hare** opened the session at 8:00AM. The presentation of colors we performed by the Beaverdale VFW Post 9127. Roll call was taken by **Jennifer Comer** and answered by eight states with 16 delegates present. Iowa State Executive Director, **Amanda De Jong** welcomed all attendees. Ms. De Jong stated she was honored to represent FSA and fellow SEDs in bestowing a round of “Thank Yous” to all that have been asked to do more with less through out the agency. The attendees were a testament to the commitment to FSA and Agriculture. After the welcome, the attendees were introduced via VTC to **Under Secretary Bill Northey**. Mr. Northey informed us of more details on the newly formed FPAC including how FSA, NRCS, and RMA will be brought together as one agency. The attendees were allowed time to have a question and answer session with Mr. Northey (see notes).

Next on the agenda was **Acting FSA Administrator Steve Peterson**. Mr. Peterson has been with FSA for 33 years he came from the Maryland State Office to Washington DC as a National Program Specialist. As a specialist, he wanted to learn how to implement the rules and regulations that Congress passes. In September, he was asked if he would be interested in interviewing for the Acting Chief of FSA, from there was appointed to the Acting Administrator of FSA. Mr. Peterson offered his appreciation to all FSA employees for their hard work and commitment to agriculture, the backbone of American culture.

Mr. Peterson gave additional information on FPAC. He reiterated the statement that is to “realign the mission areas”. Prior to May 2017, FSA was not with NRCS, we were under FFAS, Secretary Perdue recognized that we serve the same producers and felt it would make more business sense to align us under one mission area. He stressed that there will not be one agency leading the other, all agencies will keep their identities. The goal is to have the producers see continuity across the board. If leadership disagrees on an issue, there will be one “boss” to go to – Under Secretary Northey.

The Business Center will focus on mission delivery areas not related to rolling out programs. For example, bringing budget, HR, and IT together allows field office managers more freedom to do their jobs of managing programs. This will leverage the process to get the best from all worlds. How does it affect County Offices? It will have a bigger impact, employee wise on State Offices, Kansas City and WDC. These offices will work to combine resources. The core groups will stay in each respective agency and not have to move to do their jobs. However as attrition occurs, each position will be looked at to determine if the role could be combined or better served in a different location.

Mr. Peterson commented on hiring. In September FSA had a plan for hiring, however it was a number. The Secretary wanted a tool to better plan on how many employees were needed to do the work. A workload analysis task force was formed. That group met in WDC recently and presented a model that that not only allows numbers in regards to where the work is but a management tool. Critical hires were recently allowed, FSA came to the table with 500 and were allowed 150 (75% internal 25% external). The reason it was so low is that leadership wanted to make sure we filled a need and not just a position. Internals were hired to ensure work is getting done. External hires will be coming very soon.

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Other topics Mr. Peterson addressed:

- **Bi-Partisan budget, February 2018:** This will allow additional funding for disaster programs. Not limited to hurricanes and wildfires; removes cap for ELAP as well. It will also allow money for training for disaster programs. Also added additional funds for ad hoc disaster money for hurricane and wildfire assistance, the Secretary wants these programs implemented quickly and efficiently. Weeks not months!
- **MPP** – change the formula to lower the amount of premium producers pay. Provides a risk tool for producers. Producers will have to sign up again for 2017 but working behind the scenes to get a lot of work done before the producers have to come in to the offices.
- **Cotton** (seed) no longer a generic base. Will go back to 2014 to establish base, reallocate acres and pick a program.
- **2018 Farm Bill** – Congress is working diligently with departments to gather information and interact on technical advice in planning the new farm bill. Not certain it will get done in 2018. Currently looking at options for extensions for CRP and programs.
 - **CRP** – If the farm bill allows producers to sign up again, some groups want to increase the cap others want to keep it the same to allow row crop to become available for new and beginning farmers.
 - **ARCPLC** will be discussed and could possibly see some changes. He believes Congress will be more prescriptive to data that is used. Location of farms relative to benefits received could be discussed again.
 - **Disaster Programs** – not anticipating a lot of change, those were permanent programs in 2014 FB.
 - **FLP** – Loan limits may be increased, and probably should be but that takes funding so not sure it will happen.

Next on the agenda was **Michelle Motley** for the National Association of District Directors (NADD). Michelle informed the group that they had 190 members nationwide. Their current membership is at 92%. They continue to provide support for new DDs and collaborate with State Offices. NADD appreciates working together with NASCOE on policy and procedures and she commented on how successful we are when the boards work together. Some of the accomplishments that NADD and NASCOE have achieved are:

- Implementation of Key PTs
- National Leadership Training – over 1800 supervisors to date have been through training.
- Implementing joint meetings with WDC, this allows more voices at the table and more success when everyone works together.

Dennis Ray, NASCOE President was the next speaker. Dennis introduced the NASCOE leaders in the group, **Curt Houk**, NASCOE Treasurer, **Chris Hare**, MWA Exec, **Jackson Jones**, MWA Alt Exec, and **Teresa Holmquist**, NASCOE Publicity Chair. Dennis also thanked Iowa's **Patty Murray** for her work and support in HR. Dennis discussed the negotiation process and how it is important to build it at the local level. He encouraged members to meet with their SED and communicate regularly as it makes transitions and difficult situations so much easier. He also talked about effective communication and how important it is to share information with our members as quickly as possible. Encourage your state's members to sign up on the national

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database, this is the quickest way to get information. If you are hearing concerns or issues, it is important to communicate those back to NASCOE.

Dennis discussed the following highlights of the meeting he and VP **Brandon Wilson** had with WDC.

- **Workload Tool** – NASCOE had a seat at the table to work with Leadership. A lot of consideration in what to count and how to count items. That piece is done and now working on implementing it as a staffing model. The model needs to be available at the CO level, which is still being worked on with WDC. NASCOE will continue to monitor any potential office closings. Will ensure that they are closed because of workload and NOT circumstances.
- **Dedicated funding for COC meetings.** Currently budget is the same as TO money for COC meetings. Some states are reducing COC meetings to ensure money for TOs. NASCOE is wanting a separate budget fund to ensure there is money available if COC needs to meet.
- **PM 2983 Performance Work Plan memo.** There are parts of this memo that are very contradicting. There are extreme differences in the memo on how a rating is earned. Working with a competency work group to better define how a rating is earned with no arbitrary hold downs.

Jackson Jones, Midwest Area Alt Executive visited with attendees on a couple of topics:

- **The importance of the COC and NAFEC.** There is no other place in the federal government where federal programs are administered by locally elected committees. The COC environment offers an opportunity for a producer to appeal a decision handed down by a program official back to a locally elected board who knows the local conditions and understands what is going on in the community. The COC system is constantly being threatened by DC officials and some State Offices. NAFEC is the association formed to fight to protect the authorities given to our committees so we don't have to put ourselves in a situation where we are going up against bureaucracy putting our jobs at risk. Jackson encouraged all of us to be an associate member of NAFEC and encourage our COCs to be members.
- **Legislative.** The legislative committee is working to identify members of each congressional district that either had a relationship or was willing to form a relationship with their member of congress and or their two senators. Basically forming an "emergency contact list". This is something that was started, progress slowed, and then Chris picked back up. Basically it is a listing of key congressional contacts to use in case of an emergency. Jackson reminded all the State Presidents and Leg Chairs to work on these lists and keep them up to date. These contacts can become very key as the new farm bill is drafted as well and budget items discussed.

Dillard Financial Services Staff updated us on their programs and discussed the availability of benefits training they offer for each state. They invited **Tony Augustine** to give a report on working with them on a retirement analysis and planning. Tony sang the praises of Dillard's and how they have assisted him to better understand his benefits and continue to maximize TSP to be better prepared for Retirement.

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The area Legislative Committee gave us an update from Committee Chair Kay Lumsden who was unable to attend the rally. They updated the attendees on budget, the Farm Bill and the recent negotiation meeting. Tony Augustine discussed the PAC and reminded us how AMAZING the MWA really is!

A **NAFEC Report** was given by MWA NAFEC Chair **Mary Roberts** and NAFEC Secretary/Treasurer **Bob Braden**. They reminded us to keep the lines of communication open with our COCs and encourage them to become members of NAFEC. They have the voice that we do not have in WDC. The COC is essential to the mainstay of FSA and without them or the COC system we will no longer be "farmer run". NAFEC is working to get the COC funding as its own line item on the budget rather than using the same as temporary staffing funds. They have had some issues with membership and payroll deduction. If you have signed up to be a member and your payroll deduction is not being taken out, please check with your State Chair or Mary Roberts and she will get it taken care of. You may need to renew your membership.

RASCOE. Cindy Hall, National Treasurer reported on RASCOE. She informed the attendees that they were offering a 2 for 1 membership for all associate members that signed up this weekend. And reminded the group that any new retirees, your first year of membership is free. Cindy also reminded any attendees that if they have not forwarded pictures and information for any members that have passed from their states to please do so. She is working on the memorial slideshow for the NASCOE convention.

The rest of the afternoon was spent listening to Dillard Financial Services present to the attendees information on retirement benefits and how Dillard's can work with you to maximize your benefits. They always provide excellent information

The day was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm.

MWA Rally Saturday March 24, 2018

Saturday morning attendees reconvened at 8:30AM. There was inclement weather starting across the Midwest, so a few attendees chose to head out early and beat the weather. However, those left in attendance discussed several hot topics with MWA Executive **Chris Hare** and President **Dennis Ray**.

- Office realignments – *mostly happening in the State Offices. Works well in situations where the STO are in the same cities. Those that are not in the same city will take more effort and may not happen due to the hardships it would cause on employees and the costs associated with the moving employees doesn't make sense.*
- Leasing – *needs to be back in the hands of the COC. Concern was expressed over a lease that is expiring in August and nothing has even begun on renewal. This has been a negotiation item in the past and working with WDC to get it back on the list.*
- Workload and Staffing model. Workload has changed dramatically, what years are they looking at for current numbers? *Previous three years. Working to make sure the work load levels are available to the county, currently it is designed to stop at the SEDs. Needs to be at the county so that work can be properly distributed among employees. ARS also needs to have*

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better activity codes. We realize that but probably won't happen any time soon.

- *Is there any thought to giving credit to county offices that do work for other counties? Right now, the only way to get credit for time worked in another county is to be detailed to another county for more than 40 hours a week. We know it is happening, but finding a way to count it is difficult.*

A presentation was given by **Joel Foster**, SDASCOE on the 2018 National Convention being hosted by South Dakota. The 2018 NASCOE Convention will be held in Sioux Falls SD August 1 – 4, 2018. Joel reviewed all the planned activities and invited attendees to get their registrations made as soon as possible. Raffle tickets are available for \$20 each for cash prizes along with tickets for a quilt and SDASCOE is selling cookbooks.

State Presidents were asked to give a report of activities happening within their state associations.

Committee Reports were given at this time. (Reports may be found on the [MWA Website](#))

After the State and Committee reports, Chris asked if there were any candidate announcements. The following have announced their candidacy for 2018:

Jackson Jones, Midwest Area Executive
Mary Roberts, Midwest Area Alt Executive
Dennis Ray, NASCOE President

New business was discussed. All attendees were given the following reminders:

- Use personal emails when communicating about NASCOE. With each new administration our associations are scrutinized to ensure we are following policy and procedure.
- Communicate often and effectively with your membership, share information as soon as it becomes available.
- Engage with your SEDs and State Committees. Don't always take a problem, take solutions as well. "Work smarter, not harder".
- Encourage everyone to be involved!

MWA Executive called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by **Charlene Neukomm** (IL) and seconded by **Char Stone** (OH).

The 2019 MWA Rally will be hosted by Illinois.

Respectfully submitted;

Jennifer Comer, IASCOE



59th NASCOE CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

August 1-4, 2018

Ramkota Best Western, Sioux Falls, SD Telephone: (605)977-4501

<http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/groupSearch.do?groupId=6P3TJ4R5>

Name: _____ Guest: _____

Circle One: Delegate Member RASCOE NAFEC Honorary Member District Director Guest

First time attendee _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Please choose ALL EVENTS that you plan to attend—even if it is FREE!

Honorary Life Members and guests under 13 years of age are honored with FREE registration by using code (HLM or YOUTH) in the Total Due for registration. Your registration is essential so that we can be prepared for the correct number of attendees to each event.

DATES/TIMES	EVENT	COST PER PERSON	# ATTENDING	TOTAL \$ DUE
POSTMARKED BY JUNE 15, 2018	REGISTRATION	\$45		
POSTMARKED FROM JUNE 16 – JULY 15	REGISTRATION	\$55		
POSTMARKED AFTER JULY 15, 2018	REGISTRATION	\$65		
THURSDAY-ONE DAY ATTENDANCE Employees/Guest COC/STC/STO	REGISTRATION INCLUDES A BUFFET LUNCH (MUST REGISTER PRIOR TO JULY 15, 2018)	\$25		
WEDNESDAY, August 1 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	SDSU AG RESEARCH TOUR – BROOKINGS, SD INCLUDES LUNCH	\$40 adults \$20 kids (under13)		
WEDNESDAY, August 1 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM	USGS EROS CENTER – FIRE ENGINES, ETHANOL – INCLUDES LUNCH @ JL HARLEY DAVIDSON	\$40 (must be 18 for EROS)		
WEDNESDAY, August 1 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	HISTORIC DOWNTOWN MEAL ON YOUR OWN	\$25 \$10 kids (under 13)		
WEDNESDAY, August 1 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	GOLF TOURNAMENT- FEE INCLUDES GOLF, CART, LUNCH & TRANSPORTATION	\$50		
WEDNESDAY, Aug. 1 6:30 pm CASH BAR/MEAL	PIN TRADING (bring your State pins) PIZZA, DJ and DANCING	Free		
THURSDAY, August 2 - NOON	BUFFET LUNCH EXHIBIT HALL SANDWICH/SALAD/DESSERT BUFFET	\$15		
THURSDAY, August 2 - 6:30 PM	MEAL, SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION AND HYPNOTIST/MAGICIAN (10- 11:30)	Free		
FRIDAY, August 3 - NOON	RASCOE LUNCHEON	\$30		
FRIDAY, Aug. 3 NOON LUNCH	BUFFET LUNCH EXHIBIT HALL SANDWICH/SALAD/DESSERT BUFFET	\$15		
FRIDAY, August 3	FALLS PARK AND DOWNTOWN FIRST FRIDAY AT THE FALLS,	Admission is price of T-shirt or wrist band see below		

STARTING AT 5:00 pm	(order T-shirts or wrist bands at bottom)			
SATURDAY, August 4 5:00 pm – 6:00 pm	SOCIAL HOUR	CASH BAR		
SATURDAY, August 4 6:30 pm – MIDNIGHT	NASCOE BANQUET AND AWARDS WITH 80'S BAND AND DANCING	\$35		

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

Youth Name(s): _____ Ages: _____

Meals for noon and evening along with snacks, games, and price of outings are included in the price.

YOUTH ACTIVITY DATE/TIME	YOUTH ACTIVITY	COST PER PERSON	# ATTENDING	TOTAL \$ DUE
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 1 (4:00-10:00 pm)	Meet and greet activity at motel	\$5		
THURSDAY, AUG. 2 (8:00 am – 4:30 pm) Youth Room	Motel and Sertoma Butterfly House and Marine Cove and GFP Outdoor Park suitable for 5 & up	\$10		
THURSDAY, AUG. 2 (5:00 pm – 11:30 pm) Youth Room	Motel for activities, games and meal	\$5		
FRIDAY, AUG. 3 (8:00 am – 4:00 pm) Youth Room	Motel in AM and Washington Pavilion and Cinedome Theater suitable for age 5 & up	\$10		
FRIDAY, AUG. 3 (5-10pm)	Falls Park with Parents	\$15 under 13 (see above)		
SATURDAY, AUG. 4 (8:00 am – 4 pm) Youth Room	Motel Youth Room / Great Plains Zoo and Museum fun for all ages	\$10		
SATURDAY, AUG. 4 (5:00 pm – 12:00 am) Youth Room	Motel, fun and food	\$5		

PURCHASE YOUR 2018 NATIONAL CONVENTION T-SHIRT OR WRIST BAND FOR FRIDAY NIGHT MEAL AND FIRST FRIDAY NIGHT ENTERTAINMENT

Adult \$25 Quantity_____ Color_____ Size_____ Quantity_____ Color _____ Size_____ (S – 5XL)

YOUTH \$15 Quantity_____ Color_____ Size_____ Quantity_____ Color _____ Size_____ (S/Med/Lge)

Color – Heather Red (R)or Heather Blue (B)(true to size)

WRIST BANDS \$15 _____

Extra Shirts will not be available at registration. We will have extra wrist bands for last minute registrations.

2018 NASCOE NATIONAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION TOTAL

\$ _____

RETURN YOUR COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM AND CHECK PAYABLE TO:

SDASCOE send to SDASCOE/Jeanie Emmett, 205 6th Street, Brookings, SD 57006

INFORMATION NEEDED FOR THOSE ATTENDEES ARRIVING AT THE

SIOUX FALLS AIRPORT:

ARRIVAL DATE AND TIME: _____

AIRLINE/FLIGHT NUMBER: _____

NUMBER IN PARTY: _____

DEPARTURE DATE AND TIME: _____

If flight information is not available at the time of registration,

Please contact Nancy Gall - Cell 605-481-1696 (can receive text msg) when that information is determined.

QUESTIONS:

Becky Zirpel

flyingz@alliancecom.net

605.999.2290

Joel Foster

jrfoster@itcmilbank.com

605.949.2303

MWA Alternate Executive

Jackson Jones, Missouri want2c_bass@hotmail.com

What's the state of your labor management relationship?

This has been the busiest convention season I have had since becoming active in NASCOE. I have had the pleasure of representing NASCOE at 4 different state conventions as well as the MWA Rally in Des Moines Iowa. Every convention is different because every state is unique in tradition, customs, and culture. But one thing I have made note of in each state is how amazing most of our state offices are, and how willing they are to participate alongside state associations.



It is imperative that our trade association has good working relationships with our state offices to ensure open dialog between employees and our state leaders. There are difficult situations, but we need to find common ground and fix the issues that are in everyone's best interest. Even though NASCOE primarily represents county office employees, NASCOE does indirectly work to protect the interest of state office employees as well. Without our producers, a strong safety net, robust footprint, and adequate front-line staff, state offices would be rendered obsolete.

In those rare cases where state office staff are not on the same page as NASCOE or the state affiliate, I would hope that we could at least still carry on an open dialog about the issues we do agree on. For the most part I believe most of our differences in ideology can be overcome by open and transparent negotiations and direct communication. Our association is about promoting the loyalty, service, courtesy, and effort of our employees, not creating an us versus them mentality. We are about promoting good sound ideas that make business sense and make ours a stronger agency into the future.

And to our state associations who are having difficulty in negotiating with our state offices, please take the time to examine your tactics. Make sure we are extending an olive branch, and that we are meeting our state office leaders well past the middle. Our intent should be to improve our employee experience and ensure the best possible customer service for our farmers and ranchers, as opposed to winning debates on principal alone.

Sometimes it is best to go to management with an offer before we have an ask. Trust is gained over time with positive experiences and lost immediately with poor judgement or even innocent missteps. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to gain trust than it is to lose, so consider your actions and statements carefully.

State leaders, of NASCOE and State Offices, please take stock of your labor management relationships and let's try to find as much common ground as possible building on the rich history we have of being the "can do" agency. Let's continue fostering productive relationships through loyalty, service, courtesy and effort.

Illinois

Debbie Staley, President

Illinois recently held our Annual Convention and Board Meeting in Springfield the 1st weekend in March.

We were excited to have the honorable Congressman Rodney Davis. He is the Representative for Illinois 13th Congressional District; he serves on the House Ag Committee.

We changed things up a little this year with regards to our Agenda. Our state has had several conventions where we have had extensive benefits training and then last year IASCOE and our State Office worked together to have Dillards come into Illinois and conduct a 4 hour benefits training for all of the employees statewide. We broke those meetings up into 3 areas of our State. So we opted to not have the benefits providers present at our convention this year but did make sure they had access to them during our convention.

We had a guest speaker come in this year and his focus on Leadership training and team building exercises. It was good, it was good to see membership laughing and I believe Chris came away with a new wake-up song for his morning alarm clock. We were also thankful for Brandon, our VP and Chris, our Area Exec speak at our convention. Something else we did to change things at our convention it to have the Committee Reports during the meeting so that our members can put a face with their Committee Chair and we felt it was important that the membership hear what is being done for them through our committees.

IL has around 92% membership and continue to work on getting our numbers up.

IL has been working on something very exciting....

We will be hosting the MWA Rally in 2019

It will be in Champaign, IL at the iHotel (March 14, 15 - 16, 2019).

2019 will be Illinois' 60th Convention! Chris, Jackson and myself will be working on the Agenda. (Or at least Chris until he retires, will help on it.)



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/>](http://nascoe.org/forms-downloads/negotiations-submission/)

Indiana

Stacy Helbert, President

The Indiana executive board and board of directors are making many positive changes for IASCOE. We are currently working on amending our bylaws and standing rules to ensure updates have been added to provide clarification and to revise outdated items. We are also working on creating a mutually beneficial Labor Management Agreement to take to our new State Committee. Indiana is very excited to format the new website to meet our needs. We are also looking forward to our convention on April 27th at the Farmstead Inn & Conference Center in Shipshewana, IN.



Jamie Garriott (IASCOE past president) is heading up our newly formed convention committee. Indiana has made the decision, and we would like to announce a bid for the 2021 NASCOE Convention! The convention committee is beginning to look at potential locations and is currently working on fundraising ideas (including a cook book). Our potential ideas so far are Fair Oaks Dairy and Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Indiana has decided to go forward with co-chairs (representing the north & south) for membership as we feel we can make better connections with new employees this way. Indiana has 181 members and 5 associate members. We are currently working on updating our information for the National Membership Award. The state feels we need to be more proactive in getting more associate members, and getting retiree information timely for the potential for NASCOE lifetime membership candidates.

Indiana is currently working to get more legislative contacts and trying to get face-to-face meetings with the representative's agricultural contact in each office.

Indiana received 5 eligible scholarship applications, 2 Traditional and 3 Continuing Education applications. Alexandra Thurnall, Continuing Education recipient of the \$1000 scholarship and Cacy Zeller, Continuing Education recipient of the \$500 scholarship. We also received 1 award nomination for service to agriculture and are reaching out to our members to keep us informed on sick leave awards for employees. To encourage emblem sales we have provided flyers to for our PT skills training meetings.

The current concerns for the state are: FPAC transition, hiring freeze (critical hires needed), 2018 Farm Bill, furlough issues (in newer employee offices), management training (for PT-in-charge transition to CED employees), AGI process confusion, multi-state UCC filing concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy Helbert

IASCOE President

Iowa

Jennifer Comer, Past President

Membership! Iowa is launching a membership incentive program for the 2018 year. We will be offering a one year new member reimbursement for their first year of membership if they sign up with an FSA-444. We have membership co-chairs beginning with the 2018-2019 year and have divided the state in half. This will hopefully lighten the load on the membership chairs. We will also focus on retaining current members.



We have already had good communication with our SED and will work to continue building that relationship. The officers met with the State Committee to sign the Labor Management Agreement and had positive communication with them and look forward to building that relationship. One of the items that we will be stressing to the STO is the need for continued training and the need for new hire training. Staffing is always a concern like every other state but as we bring new people on board the need for training will increase. Not only will it increase program knowledge, work output, but will help new people take a stake in the agency and make them want to stay.

Iowa welcomes six new board members this year and is looking forward to new ideas and perspectives. We will continue to increase communication with our members and to offer support and information through the budget and farm bill talks.

Our newly elected officers are:

President, Jesse Wegner
Vice President, Angie Christian
Secretary, Wendi Denham
Treasurer, Judy Dameron

Respectively submitted,

Jennifer Comer, President



Michigan

Benita Meekhof, President

Greetings from the Midwest Area Step-up challenge winners!

In Michigan, we are so excited about our member increase through our membership drive this winter. I have to give credit to Diana Graef. She put so much work and energy into the drive. We coincided it with Michigan's PT skills training and I feel that PTs hearing testimonies from their peers about MASCOE was a big selling point for our organization. We gave a free polo shirt for every new member which boosted our emblem sales. We also entered each new member into a drawing for free registration to our annual convention on May 5th in Birch Run.

This past year has been tough for Michigan FSA. We endured an extensive national CRP review in a county office. This resulted in many of our offices being stretched even thinner with employees being called to assist. FSA employees were also drawn from other states to help in the efforts. With challenges, come adversities and learning experiences. Through this, Michigan was able to build its future leaders and develop new relationships.

As with the whole nation, our farmers are going through some tough times. Especially in Michigan, our dairy industry is being hit extremely hard. This extra burden felt by our farmers is weighing heavy on my heart and on others at Michigan FSA. Many of us have attended workshops hosted by Michigan State University on helping our producers who are struggling with rural stress. Our district directors have helped in getting the word out about these workshops and some have encouraged FSA employees to attend. It is one more thing we can do to help our farmers.

Respectfully submitted,

Benita Meekhof, MASCOE President



PROGRAMS

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

Submit your idea to:

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

Minnesota

Kayla Mattson, President

Minnesota is proud to report that our membership percentage is currently at 92% and we consistently stay between 89-93%. We have 2 counties that have no members. We will be gearing up our efforts to contact new employees once we are able to start hiring again. There have been numerous retirements over the past six months and are anticipating many more within this calendar year. To help with membership we now have 2 people helping with membership as co-chairs and they are doing fantastic things and are working very well with our board and members. An email distribution list continues to be utilized which allows us to quickly communicate with a fair amount of our members and we are continuing to work on obtaining more home email addresses from our members.



FLP is working through severe shortages and heavy workload and FP staff are doing what they can to provide assistance to the FLP teams across the state. There is an FLP workload team that is working together to determine where the workload is and where the staff are needed across the state. MNASCOE was asked to appoint one of our members to serve on the FLP workload team.

On March 22nd MNASCOE and MACS were invited to the STO to hold the annual negotiation session. This was a very positive day and we continue to see great support from our new SED, Joe Martin. His goals currently are to work on succession planning but also focusing on retention of the staff that we currently have on board, improvements to communication, and finding a better way to utilize the program management teams to assist the STO sections. The STO is aware of personnel issues in areas of the state and continue to stress the importance of following your Chain of Command and also the Informal/Formal Grievance Process. MNASCOE and MACS will continue to have bimonthly calls with the SED, Administrative Officer and Executive Officer which allows us to discuss questions or concerns of our members more timely.

In the fall of 2017, Dillard's provided 2 informational meetings for employees that were within 5 years of retirement. There were positive comments from the numerous attendees. The Acting SED authorized Administrative leave for those that attended these sessions. We are looking to hold future sessions with Dillard's for members that are early in their career and are hopeful that the STO will continue to authorize Administrative leave for these.

Minnesota offers a 1st timer contest for members that have never attended a state convention. In 2017 we had 17 MNASCOE 1st timers. We gave each of them a NASCOE pin and 7 of them (1 winner per district) received \$50 cash. We also offer 2 - \$500 scholarships for a 1st timer to go to the National Convention. In 2017 we did not have anyone enter for these scholarships so we are offering this again in 2018.

We have completed the PT Skills for Success training. We were allowed to hand out the Membership flier and also provided a flier to advertise Emblems. Due to the numerous training

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sessions and the location we were unable to offer special hospitality room, gift or treat. We also were not able to necessarily speak much about NASCOE other than what was in the prepared materials due to MACS and NASE not having the opportunity to be there to speak about their associations.

2018 Convention was held at Arrowwood Lodge at Brainerd Lakes in Baxter, MN on Friday, April 6th. Attendance was lower than usual but those in attendance were engaged and participated in the Q & A sessions with the SED, Administrative Officer, Executive Officer, FLP Chief and STO Section Chiefs. We had two 1st Timers in attendance and each were given \$50 cash for attending their first convention. We had special guest speakers, Dennis Ray and Chris Hare. Dennis and Chris gave updates from their recent trip to WDC and the negotiation sessions. Our members continue to share with us that they really enjoy meeting and hearing from NASCOE leadership. It truly shows Dennis' and Chris' dedication to NASCOE and to all of us. Prior to lunch Steve Dillard presented new information on TSP and retirement to the crowd and a BCBS representative was available for questions about their benefits. An awards luncheon was held and sick leave awards, DSA winners and the Scholarship was handed out as well as prizes from Dillard Financial Solutions. We heard committee updates from all of the committees of MNASCOE and also offered NAFEC Membership forms and PAC enrollment/increase forms. Results of the Election of the Board of Directors was announced and the Election of President and Vice President was held. Kayla Mattson was elected as President and Darlene Johnson was elected as Vice President – each being elected to a two year term. Next year's convention will be held in Alexandria, MN with a date and location to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kayla Mattson
MNASCOE President

NASCOE & Midwest Area State Websites



NASCOE

<http://nascoe.org/>

MWA-NASCOE

<http://midwestnascoe.org>

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio and Wisconsin
[\[statename\].midwestnascoe.org](http://[statename].midwestnascoe.org)

Iowa

<http://iascoe.org/>

Missouri

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

Missouri

Jared Singer, President

A report from Missouri has to start by mentioning the 2017 NASCOE Convention. We were proud to host our colleagues in the Show-Me state and hope everyone enjoyed their time in St. Charles. MASCOE received outstanding support from FSA staff from across Missouri, including our STO. We would not have been able to pull off hosting the Convention without everyone's enthusiastic support.

MASCOE restructured the Board of Directors in late 2017. This was to align MASCOE Districts to FSA Districts, which over the years had been reduced from 9 to 7. To ensure adequate representation 3 directors from each District were elected to the board; 1 CED, 1 PT, and one of either position.

The MASCOE Board is offering a stipend for a MASCOE member who has not previously attended NASCOE Convention to attend the 2018 Convention in Sioux Falls this August.

To show support for the Program Technician Skills for Success trainings, MASCOE has partnered with Missouri's farm loan employees association to provide refreshments during breaks at the trainings. This has been greatly appreciated by attendees, and has built a lot of good will between everyone involved.

MASCOE and Missouri's new SED, Richard Fordyce, have already fostered a positive rapport. He is supportive of employees and the employee associations. In fact, he joined as an Associate Member very shortly after coming on board. We look forward to a very productive dialogue with him, the STC, and all of Missouri FSA management.

The 2018 MASCOE Convention is coming up August 27 and 28 in New Haven, Mo.

In closing, I was to express my pride in MASCOE's Board of Directors. We have a great group of people representing Missouri FSA employees. With a diverse board of novice, intermediate, and seasoned members, we have a great balance in the group. There is a lot of enthusiasm, creativity, and professionalism in our Board, which leaves me confident in the future of our organization.

Respectfully submitted,

Jared Singer

MASCOE President

MWA Distinguished Service Award - Service to NASCOE Recipient Tony Augustine, IL

Pictured (L to R): MWA Exec Chris Hare,
Tony Augustine, MWA Awards Chair
Kathy Balbaugh (OH), Debbie Staley (IL)



Ohio

Charlene Stone, President

The Ohio Association of County Office Employees met on Jan. 25, 2018. The results of the annual elections are as follows. President: Charlene Stone, 1st VP: Mary Marty, 2nd VP: Jill Ritchie, Treasurer: Ashley McCurdy and Secretary: Vicki Olson.

Ohio is currently at 81% membership - We have 47 employees that are not members. We have set up a team to talk to the non-members and find out why they are not members and educate them on the importance of supporting NASCOE.

This past year, Ohio added a fourth scholarship and named it the RASCOE scholarship, as RASCOE is a huge supporter of scholarships. We have three Jim Pollack memorial scholarships and one RASCOE scholarship and all four pay \$750.00 to the deserved students.

Ohio had six nominations for awards. We received one Service to Community nomination, two Service to NASCOE nominations and three Service to FSA nominations.

Ohio held retirement training this past year with Dillard's, over all it went very well and the people who attended were pleased with the training they received. We were able to have four training sessions and we are working with Dillard's to do one more training for those who missed the last ones.

We are currently working on getting contact names for the Legislative Contact Plan.

We had 2 program issues submitted for National Review.

We took the time to talk to the PT's about NASCOE and the importance of being a member at all the PT Training sessions held in Ohio.

We are currently working on a new Employee directory, this has been a slow process however we are hoping to have it done by the end of the month of April.

Ohio will not have a State Convention for 2018 and plan to have one in 2019 and plans for the convention will be started at the next OASCOE meeting on Thursday May 3rd in the Madison County office.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Stone
Ohio President

**MWA Distinguished Service Award -
Service to FSA/Agriculture
Recipient
Kevin Beekman, MN**

Pictured (L to R): MWA Exec Chris Hare,
Kevin Beekman, MWA Awards Chair
Kathy Balbaugh (OH)



Wisconsin

Jon Williams, Vice President

WASCOE's membership had dropped to below 70% during the last year. The major contributing factors are the retirement of long time members, negative influence of non-members on new employees, and restricted communication through the State office. WASCOE has targeted specific counties with zero or low membership for visits to address concerns and recruit new members. On the way to the Rally, one such visit resulted in six individuals signing payroll deduction forms and becoming new members. This method has been successful and will continue to be utilized to rebuild membership.



WASCOE has had two meetings with the SED. She is a former Executive Officer under the last Republican administration. She seems to be receptive to listening and working with WASCOE. One issue however is that WASCOE's ability to post items on the State FSA share point site. We have not been able to post scholarship winners or NAFEC promotional materials. We will be able to announce meeting and convention dates and minutes. We will be allowed to have a page in the monthly employee newsletter.

We have tried to utilize a member email list to communicate with our members. The list has 153 addresses and has been appreciated by many members. WASCOE also has a Facebook page that is followed by 217 people.

One benefit WASCOE hopes to implement for its members is a relief fund through its Sunshine Committee. This will be a voluntary fund that will provide assistance to a member that suffers significant loss of property through a catastrophic event such as a tornado, fire, or some other approved event. The parameters have not been established but the fund will be finalized at the WASCOE convention in April.

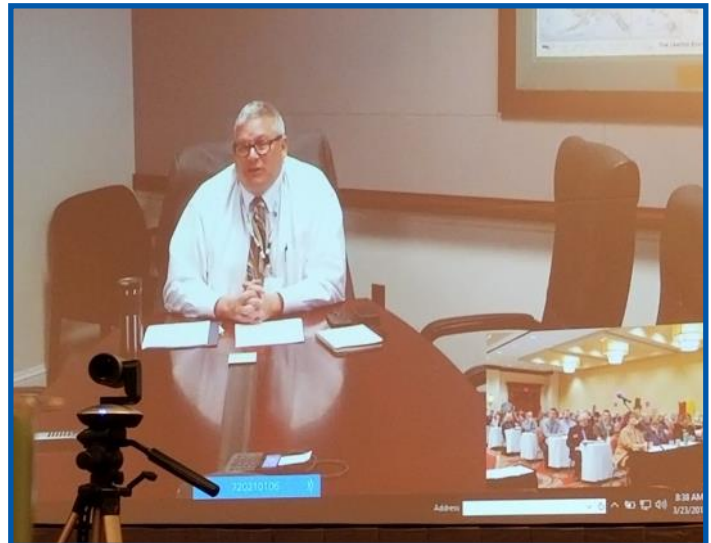
WASCOE is encouraging participation in the first timer promotions for the NASCOE convention in the hopes of getting younger members interested and involved in the association. Hopefully, we will be able to gain directors, committee chairs, and future officers from these efforts..

The 2018 WASCOE convention will be held in Marshfield, WI on Friday, April 20.

Submitted by

Jon Williams
WASCOE Vice President

**FPAC Undersecretary
Bill Northey joined the
MWA Rally via VTC**



MWA Rally Question & Answer Session

Steve Peterson and Dennis Ray

March 23, 2018

Q1: During the FPAC townhall meeting there was a statement that each supervisor can manage up to 10 employees. Will that standard be implemented at the county office level?

A1: Right now, we are looking at that more at the State Office, National Office and Kansas City. Too much to trickle down to county offices. In some instances, it would take up to 3 county offices combined to get a 10:1 ratio and that is just not the intent.

Q2: In regards to temporaries, are they the most efficient means of staffing help? Usually a temporary is a 90-day appointment, it takes 20-30 days to get an Alt Linc Card, then time to get access to systems. Often the 90 days is close to expired before any proper training has occurred.

A2: First off it sounds like we have a problem with "on-boarding". Solution to this problem would be something to look at. Focus on taking advantage of temps to allow a step in the door to try them out before becoming a long-term employee. We need to try and come up with a training piece to train people about the importance of our job. For now, I will go back to WDC and discuss the onboarding issues with temps.

Follow-up: HRD is in the process of creating an on-boarding guide, which is a very helpful tool. They are mostly complete with a few minor tweaks. This should help with the process and will be shared soon.

Q3: You mentioned the ad hoc disaster programs that the COC would have approval authority if the county doesn't meet the 35% loss for wildfires and hurricanes. Does this have to be applied to wildfires and hurricanes? Tornadoes, freezes, and ice storms affect our producers in other parts of the country.

A3: Ad hoc disaster gives COC authority on wildfires because they often do not get a Secretarial Disaster Declaration like others (i.e. tornados) do. The Secretarial declaration provisions are not changing.

Follow-up: The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 authorized an Ad-Hoc Disaster program for ONLY losses due to hurricanes and wildfires. The county must be a presidentially declared disaster county. However, County Committees will be given latitude and guidance on approving individual applications in non-designated counties where the applicant claims they were also impacted. The losses must still be a result from a hurricane or wildfire.

Q4: What is the % nationally of FSA/NRCS offices that are NOT co-located? And is there a plan to co-locate FSA/NRCS offices at the State levels? -

A4: Right now, the majority of the county offices are co-located - approximately 85-90%. As for state offices, we have determined where the STO's are in the same city and are currently working on a plan to co-locate those in the future. We will start with the ones that are close to or working on a lease right now. In the instances where the offices are not in the same city, it is not as easy and we will have to look at locations, staff size and locations in between. Ultimately, YES, the plan is to co-locate the state offices as well.

Q5: What is the current enrollment acreage number? We have several options about how CRP may be handled this year. When will a decision be made and when can we start notifying producers? Note: in my county I have over 200 contracts expiring on September 30, I take calls every day on what options do the producers have?

(Continued from page 23)

A5: Ultimately it depends on the Farm Bill. In the past we have made a 1-year extension to allow the Farm Bill to be worked out. We are briefing the Secretary about concerns from producers. He fully understands that something needs to be passed on to the producers but at this time, we don't have any further information.

Q6: You stated this morning that we are not losing our identities, but the perception in the field is that we are. FSA logo has been pulled and we are to use the USDA logo, but have been told NRCS is maintaining their logo. I fully appreciate that we are all USDA but could you expand on this please?

A6: No one is losing their identity. We are One USDA. Have to work on the logo piece but will try to obtain newer information.

Follow-up: The agencies will remain. There will still be FSA and NRCS. There will still be a CED and Conservationist to report to the SED and/or the State Conservationist. Cross-training will be provided on the common programs available in order for both staffs to know which direction to point them in. However, the specific agency staff will still be responsible for enrollment.

Q7: In past online tools for producers for sign-ups, entities have been unable to do so and be recognized. With Farmers.gov, will access and privileges be easier to acquire for complicated business partners?

A7: When it rolls out will be customer facing to start with. As it gains momentum, entities will be able to get access. Have been in discussion with IT to grant Level 2 access for entities. The first roll out will be Farm Plus & Bridges.

Follow-up: The full intent of Farmers.gov is to have necessary information for employees and farmers. Additionally, the farmers.gov is being built to provide more simplistic and easier functionality. This will be in phases and will take time to get to full functionality.

Q8: Will there be additional funding for BCAP?

A8: BCAP has kind of fallen off the radar. Mr. Peterson indicated he will follow up when he gets back to WDC.

Follow-up: Due to the Omnibus Bill language we are not allowed to perform work on any BCAP at this time. All BCAP related software has been disabled until further notice. The website/AskFSA/Gov Delivery sites for BCAP are being hidden until we are given authorization to administer BCAP again.

Q9: USDA Service Center lease expiration. My county office lease expires on 09/30/2018 and must move. RPLO and our State Office has told me (CED) that my role with respect to finding a new space is limited to prevent conflict of interest. So how can I envision a new service center?

A9: County office needs to have input in the space. GSA space is first choice but that doesn't mean the county office will not or should not be involved. Mr. Peterson stated that he will look into this when he gets back to WDC and follow up with RPLO representative and the state office.

Q10: Can you elaborate more on when the workload tool is going to be available for the counties and states? Are we waiting for a tool to determine the hiring needs?

A10: Yes, because that is what we need to justify to the Secretary where staff is needed.

WebTA is very important, we are at a point with the WebTA reports that we can use them to tie

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into our workload tool. It gives us a place to start. Do all of the pieces have to be in place before hiring? We would prefer it was yes, but it is not holding up everything 100%. It is to a point where we can share the information with the Secretary and state a case to justify the hiring that needs to be done.

Q11: With FPAC driving customer service to get better. It is very tough on the county office when they have appointments set and the computer system is extremely slow or not working on a regular basis. Is there a plan to do an over haul or upgrade of a computer system that can handle the entire agency?

A11: Bringing IT under the operations of FPAC we are working with them to do a "refresh" of equipment. We are hoping that budget will allow us to replace 1/3 of systems, equipment etc. every year. Currently safe guards have been built into systems that alert IT staff to a potential issue before it starts. IT is engaged and wants to make things better.

Q12: Is there a plan for DAFO to have a pool for non-ceiling COTs? States need to fill PT & CED vacancies immediately but they also need to have COTs on board because of the year long training. States need to decide whether to meet today's needs and sacrifice tomorrow. Non-ceiling COTs will allow flexibility for states.

A12: We have not discussed this specifically but we are discussing streamlined applications. Possibility of using a "register" type of employee. Will take this suggestion back to WDC. Thank you.

Follow-up: Through the use of the staffing tool, HRD information and predicting retirements, headquarters is looking at additional tools to utilize for succession planning. COT's are just one position which is being discussed.

Q13: What do you anticipate the staffing level to be for FSA CO Staff? Any thought of "right sizing" staff by states?

A13: Workload models will show where staffing needs to be at. Right sizing provides some solutions but gives decision to put people together. Are we staffing for continuous need or according to workload today? Looking at 25 programs for staffing and weighting information on each of them. Our plan would be to pull all 50 SEDs into understand the model to roll it out to the county offices.

Follow-up: The SED's will be in WDC the week of May 7th to discuss the staffing model.

Q14: This morning you said you went to the Secretary's office and asked for a number of employees for FSA. What is that number?

A14: Based on 2017 funding and the continuing resolutions our ceiling is around 11,000 employees. We are currently way under that. If we get approval to hire, the numbers will be shared across the agencies. The attrition rate over the next few years will be astounding.

Q15: Where has the money gone that has been saved through salary and benefits by being understaffed for so long?

A15: It will come back as TOs and hiring. If there is a surplus, it will be ear marked for skills training.

Follow-up: Money saved is being utilized very diligently. We have used a portion to increase the performance award percentage in December, as well as funding the maximum amount of

(Continued from page 25)

spot award monies. We have also utilized some of these funds for additional interns to states offices, which we are still in the process of hiring, as well as the computer refresh. Travel dollars have been allocated to allow state, county and hq employees to travel to assist with necessary disaster recovery efforts, as well.

Additional Questions that we did not have time to ask/answer:

1. **How is work counties do on behalf of other counties being considered in the workload model? For example: employees who travel to other county offices to help with programs or certifications for farmers who farm in multiple counties.**

Response: Currently that work is counting in the county which the employee is assigned to. This is a very minor adjustment in the workload model in most cases and does not have an effect to hiring proposals. However, there are certain situations where this would have to be identified by the local manager and discussed with the SED. In the future, there is a change in the plans to allow that work to be attributed to the location where worked.

2. **When the three office closures in Iowa occurred a few years ago, FSA closed but NRCS remained open in those counties. How will those NRCS offices be affected by FPAC?**

Response: This would be a NRCS response along with FPAC.

3. **Why do we continue to have CO and GS employees?**

Statutorily there are still two employment systems authorized by law. Additionally, the County Committee has the authority to hire CED's and this can only be accomplished using the CO hiring authority.

4. **Do we as USDA have a plan on how to improve the efficiency of our LincPass Card system? I work in a light activation office in Iowa. We are happy to provide this service to local USDA employees but always wonder why the whole card activation cannot be done every office to reduce travel? Also, improvements to eliminate down time when activation doesn't work properly and the number of contact options to fix a variety of problems is limited.**

Response: This will be discussed with EPD.

5. **When you referred to the "issues" we (the county office) had with SURE and the worksheet. Do we understand correctly that the new disaster program will be under Farmers.gov and producers can apply from home using a worksheet? Seems like we are unaware that realistically producers will have the same "issues" and end up in the county offices for help. The money and budget for this type of software for producer use could be spent at the county level on software and training because it is likely that he producers will end up applying at the county office in the end.**

The producers will not apply for WHIP from home. They will be able to obtain certain information from farmers.gov, but will not complete the application. Funding is appropriated by Congress separately for software development and personnel/travel/training. IT funding cannot be used for personnel and travel.

NASCOE MEMORIAL PRESENTATION

LYNSEY M. BROOKS, NASCOE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

SEVERAL YEARS AGO AT OUR NASCOE CONVENTION, A TRADITION WAS BEGUN THAT HAS BECOME A SPECIAL PART OF THE CONVENTION AGENDA. IN HONOR OF OUR DECEASED NASCOE MEMBERS, WE PAUSE AT THE NATIONAL CONVENTION TO REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED AWAY IN THE LAST YEAR. THIS VERY SPECIAL SERVICE IS A TIME THAT WE PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO WERE DEDICATED MEMBERS OF NASCOE AND WHO PROMOTED AND SUPPORTED OUR EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION DURING THEIR LIFETIME.

DURING THIS SPECIAL OBSERVANCE, WE RECOGNIZE OUR DECEASED MEMBERS WITH A TOUCHING POWER POINT PRESENTATION SET TO SPECIAL MUSIC. WE ASK THAT YOU HELP US HONOR THE DECEASED MEMBERS FROM YOUR STATE BY SUBMITTING THEIR INFORMATION AND A PHOTO, IF AVAILABLE, SO THEY MAY BE MEMORIALIZED IN THE SERVICE.

ANDREA STAFFORD, PROGRAM TECHNICIAN FROM TENNESSEE, HAS VOLUNTEERED TO PUT THE MEMORIAL SERVICE PRESENTATION TOGETHER FOR THE CONVENTION IN AUGUST. PLEASE SUBMIT THE REQUESTED INFORMATION ALONG WITH A PHOTO TO ANDREA. YOU MAY SUBMIT VIA EMAIL OR SEND A HARD COPY BY MAIL, TO HER ADDRESSES LISTED BELOW. THIS FORM IS ALSO AVAILABLE AT: WWW.NASCOE.ORG

PLEASE SEND YOUR SUBMISSION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BUT NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2018.

2018 NASCOE MEMORIAL SIOUX FALLS, SD POWER POINT PRESENTATION INFORMATION

NAME OF DECEASED MEMBER	
POSITION HELD	
YEARS OF SERVICE	
COUNTY(S) & STATE	
OTHER INFORMATION: <i>STATE, AREA OR NATIONAL CAPACITIES SERVED IN</i>	

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

NASCOE REGULAR MEMBER		PHOTOS ENCLOSED	
NASCOE ASSOCIATE MEMBER		PHOTOS EMAILED	
NASCOE MEMBER		REMARKS:	

ALSO, IF THERE IS A SPECIAL MEMORY OR SHORT STORY YOU HAVE FOR THE PERSON YOU ARE SUBMITTING, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO INCLUDE IT WITH YOUR SUBMISSION. WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE THIS AS PERSONALIZED AS WE CAN, SINCE MANY TIMES OUR MEMBERS MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN THESE WHO HAVE PASSED ON.

COMPLETED FORM AND PHOTO SHOULD BE MAILED OR EMAILED TO:

ANDREA STAFFORD
1024 MILL STREET
PULASKI, TN 38478
PHONE 931.363.2675
EMAIL: ANDREA.B.STAFFORD@GMAIL.COM

IF YOU SUBMIT A PICTURE BY MAIL AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE IT RETURNED, PLEASE INCLUDE A SELF ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE. THANK YOU!

CONTACT INFORMATION OF SUBMITTER	
NAME	
ADDRESS	
CITY, STATE, ZIP	
PHONE	
EMAIL ADDRESS	

MWA Action Items and Deadlines

(Click on the underlined words for more information)

June 15, 2018	NASCOE Convention \$45 Registration
June 15, 2018	NASCOE Membership Award Submission
June 30, 2018	4th Quarter Dues Deadline
July 1, 2018	NASCOE Memorial Presentation
July 15, 2018	NASCOE Convention \$55 Registration
December 1, 2018	<u>Negotiation Item Deadline</u>
Ongoing/no deadline	<u>Program Efficiency Submissions</u>

Conventions / Rallies

NASCOE Convention
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
August 1 through 4, 2018



Wednesday, Aug 1	Tours, Pin Trading, DJ & Dancing
Thursday, Aug 2	General Session with WDC Panel; Scholarship Auction; Magician/Hypnotist
Friday, Aug 3	General Session with Committee meetings and Area Breakout Sessions; Falls Park "First Friday at the Falls"
Saturday, Aug 4	General Session with In Memoriam; Banquet and Awards Presentation; Live Band & Dancing



Missouri – August 27 – 28, 2018