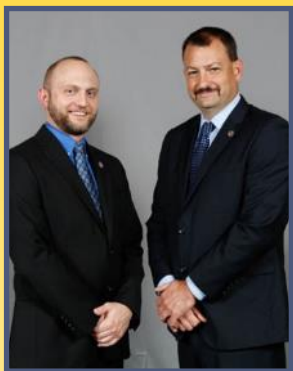




AREA EXECUTIVE

Chris Hare

(765) 505-3355 Cell
chrishare05@gmail.com



ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE

Jackson Jones

417-818-9147 (Cell)
want2c_bass@hotmail.com

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

MIDWEST AREA BULLETIN

Volume 2, Bulletin 4

MWA Executive Exit Report 2018 National Convention

THANK YOU SOUTH DAKOTA for hosting the 59th NASCOE National Convention in Sioux Falls. I encourage everyone to attend at least 1 NASCOE National Convention in their career. The motivation that is driven from the energy of the members is contagious.

The work NASCOE Officers, the Executive Committee, your National, Area, and State Committee Chairpersons do for us is tremendous. Your dues are well spent to ensure member's benefits are protected.



In March, I attended the Illinois (IASCOE) State Convention. During the Friday session they had a motivational speaker. During his presentation, he spoke about our life "wake up" song. On Saturday as I was driving home two songs came to mind for me personally. My morning "wake up" song would be "Good Life" by One Republic. There are a lot of things I can be thankful for, and NASCOE is one of them. As I reminisce over the past few years while serving as the MWA Executive, I have to thank my family, and a HUGE THANK YOU to my employees. Without them, I could not have served in this capacity. Susan Smith, Mary Ferguson, Laura Brown, Amber Peach, Jeni Cole, and Jennifer Strohl if I have not told you all enough, I want to thank you for everything you did while I served as the MWA Executive. Your hard work, dedication, appreciation and support while I served in this role was never forgotten.

This year our organization saw hurdles. Furlough, delays in political appointments, ceiling reductions, and delays in responses from management officials due to "acting" positions are just a few to name. However, even though these hurdles may have slowed us down, our membership continued to grow. Fifty percent of the MWA states have increased their membership, while the other 50% of the MWA states membership maintained their membership. No states lost membership this year. Congratulations to Michigan. They had an increase of 14% this year alone. The MWA ended the year with 84% membership. This is the highest the membership has been in over 5 years.

At the 59th National NASCOE Convention, we were greeted and addressed by many Washington D.C. Officials including our Under Secretary, Bill Northey and FSA Administrator, Richard Fordyce. I look positively to our future as "acting" roles are filled permanently. NASCOE has already begun to build strong working relationships with new appointees and maintain our existing ones. These relationships will be needed to work through the new staffing tool, the workload tool, the new MFP program, and many other items. I feel our voices, frustrations, and compliments were heard strongly and professionally during the Q & A with management.

As a leader for the MWA, I have tried to promote "thinking outside the box" ways of getting our employees involved. Our area debuted the MWA Website this year. Many states struggled to have a webmaster, yet paid \$70-\$100 a year to maintain a website for their state. To be cost effective, reduce redundancy of information, and time; the MWA now has one website, with a page for each state to cut down on repetitive postings and cost. Six of the eight states bought in and split the cost. The two states that did not buy into the webpage, have "static" pages where members can go and get offices names and contact information.

(Continued from page 1)

The Welcome to the MWA NASCOE video was debuted as well. This went over better than I expected. This was unanimously voted to send out immediately. There are a few tweaks, but we will release this to all non-members within a week. There are 6 testimonies from members in the MWA of why being a member of NASCOE is so important.

The PAC (Political Action Committee) numbers are lower than wanted at the area level, but I am hopeful with the ideas presented at the MWA Break Out Session, they will increase accordingly with outreach ideas.

NAFEC, the National Association of Farmer Elected Committee's numbers continue to grow. Currently there are 158 members / associate members for the MWA. The break down by states are as follows:

Illinois- 52	Indiana- 11	Iowa- 33	Michigan- 7
Minnesota-10	Missouri-6	Ohio- 29	Wisconsin- 7

Our participation in the Awards, Benefits, Emblems & Scholarship, Negotiations, and Programs Committee areas are always strong. To those who utilized these tools to support employees or the families of the employees, thank you. Please continue to do so. Stay tuned for total numbers and breakdowns for all committee areas in our Post National Convention Bulletin, scheduled to be released by the end of August.

It's comforting to know when I call upon the Midwest Area Chairs, State President's, and membership, they always step up to the task I have asked of them. I am surrounded by an amazing group of Area Chairs. It is because of these people, I attribute our areas success. I want to personally thank them all for all of their hard work, time away from their offices and home, and of course, taking on every task and request I have asked of them:

Kathy Balbaugh , Ohio	Awards	Tina Young , Missouri	Scholarships / Emblems
LeAnn Oltmanns , Illinois	Membership	Mary Roberts , Iowa	NAFEC
Jon Williams , Wisconsin	Benefits	Kay Lumsden , Michigan	Legislative
Jamie Garriott , Indiana	Programs	Teresa Holmquist , Minnesota	Publicity/ Webmaster
	Debbie Staley , Illinois	Negotiations Consultant	

Working with Jackson Jones, Midwest Alternate Executive has been a true honor. We have truly been fortunate in the MWA to have such great working bonds and friendships that represent 2,000 members of 2,500 employees. Jackson brings a strong Legislative background to our area leadership. His energy and the way he delivers his information is powerful and can relate his message to any audience. This past year, Jackson and I worked together in order to promote a seamless transition this fall. I look forward to seeing what great things newly elected MWA Executive Jackson Jones and newly elected MWA Alternate Executive, Mary Roberts, and all of the MWA Committee Chairs has in store for us.

I hope reading this has inspired you to remain a NASCOE member, become a NASCOE member, and appreciate the amazing benefits we currently have, and the ones to come in the future.

Humbly yours,
Christopher L. Hare,
NASCOE MWA Executive
Chrishare05@gmail.com
765-505-3355

Parke-Vermillion County Office

Fountain County Office



MWA Alternate Executive**Jackson Jones** want2c_bass@hotmail.com

It's hard to believe that two years have passed since Chris and I became partners in crime. Lots has changed, but at the same time there are lots of things that have not. For example, two major items of change are the administration and our departmental structure, one item that has not, Jackson still drives the struggle bus when it comes time to write MWA bulletin articles, and Chris has to "remind" him it is due.



It has been fun watching Chris work, watching him grow within his role at the helm of the MWA. Fun watching him interact with our membership, watching him not only tackle but fix problems, and fun helping him talk out issues. I mean it wasn't always roses, sometimes Chris got frustrated, but that frustration was without question driven from his passion to leave things much better than he found them.

Chris has been the guy that who would, when there was a problem in one of his states, just jump in his truck and drive across three states and attend a state board meeting just to make sure issues got worked out. Chris was the guy who would write a check when he wanted to do something that there was no NASCOE budget for. I would say that Chris will be missed but I have a feeling he isn't going anywhere, his NASCOE service isn't done yet, or at least I hope it isn't. And because of that I believe that continuity between Execs will not be an issue with this transition.

With the election of Mary Roberts as MWA Alternate Executive and myself as MWA Area Executive, I'm sure the learning curve will be steep, but Chris has been a great mentor to help us not have to start at the bottom and will continue to be there when we need him. I am looking forward to working with Mary over the next couple of years, to passing along as much NASCOE knowledge I can and ensure she is as prepared for her future as I was.

Chris has served as a great role model regarding keeping your alt informed and ready to act if needed. We have been in regular communication about growing membership, increasing awards and scholarship number, programs items, negotiations items, legislative issues, growing NAFEC, maintaining COC authority, communicating with membership, and most of all keeping ourselves motivated when frustration set in.

I hope I can take half of what I learned from Chris and pass along to Mary, and ensure all MWA employees are represented, informed and motivated the way they should be, not just for my term as Exec but for future execs as well.

Thank you Chris !

Legislative

Kay Lumsden, Michigan

This past year, NASCOE'S Legislative Team has worked closely with Hunter Moorhead, our Legislative Consultant, as we diligently researched and addressed legislation that affects appropriations, budget, office structure, staffing, benefits and Farm Bill developments. A few of the most recent and significant topics acted on by NASCOE's Legislative team this past year were: FPAC Reorganization, Staffing, the new workload tool, the 2018 Farm Bill, worked to secure significant funding above the budget request for FSA Salaries and Expenses, worked to maintain employee benefits and, as always, worked on increasing contributions to the NASCOE PAC.



Because of sensitive information, as well as respect to FSA Administration, there are a lot of actions taken (on our significant issues listed above) by NASCOE Leadership and our Legislative Consultant that happen "behind the scenes" that our members are not privy to. I want to emphasize to all our members how hard our NASCOE Leadership works for us. It is a full-time job in which they dedicate an astronomical amount of their personal time to making sure our benefits, as County Office Employees, are always being protected and preserved, as well as improved; and that's on top of working the full-time job they already have as a USDA-FSA COF Employee. It is a non-paid, very tough job which they do out of love and appreciation for NASCOE members and I would like to encourage our members to thank them all for their efforts.

The MWA's major concern is staffing: how the workload tool determines what offices should be staffed, shared-management and the affects of not having CED's full time in an office, fully staffed offices assisting other COF's but not getting credit for it, opening offices up 'within' in order to allow people to get where they want to be long-term, understaffing and bringing on new programs, retaining new employees, etc.

The PAC continues to be an important part of our legislative process. The PAC is a resource in which we can support and help legislators, who are friends of Agriculture, FSA and NASCOE, to get elected (or re-elected) to the House or Senate. The Representative's, which NASCOE supports with PAC funds, will be the people that fight for us when we get into the nitty-gritty of employee benefits, restructuring offices, etc. With this year's PAC promotion, the overall number of participants have increased nationally from 689 to 816. The amount of contributions has increased from \$3049/PP to \$3765/PP. These increases are outstanding! Unfortunately, most of those increases are in the SWA and SEA. The MWA has a lot of room to increase our numbers. Nationally, the percentage of NASCOE members contributing to the PAC is still low so we have a long way to go and we need to continue discussing this with our members, especially the new ones coming on during these rounds of hiring. Currently, the MWA has 197 participants in PAC, contributing approximately \$918/PP. This year, we must communicate with our new members about the benefits of the PAC within our own states, as well as at the State Conventions. If you are interested in knowing the details of how much money is being contributed to the NASCOE PAC or where/who the money is being donated to, please visit OpenSecrets.org.

It has been an honor this past year to work with Chris Hare (MWA Exec), Jackson Jones (MWA Alternate and National Legislative Co-Chair), Donny Green (National Legislative Co-Chair), and many other dedicated people who are committed to honoring NASCOE's purpose of improving benefits for County Office Employees.

MWA Post Convention Report: 8/13/18

The Mid-West Area Legislative Report sparked a very interesting conversation among members. I presented the Legislative report and focused mainly on how we can get our states more active in PAC recruiting. I asked the attending members to help me with some ideas, because it is obvious I am struggling on how to get new contributors. The fact is, we have the largest number of employees in our area...but we are the lowest in participation.

One of the first questions asked by an attendee is "What is PAC?" After I picked my jaw up off the ground from pure amazement...I explained briefly what the PAC was. It made me instantly aware this information is not getting down to the state membership like it is supposed to be, since we had discussed it at every Rally and Convention for the last 4 years and we are still getting this question.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

I mentioned possibly choosing a pilot state to send an informational letter/packet to all of their members and see if that helps; people thought that would be a good idea. I mentioned trying to get the new people we have just recently hired to contribute to PAC right away...versus going back after they've become a NASCOE member and asking them for more money, which sparked an interesting conversation from a brand new employee. She stated she did not make enough money to cover her bills now and \$3.00/pp was a lot of money to her. I discussed with her how the PAC is truly the best, most important tool we have to help get the representatives who support us re-elected; it is our job insurance, and it is pretty cheap job insurance. Jackson Jones stood up and discussed the PAC with passion as well.

I also mentioned starting the process of making sure each of the state's board members became contributors, which sparked conversation on how hard it is to talk about the PAC. People like myself, Robert Payne, Jackson Jones and Tony Augustine are passionate about the PAC and it shows...but when people broach the subject back in their states...it's not easy to discuss it. It was asked if we could put a video together so states could show it at their conventions. I stated I would suggest it at our organizational meeting in September.

People were definitely engaged in the conversation and it brought many concerns to the surface that I need to figure out how to address with each of MWA states in the upcoming year.

Benefits

Jon Williams, Wisconsin

I would like to thank Chris for allowing me to serve the MWA as the Area Benefits Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to give back to the association that has given me so much during my career. I would also like to thank the State Benefits chairs and State Presidents for their support and efforts in providing benefits and information to all of their members.

There wasn't much new that occurred during the past year but I did ask the Benefit Chairs and Presidents to respond to two topics during our conference call on July 19th.

The first topic was 1) How important are the NASCOE benefits like working advantage.com, Sam's Club Gift Card, or the Airmed club discount to our membership? Do we need to continue looking for new benefits? Is it worth the time and effort required? Are benefits an incentive to join NASCOE or are they a perk for becoming a member? The responses definitely supported the benefits we have and indicated that the membership does like to have these tangible benefits that can only be obtained as a NASCOE member. It was acknowledged that it is hard to find a new benefit but a suggestion was made to look into discounts for Amazon Prime, Netflix, or Hulu? These services could be available to all members and were sent to the National Chair to investigate.

The second topic had to do with the duties and responsibilities of the benefits committee could be split between other committees. Some benefits such as flexible work schedules and credit for unused sick leave were obtained through legislative efforts. Promotion of benefits can be done by membership or publicity? Who is the primary contact for Dillard's, is it the Executive Committee or the National Chair. The purpose of this topic was to be food for thought as associations look for ways to cut costs and be more efficient.

The responses did vary. Some states have the benefits and legislative committees combined but the majority said it was definitely a committee that is important and needed. Although some states have it combined with another committee, they may have individuals serving as primary contacts instead the committee chair due to established relationships. Chris did explain that at the Executive committee did serve as the primary contact with Dillard's for a while when Christy stepped down and there was a period of transition at the National level. Now that Christy is back she will again be the Primary contact with Dillard's.

Communications between the state, area, and National level is what makes agencies strong and that is the same for committees. Communications between all levels makes committees more effective and we have tried to do that. Thank you for your cooperation and support.



Membership

LeAnn Oltmanns, Illinois

Another amazing NASCOE year is in the books! And, I'm still thankful for the opportunity I have been given to serve as your MWA Membership Chair. The most recent information that I have shows that the MWA has 84% membership for the 2017/2018 year which is a 3 percent increase over last year! In March, I had set a goal of 85%, we didn't quite make that, but you all did a great job. I'd like to acknowledge Diana in Michigan for all her hard work to recruit new members. When she and I were talking about her success in growing Michigan's membership she told me she did it through person invitations. At that point I didn't realize that what she meant by personal invitations was that she took 3 days of leave to travel around Michigan to IN PERSON invite employees to be NASCOE members. She said that in 3 days Michigan gained 9 new members. Diana also said that it is hard for people to tell you know when you are standing there looking them in the face. Thank you Diana for all your hard work. I also like to mention that Minnesota currently has 100% membership.



As I'm sure you know, states are able to hire new permanent employees. Lynsey Brooks, NASCOE membership chair has conducted 2 training conference calls concerning the membership drive we are currently having to acquaint new employees with NASCOE. The MWA also had a conference call recently and we discussed our game plan. It has been discussed that a membership drive team member would contact each county office that is allowed to hire new employees to make sure there is someone in the office that will make sure the new employee gets the Welcome Letter, Membership Booklet, Membership Application, and a 444 as soon as the new employee starts. Then within a few weeks of the new employee starting their career with FSA, a membership drive team member will contact the new employee to welcome them to FSA and make sure they have indeed received the membership information. We will also be asking if they have any questions about NASCOE or our state organization and inviting the new employee to join NASCOE. We are hopeful with the contacts to each COF and then to each new employee, the new employee will see how important NASCOE is to us and want to become a member also.

I'm excited to hear how each state does with your membership drive and our continued efforts to increase membership with our current non-members. I'm positive that by next year at MWA Rally time we will have obtained our goal of 85%. Many, many thanks to all the State Membership chairs and committee members! It is due to all of your hard work and dedication that we have been able to increase the MWA membership. Thank you again!

Respectfully submitted,
LeAnn Oltmanns
MWA Membership Chair

NASCOE Midwest Area Welcome Video

Visit

https://youtu.be/uWa4cAMCr_k

to view the new
Midwest Area
Welcome Video.



Awards

Kathy Roberts, Ohio

Each year the states accept nominations of deserving individuals for Distinguished Service Awards in 3 categories: Service to NASCOE, Service to FSA/Agriculture, and Service to Community. At the area level we judge the winners from each of the 8 states and determine an area winner in each category. This year the Midwest area received 41 nominations – this is DOUBLE what we received in 2017 (20), and that was DOUBLE of what we received in 2016 (11).

In three years we have gone from 11 area nominations to 41! That is AMAZING!!!! Out of the 41 nominations, 10 were for Service to NASCOE, 25 were for Service to FSA/Agriculture, and 6 were for Service to Community. Last year I challenged the states to have at least one nomination in each category. While not EVERY state in the MWA was able to achieve this, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, & Illinois did! I would like to issue that challenge again and for those states that already met that challenge, I'd like you to try to increase that to at least TWO nominations in each category!

The MWA winners are:

Service to Community – Vicki Schwass, Illinois

Service to FSA/Ag – Kevin Beekman, Minnesota

Service to NASCOE – Anthony Augustine, Illinois

In addition, Kevin Beekman also won the National Service to FSA/Ag award! Congratulations to all our Area and National winners!!

In our breakout sessions, it was suggested that the deadline dates be moved from the 1st of the month to the 15th of the month. This has not been decided yet, but it may change for 2019. However, as it stands now, applications for nominations must be submitted by January 1, 2019. Applications will then be forwarded to the appropriate states for judging. On February 1st, the state winners are sent on to the Area judges and those winners were selected and sent on to the National judges by March 1st. As I stated before, 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 1000, 1500, and 2000 hours of unused sick leave. Also, plaques are awarded to employees who have accumulated 2500, 3000, and 3500 hours and above of unused sick leave. State chairs can contact me with their state's information and I will deliver the certificates to them either at the MWA Rally or the National Convention, and also provide them information for ordering plaques.

I would like to thank all the state award chairs:

Pam Cremeens, Illinois

Lisa Hollars, Indiana

Karen Lacour, Iowa

Beth Saxton, Michigan

Nathan Peterson, Minnesota

Debbie Leeper, Missouri

Teresa Zimmer, Wisconsin

and the area judges:

Judy Dameron, Iowa

Debbie Leeper, Missouri

Mindy Lolie, Illinois

Brandi Tatum, Missouri

for all their help in making this award program a success!

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

Kathy Roberts

MWA Awards Chair

littleone9699@gmail.com



Emblems / Scholarships

Tina Young, Missouri

MWA Scholarship Report – National Convention

Scholarships in the MWA were great this year. We had a total of 59 applicants.

Traditional:	42 applications received
Open Continuing Education:	15 applications received
Member Continuing Education:	1 application received
Associate Member:	1 application received



Applications had to be submitted by January 1, 2018. Those applications were reviewed by myself for completion. We had 20 applications that were either found ineligible by the membership chair or did not have all supporting documents submitted by the deadline of January 1, 2018.

We awarded two Scholarships at the MWA level, Travis Oliver from Wisconsin in the category of Traditional and Kassidy Maierhofer from Illinois in the Category of Open Continuing Education. Congratulations to our winners at the MWA level.

Topics that I would like to discuss the National Convention breakout sessions are, the online process and how it is working in your state and how can we better inform states and applicants of the required documentation.

MWA Emblems – National Convention

MWA has been very busy this past year in the Emblems area. For the 2018 year, the MWA has had a total of \$6,197.30, sales on line.

State convention sales totaled \$3,677.50, for those states that reported.



Also, in 2018, the MWA was busy with Skills for Success training that was offered to Program Technicians. During some of those meetings Emblems were present and available to purchase. The total for Emblems sold during Skills for Success trainings was \$2,789.50.

During the MWA Rally in Iowa a total of \$551.50, in Emblems were sold.

With all these figures the MWA sold approximately 12,643.80 in Emblems. This is exciting for the MWA.

Continue your support to Emblems and keep encouraging your states to advertise and letting membership know what Emblems have to offer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tina Young
MWA Emblems and Scholarships Chair

Programs

Jamie Garriott, Indiana

There were a total of 186 program submissions nationwide. The MWA had 60 of those. This number is down significantly from last year. Currently there are 10 pending in DC. Any program submission from July – October of 2017 has been issued responses. From November forward we have received one response. There were 5 submissions that were not forwarded on.

The one submission was asking for a prepayment report for ARC/PLC was not actually sent on, however we now have the report available for use. From the MWA submissions there are 19 that I am currently waiting on a response from and another 15 that I have not seen.



The totals by state are:

Illinois	7	Indiana	10
Iowa	10	Michigan	3
Minnesota	17	Missouri	1
Ohio	2	Wisconsin	3

The NASCOE website will be updated in the near future again. Once this is complete a new programs flyer will be completed and sent to each state chair for distribution. I encourage each state to continue submitting program submissions, even though it is take a while for a response. I will continue to monitor the submissions that I have received and follow up to make sure each gets answered. I also ask that when a program submission is entered online to let the state chairs know and forward them to me. This will help monitor what is outstanding and make sure it gets timely submitted to DC.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the MWA programs chair, I have learned a great deal. Please let me know if there is something I can do for you or your state.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Garriott



PROGRAMS

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

Submit your idea to:

<https://nascoe.org/programs/programs-submission/>

NAFEC

Mary Roberts, Iowa

I can honestly say that I'm impressed with the increase in membership we have seen since we kicked off the membership drive in December of 2017. Over 100 new members have been added to the membership listing. This includes both associate and regular members and reflects the effort put forth by everyone who has taken the time to promote NAFEC. In the 3 years I've been NASCOE's MWA NAFEC representative, our numbers have remained steady but this year you have all gone above and beyond. The key component we need to focus on moving forward is getting our county office staff (either CED or PTs) to tell NAFEC's story and promote membership. As with any organization, it takes boots on the ground to get the work done. In this case, your co-workers, farmers, and friends are more likely to join an organization you are involved in and excited about. The energy I continually see at our state, area and national conventions is exactly the energy we need to harness for NAFEC.



NAFEC continues to work on behalf of the County Committees to insure that our grass roots system of government is not overlooked when it comes to new programs and policy. They have also stepped in when there have been personnel and performance concerns that have not been handled in the proper channels. I recently had a conversation with a County Committee member who was wondering if they would have any say in who the new director would be in their office. I was shocked that they had no idea that they are in charge of hiring, firing, and performance reviews/appraisals for the CED. It was understood that they only handled programs and signing contracts. If we don't take the time to educate our county committee members, they will not be as effective as they need to be at the county level. We need to empower our county committee not only with educating them on their role, but giving them a tool in the toolbox for the times that concerns arise. NAFEC is a tool that can help them get through tough situations and issues that are not being handled locally. Of course, we would hope that all situations could be handled locally, but when the going gets tough NAFEC is there to help.

Another key to building and maintaining membership is communication. This membership year NAFEC has worked on improving communication through both email and Facebook. If you are on facebook, make sure you like the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees. There have been a number of updates sent this year both on facebook and via email. Stay connected for the most current NAFEC information as this will help you with membership also.

It has been my honor to serve as both Iowa's NAFEC chairperson and the MWA NAFEC chairperson over the last 5 years. The opportunity to help promote NAFEC has been a steep learning curve, but a very rewarding one too. I have learned so much about both NAFEC as an organization and the leaders of NAFEC. I would love to share the excitement I have for this organization to help you pass it along to your coworkers and your COC. Please call or email me anytime and I'll do anything I can to help share the message and promote membership. I would love to see 200 or more new names added to the list with our next membership drive and cannot wait to hear from my Midwest states about what is working for them. Thank you for everything you have done to help promote membership and for your continued efforts to grow NAFEC.





NASCOE & NAFEC

Working together for all FSA.

Mission Statement of the NAFEC Committee: To support and cooperate with NAFEC promoting a more effective and active farmer elected committee system for the betterment of agriculture.



Mission of NAFEC: "The primary purpose of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC) is, and will always be, to promote and improve the farmer elected committee system for the local administration of farm programs. The coordinated effort will give us strength, and much more influence in Congress for the kind of farm programs America's farmers, ranchers and rural communities need in order to thrive."

Why should you become an associate member of NAFEC?

- A stronger NAFEC will provide NASCOE with a much stronger support base.
- NAFEC speaks on behalf of the County Committee system like no one else.
- NAFEC has the respect of Congress and the USDA.
- NAFEC associate dues are only \$1 per pay period or \$20 per year.

How can you become an associate member of NAFEC?

- Complete the Membership Form on the NASCOE website: go to www.nascoe.org
1) click on NAFEC Committee on the left column,
2) click on NAFEC Membership Application. Print and complete.
3) Submit dues including a check for \$20 or print out the FSA-444 just below the Membership Application, complete and submit to your State offices for dues withholdings. Please enter \$1 per pay period on the FSA-444.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP

- Become an associate member of NAFEC
- Provide your local COC information regarding NAFEC and Membership enrollment options
- Provide your local staff information regarding NAFEC and how to become an associate member.
- Get involved in your state NASCOE association affiliate.
- Encourage your state association to support NAFEC with membership and with financial support such as assisting NAFEC directors attend state, area and national meetings.
- Invite NAFEC members to your state meetings and encourage their participation.

CURRENT ISSUES FACING EMPLOYEES TODAY

Increase in Shared Management Offices

Reduced COC program responsibility

Reduced COC role in the administrative functions of the COF

Reduced COC role in COF performance evaluations

Reduced COF staffing in FSA offices

Reduced understanding of the need for local grass roots input in FSA programs.

Reduced COC Meetings

Emphasizing that Annual Funding and Increased Priority for COC Orientation Training is Important.

NASCOE Officers & Executive Committee

President—Dennis Ray, MO
Vice President—Brandon Wilson, KS
Secretary—Marcinda Kester, FL
Treasurer—Curt Houk, IA
Past President—Wes Daniels, SC
Past Secretary—Deb Essleman, WI

Area Executives
MWA—Chris Hare, IN
NEA—Rick Csutoras, PA
NWA—Jessi Colgrove, NE
SEA—Mike Mayfield, TN
SWA—Jay Goff, OK

NAFEC Committee
Chairperson—Billy Denison, MT
MWA—Mary Roberts, IA
NEA—Daniel Shockey, WV
NWA—Teresa Vonn, OR
SEA—Pam Rhoades, MS
SWA—Levi Garlick, TX

Publicity

Teresa Holmquist, Minnesota

Another amazing NASCOE year is in the books. Although we have had several successes in the Publicity area, there continue to be significant challenges.

Midwest Area Website

A major goal was accomplished in January, as the Midwest Area Website was launched. If you haven't visited the website yet, GO! A great deal of thought, planning and work has been put into this site. Six of the eight Midwest Area States have pooled resources in order to have a website that they can have custom content for their state, as well as information for the Area. The two states that did not buy-in still have a page with a referral to their states website. As with any website, it needs maintenance, and updates. Hopefully, this site can continue to expand and provide MWA NASCOE members with valuable information for years to come.



Bookmark this page, and visit it often!

www.midwestnascoe.org

Communications within States

A pretty big concern is communications within each state. MWA Executive Chris Hare challenged each state to step up and send a newsletter (electronic or printed) that contained at least three articles. The result of that challenge is that only two states sent out a newsletter.

Does that mean that we aren't getting information to our members? It is hard to say. Are states just forwarding emails to members? I know that I tend to zone out sometimes with all the plain text emails that I get in a given week. I challenge all MWA States to put together at least one newsletter / bulletin this year. It doesn't need to be fancy or long, but include a few photos, include some "good news" - like new members, retirements, fun activities.

NASCOE Communications

This past year, we have sent a larger number of NASCOE News Flash updates. Have you seen them? A NASCOE News Flash is sent when there is critical information to go to all members. The NASCOE Communications Database is utilized to send these updates out to our membership. Depending on the content communication, the News Flash may be posted to the Nascoe News Facebook page and to the www.nascoe.org blog.

If you are following the NASCOE website, you will also receive email notifications when an item is added to the NASCOE blog. If you are not sure if you are following the website, go to www.nascoe.org and complete the item: "Follow Blog Via Email". Just enter your email address and click the follow button - and you're done!

Moving on...

This marks the last MWA Bulletin article that I will write, at least in the foreseeable future. As I continue serving as your NASCOE Publicity Chair and Webmaster, I needed to step back from activities on the area level. I wish to thank: past MWA Exec Curt Houk for cajoling me into saying Yes at a time when I was saying No to pretty much everything else; Chris Hare, for all his silliness, has a deep passion for NASCOE and FSA employees - I know this isn't the last we'll see of Chris.

I am stepping aside as another great MWA Executive team is beginning. Jackson Jones, your new Exec, is the closest thing I know to the Energizer Bunny. His passion is obvious, he will serve our area well. Mary Roberts has brought good things to our NAFEC committee, I am confident that she will continue this work in her role as MWA Alt Exec.

The MWA is truly a great area to represent. During the past four years, I have gained many new lifelong friends, really, my NASCOE Family. The next MWA Rally will be in Illinois. I will be there, and I hope to meet many new family members.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Holmquist

Negotiations

Debbie Staley, Illinois

It's time again to start submitting ideas for negotiations. There is a link on the NASCOE Website for members to submit their ideas. I have sent a message to all of the Midwest Area State Presidents and asked them to distribute this information to their state membership in an effort to get the ball rolling for the 2019 Negotiation season.

The Negotiations process is not only one of the most important functions NASCOE does for its members but it is a fascinating, rewarding and engaging activity for our organization to provide. One that can impact every FSA employees career. It's a huge responsibility to take employee concerns to management and convey their submissions in the appropriate attitude, eagerness and thoughtfulness.

NASCOE takes every submission seriously and takes time to read over everyone.

I feel privileged to have a position for the Midwest Area where I can work with other Association Officers in taking members ideas, concerns and recommendations to management. Members can stay informed by signing up to follow the NASCOE Website and make submissions at <https://nascoe.org/>



Respectfully Submitted
Debbie Staley
MWA Negotiation Consultant

Negotiation Submission Process

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.

<https://nascoe.org/negotiations/negotiations-submission/>

NASCOE Program Efficiency Submission Form

Use this form to recommend improvements for program delivery. Issues of concern may be submitted at any time. Timing could be critical to program efficiency. It is not necessary to wait for negotiation/consultation time. These items will be acted on upon receipt.

* Required

State *

MWA Breakout Minutes

2018 National Convention
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
August 3, 2018

The Midwest Area (MWA) Breakout convened at 10:47 a.m. with MWA Alternate Executive Jackson Jones calling to the order.

Roll call of states and delegates was taken:

Illinois – Debbie Staley, Charlene Neukomm
Indiana – Lauren Shank, Raquel Walker
Iowa – Angie Christian, Judy Dameron
Michigan – Linda Rector, May Horrigan
Minnesota – Kayla Mattson, Liz Ludwig
Missouri – Jared Singer, Mandi Bird
Ohio – Charlene Stone, Jim Greve
Wisconsin – Jon Williams, Brooke Spurberg

Charlene Neukomm (Illinois) Motioned to seat Debbie Staley as the MWA Secretary for the duration of the Breakout Session; 2nd by Jim Greve (Ohio); Motion Passed; None Opposed.

All states and delegates were accounted for. There were 49 in attendance. Committee reports commenced and shortly stopped by visitors.

Dennis Ray, Brandon Wilson, Hunter Morehead, and Donnie Green stopped by and held a short discussion about the upcoming MFP program. Other items discussed were the workload tools, staffing regarding the upcoming and new Farm Bill, also, state officers were encouraged to build relationships with their respective State Executive Director's (SED's) as many of them are newly appointed.

Dennis Ray announced his candidacy for NASCOE President.

Brandon Wilson announced his candidacy for NASCOE Vice President.

Committee Reports reconvened.

Awards

Kathy Balbaugh gave the Awards Committee Report. Kathy recognized the following MWA DSA Award winners:

Vicki Schwass, IL – DSA to Community
Tony Augustine, IL – DSA to NASCOE
Kevin Beekman, MN – DSA to FSA (Kevin also went on to win the National DSA to FSA Award)

A 3,000 hour sick leave award was presented to Ron Highley from Cass/ Jackson County, Missouri.

Emblems / Scholarships

Tina Young reported for Emblems that over \$12,643.80 was sold this past year in the MWA and that 59 scholarships were submitted from the MWA. Tina proposed the idea to the group, which unanimously supported the changing of the Scholarship application date and the Scholarship Requirement Checklist.

Benefits

Jon Williams discussed current ideas and issue with the MWA.

Legislative

Kay Lumsden gave the Legislative report for the MWA. A much-needed PAC discussion was held during this time. We are accustomed to using acronyms, and for the second year in a row, during the breakout session, was asked "what is PAC". We need to take the time to always explain it no matter what setting we are in. The suggestion was a brochure or a video to be developed and released to members. We need to increase our donations throughout the MWA. We are only at 10% for the area.

MWA Candidacy Announcements

Candidacy Announcements were held for the offices of Midwest Area Executive and Midwest Area Alternate Executive.

(Continued from page 14)

Jackson Jones announced his candidacy for the office of Midwest Area Executive Chairperson.

Mary Roberts announced her candidacy for the office of Midwest Area Alternate Executive Chairperson.

The Midwest Area morning breakout session adjourned at 12:07p.m.

MWA Afternoon Breakout Session August 3, 2018

The MWA Afternoon Breakout Session re-convened at 2:47 p.m.

Call to order by MWA Executive Christopher Hare. Debbie Staley took state and delegate roll call:

Illinois – Debbie Staley, Charlene Neukomm

Indiana – Lauren Shank, Raquel Walker

Iowa – Angie Christian, Judy Dameron

Michigan – Linda Rector, May Horrigan

Minnesota – Kayla Mattson, Liz Ludwig

Missouri – Jared Singer, Mandi Bird

Ohio – Charlene Stone, Jim Greve

Wisconsin – Jon Williams, Brooke Spurberg

All states and delegates were accounted for. There were 53 in attendance.

Nominations for Midwest Area Executive were held.

Kay Lumsden (Michigan) nominated Jackson Jones for the position of MWA Executive.

Charlene Stone (Ohio) Motioned to close nominations and elect Jackson Jones by acclamation;

Motion 2nd by Jon Williams (Wisconsin); MOTION Passed.

None Opposed. Jackson Jones was elected by acclamation. Congratulations Jackson.

Nominations for Midwest Area Alternate Executive were held.

Jared Singer (Missouri) nominated Mary Roberts for the position of MWA Alternate Executive.

Charlene Stone (Ohio) Motioned to close nominations and elect Mary Roberts by acclamation;

Motion 2nd by Linda Rector (Michigan); MOTION Passed.

None Opposed. Mary Roberts was elected by acclamation. Congratulations Mary.

MWA Committee reports reconvened:

Programs

Jamie Garriott provided her MWA Programs report for the area and all states at least had 1 program submission with a total of 60 submissions total.

Publicity / Webmaster

Teresa Holmquist gave her report. The MWA has 6 out of the 8 states participating in the MWA website that split the cost. She has trained states and put together a power point to be utilized to assist states with creating their webpages.

NAFEC

Mary Roberts gave the MWA NAFEC report. She presented the listing of members to each state. Mary had a good Q & A with the area regarding NAFEC; who is eligible and why it is so important to be a supporter.

John Lohr, Cathy Dennison, and Kevin Beekman stopped by from Dillard Financial Solutions.

Negotiations

Debbie Staley provided a report on the Negotiations Committee and recapped how the meeting went with management in April. 1/3 of the submissions were from the MWA.

Chris Hare, MWA Exec informed the area that Debbie, along with Tracy Wilson from Oklahoma were chosen to serve on a ULO task force at the end of August.

Membership

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

LeAnn Oltmanns reported that her personal goal was to see the area at 85% membership. The final membership report showed that the MWA had 84% membership. This is the highest in over 5 years. LeAnn updated the MWA regarding the new membership drive and promoting NASCOE to the new hires. An update and worthy of recognition: Minnesota has achieved 100% Membership.

LeAnn also recognized Diana Graef for all her efforts in Michigan. Diana took 3 days of annual leave and drove around the state promoting MASCOE / NASCOE. Because of this action, Michigan increased their membership 14%!

LeAnn presented the following individuals and counties their membership awards:

State	Member	Year Joined	25	30	35
MN	Darlene Johnson	1987		✓	
MN	Jean Kinneberg	1988		✓	
MN	Peggy Barker	1992			✓
MN	Stacey Roemen	1988		✓	
MN	Renee Augustad	1988		✓	
MN	Mark Rashke	1993			✓
MN	Shelly Czech	1988		✓	
MN	Brenda Mass	1982	✓		
MN	Pamela Zibeil	1992			✓
MN	Renee Jensen	1987		✓	
MN	Sandy Jergenson	1987		✓	
MN	Sue Bye	1990			✓
MN	Lois Fenske	1988		✓	
MN	Lauri Jo Nelson	1988		✓	
MN	Lois Olson	1988		✓	
MN	Polly (Paulette) Olson	1987		✓	
MN	Sheila Gustafson	1986		✓	
MN	Rich Bauer	1988		✓	
MN	Sue Sportal	1983	✓		
IN	Greg Knowles	1982	✓		
IN	Lisa Wooten	1983	✓		
IN	Lana Griffiths	1993			✓
IN	Diana Mason	1988		✓	
IN	Janet Ault	1988		✓	
IN	Amy Barber	1988		1	

LeAnn also presented the following Counties were presented awards for years of membership:

County	Years of 100% Membership	Years
Isanti County, Minnesota	55 Years of 100% Membership	1960 - 2018
Posey County, Indiana	55 Years of 100% Membership	1960 - 2018
Louisa County, Iowa	55 Years of 100% Membership	1963 - 2018
Taylor County, Iowa	55 Years of 100% Membership	1963 - 2018
Peoria County, Illinois	50 Years of 100% Membership	1968 - 2018
Howard County, Indiana	45 Years of 100% Membership	1973 - 2018
Huntington County, Indiana	45 Years of 100% Membership	1972 - 2018
Pike County, Indiana	45 Years of 100% Membership	1973 - 2018
Adams County, Indiana	45 Years of 100% Membership	1971 - 2018
Pulaski County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1972 - 2018
Clinton County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1976 - 2018
Daviess-Martin County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1976 - 2018
Elkhart County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1975 - 2018

(Continued from page 16)

Gibson County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1974 - 2018
Knox County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1976 - 2018
Lagrange County, Indiana	40 Years of 100% Membership	1978 - 2018
Vermillion County, Illinois	35 Years of 100% Membership	1983 - 2018
Chippewa County, Minnesota	30 Years of 100% Membership	1988 - 2018
Calhoun County, Iowa	30 Years of 100% Membership	1988 - 2018
Poweshiek County, Iowa	30 Years of 100% Membership	1988 - 2018
Traverse County, Minnesota	25 Years of 100% Membership	1992 - 2018
Kankakee County, Illinois	25 Years of 100% Membership	1993 - 2018
Monona County, Iowa	25 Years of 100% Membership	1993 - 2018

Charlene Neukomm (Illinois) Motioned to accept the Committee Reports as filed;
2nd by Angie Christian (Iowa); Motion Passed. None Opposed.

Chris Hare, MWA Executive presented all of the MWA Committee Chairs, Area Judges, and Alternate Exec. glass jade awards in recognition for all of their hard work over the past two years. The Executive also gave his report to the area. The Exec stated he spent a lot of time this year working with Jackson Jones in hopes to have a seamless transition this fall. The Exec requested to have all reports from committee chairs and State Presidents by next Friday, August 10 so he can have the Post National NASCOE convention bulletin out by 8/31.

The long awaited MWA Welcome to NASCOE video was presented. There are still a few quirks he wants to iron out, but he is honored to have 6 personal testimonies on the video from members in our area. Following the viewing of the video, it was overwhelmingly approved by the area along with a consensus to release it "as-is" immediately.

Chris Hare, MWA Exec, reminded everyone that Illinois would be the host State for the 2019 MWA Rally and it will be held on March 14-16, 2019 at the iHotel in Champaign, IL. More information will be forthcoming on that event.

Jon Williams (Wisconsin) Motioned to adjourn; 2nd by Angie Christian (Iowa); Motion Passed.
The Midwest Area Afternoon Break Out Session was adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully Filed,

Debbie Staley

NASCOE & Midwest Area State Websites



NASCOE

<http://nascoe.org/>

MWA-NASCOE

<http://midwestnascoe.org>

Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio and Wisconsin
[statename].midwestnascoe.org

Iowa

<http://iascoe.org/>

Missouri

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

Illinois

Debbie Staley, President

IL held our Annual Convention and Board Meeting the 1st weekend this past March. We had 125 register and attend this year. 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 had a guest speaker come in this year and his focus was on Leadership training and team building exercises. His presentation was great and it was good to see membership laughing. We were also thankful to have Brandon Wilson, our NASCOE VP and Chris Hare, our Mid-West Area Exec speak at our convention.

IL currently has around 92% membership and continues to work on increasing membership.

Illinois FSA has seen a upswing in retirements and as a result our state workforce now includes a new generation of employees. This new generation is showing great interest in being involved in IASCOE/NASCOE but, at the same time they have several questions about what we do and why we do things the way we do. This has, in turn, caused our State Board to take a look at our By-Laws and creating position descriptions. In addition to that we have a team working on updating our brochures and informational handouts that will be included in our Membership Welcome Packet for new employees and members.

Illinois has been working very hard on the plans for the 2019 MWA Rally which we are very excited to be hosting. It will be held in Champaign, IL at the iHotel (March 14, 15 - 16, 2019). 2019 will be NASCOE's 60th Convention year and in honor of this milemarker, we are going to have a photo op with a 60th backdrop for members to take advantage of.



Indiana

Stacy Helbert, President

The main concerns facing the state of Indiana stem from the reduction of ceilings due to workload models that have yet to be released. The positions we are able to hire for are creating new staffing shortages at a time when new programs are to be rolled out. Training and implementation of newly created programs are causing concerns in these understaffed offices. The uncertainty of hiring (even to meet our newly lowered ceiling) is looming over the state. The urgency for hires and potential need for temporary hours for assistance weighs on many. The on-boarding of newly hired/temporary employees has been taking way too long for those offices in desperate need. We hope for more transparency in the future in regard to our workload models. We need NASCOE now more than ever to make sure our voices are heard, so that every office can get the help they need. We need to make sure not only our members but all employees know that we are here to help.



Indiana has 191 CO members and 4 associate members. In efforts to increase our membership, we are currently seeking a co-chair to cover the southern part of the state.

Indiana is working hard to get everything in place for our bid for the 2021 National Convention. We have formed a convention committee this year to assist our fundraising and organizational needs. We ask for your support for our bid and hope to see you all in here in Indiana for the 2021 NASCOE National Convention!

Respectfully
Submitted,

Stacy Helbert
IASCOE President



Iowa

Jesse Wegner, President

Staffing and workload models. Iowa lost 31 FTE's in our new workload ceiling. Iowa does not believe this is accurate do to the volume of work that is preformed statewide. The loss of staff will ultimately decrease workload and outreach on all programs statewide as there are not enough hours in the day for existing employees to make up for 1 or 2 fewer staff members in an office. This is especially evident this year with a CRP signup that started in June and will end on August 17th. Most high CRP workload counties in Iowa are struggling to process a full years' work in only 2.5 months. This is also apparent with outreach, as offices feel it cannot be performed at expectations because we feel obligated to prioritize our current customer's needs.

This is more of a question.....Clarification would be appreciated on how comp / credit / OT hours are calculated into a counties workload. Are these hours used to signify that additional FTE's are needed in an office to get the work completed, or is it simply expected that our current workforce be tasked with additional hours to complete the work at hand. There are a lot of offices in Iowa over working themselves to complete CRP SU51. Iowa was authorized for OT hours. We have been led to believe that we need to keep track and submit all hours worked on all program areas because it will ultimately help out a counties workload.....just curious as to how this helps us at the end of the day.

*Major holes have opened up throughout the state with several employees leaving offices at the same time. This is a combination of employees reaching retirement age and a prolonged hiring freeze but also increased stress and low morale due to overall staffing levels. There are several offices in the state that went from having 4 FTE's and a full time manager, to 2 FTE's and temporary shared management. There are temporary shared management areas that have been established due to CED vacancies that are pushing a year. This is with no COT class currently on board and at this point the counties affected will be without a CED for well over a year, if and when a COT class is hired and trained. Basically in a nutshell, retirements are outpacing new hiring.

Suggestions to help: The hiring process needs to be accelerated. States also need to be given the authority to flex over their ceilings to fill holes. Non-ceiling COT's would be extremely beneficial to Iowa.

*Major workload is on the immediate horizon for fall/winter. I am very proud FSA was chosen to administer the Market Facilitation Program; however, FY19 Expiring CRP contracts are going to be increased by the 1-year extensions we are granting in 2018 (50+ in Fayette County). LFP is authorized in south central Iowa and MAL's are dramatically on the rise due to low commodity prices. In Iowa, December 15th marks the perennial forage certification deadline, CRP cost-share processing.....the To -Do-List goes on. My point, there are plenty of things do to with not enough people to do them.

*Positive News- Our SED released version 1.1 of the OPO's out too all county offices! We were also informed of our county workload efficiency color (yellow, green, gray). Iowa has 5 yellow, 46 green, and 46 gray counties. Our SED also found dollars and followed an IASCOE suggestion to hold COC orientation meetings for all newly elected COC members. There will be (4) regional meetings across the state at the end of August, NEFAC will be allowed to have a small platform. I am encouraging my entire COC board to attend. I am very pleased with the dialogue between the SED and IASCOE. I hope for more things to come!

These are the most pressing issues from Iowa.

Thanks!
Jesse

Michigan

Sherry Adams President

MASCOE has had a changing of the guards. Sherry Adams has taken over as president and Ashley Akl has stepped up as Vice-President. We would like to thank Benita Meekhof for all of the time and energy she has put into being president the last four years. Her leadership has brought much success to our organization and her continued guidance is invaluable.

Our annual convention was held on Cinco De Mayo this year. We had a good membership turnout, along with some great speakers. We were fortunate enough to have NASCOE President, Dennis Ray, Midwest Area Exec, Charis Hare as well as Midwest Alternate Exec, Jackson Jones. Our State Office was represented as well.

The updated MPP program has benefited many of the dairies here in Michigan and couldn't have come at a better time as many dairies have been suffering with the low prices.

As many other states, Michigan is struggling to be able to hire the help that is much needed in the field office. Michigan has had many retirements and have been unable to backfill the positions as the organization would like to see. But with the employees we do have, they seem to pull together and get the job done.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Adams, MASCOE President

Ohio

Charlene Stone, President

OASCOE did not have a convention in 2018, as participation has been low so in an attempt to get attendance up we went to a every other year convention. We are currently working on a venue and date, the goal is to have it sometime in March of 2019.

Kathy Balbaugh MWA Awards chair, challenged everyone to have at least 1 nomination in all 3 categories. And the winners are for Service to NASCOE was Charlene Stone, Service to FSA was Jodi Bolen and Service to Community was Amy Morman.

This year OASCOE decided to increase the scholarships to \$750.00 and add 1 additional scholarship which they named after RASCOE as they are such a huge supporter of the scholarships for our children. The winners of the Jim Pollack Memorial Scholarship and the RASCOE scholarship were: Madison Nusbaum, Jonathan Sowards, Amy Ritchie, and Mark Kuhlman.

Our membership is 83%, we are currently working on a task force to educate non members of our mission and dedication.

OASCOE sent 2 people to the MWA Rally in IOWA and 4 people to the National Convention in Sioux Falls, SD.



Minnesota

Kayla Mattson, President

Since our last update we have had a change in our Executive Committee. We sadly lost our Secretary/Treasurer, Gabe Power, as he resigned from the agency. We are happy to report that Andrea Grimm, a Program Technician in Becker County, was appointed as our Secretary/Treasurer and our MNASCOE leadership is working with her to get everything set up for her to take the reins.

We were happy to report that we had 30 people from Minnesota attend the National Convention in Sioux Falls. This was a combination of our two delegates, our Vice President, past officers and committee chairs as well as members, retired members, spouses, SED, COR and COC members. We had a terrific time. We left with an abundance of information, stronger friendships and also new friendships with numerous people from across the nation. During the convention it was announced that Minnesota had 100% membership. Although this is a great thing, we cannot take much credit for it. The reason for the increase in membership is because we had numerous members retire this past year that had paid their full year's dues by check. Our Executive Committee and Membership Co-Chairs are excited to work on the Membership Drive as we will be hiring a few new employees in the upcoming months.

We have been fortunate to continue to have discussions with our STO leadership regarding member concerns on a quarterly basis, more often if the need arises. Recent updates from the SED are that our ceiling for County Office is set at 313 (down from 321) and we currently have 292 employees on board. We are presently working to hire PTs in 5 offices and the next round of hiring it was reported that we will have additional PT positions as well as FLOTs. The final round of hiring in September leadership will be looking to hire to fill to the ceiling with PTs and a couple COTS.

One of the large concerns in Minnesota presently is the amount of shared management that is in place. As of July 30th, Minnesota has 15 permanent shared managers covering 31 offices in 41 counties and 6 additional temporary shared managers covering 14 offices in 16 counties. We presently have no COTs on board. When discussing this with our STO leadership, there is no plan of posting CED vacancies within the state until we have COTs that are qualified to start applying for CED positions. Additionally, Minnesota has lost some very good employees recently because they were temporarily living away from home waiting for positions, that are vacant, to be posted/opened closer to home. MNASCOE is concerned that we have invested time and money into training these employees that the agency would have benefited from for many years to come. We have asked leadership to allow for within state posting of CED and PT vacancies to allow current staff to apply to positions in areas of the state that they would like to get back to. We stressed that we want to ensure that we are taking care of the staff that we currently have on board and making sure to retain those employees.

Minnesota has decided to continue to utilize the Midwest Area website for the upcoming year and are working together with our Committee Chairs to determine what information we would like to have on our webpage. We also continue to build our database of home email addresses to be able to share information quickly with our members. A big thank you to Danielle for taking on this task and sending out the emails promptly. We will be working on scheduling a face-to face Board of Directors meeting in September and also will start working on our newsletter this fall. We are still working to confirm our MNASCOE Convention for the spring.

Respectfully submitted,

Kayla Mattson



My Visit with Congressman Jim Jordan

Annette Purkey, Ohio

I recently had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Congressman Jim Jordan, representing the 4th district in Ohio, along with his field representative Kirby Brandenburg. When I initially met Mr. Brandenburg a year ago he admitted he knew very little about agriculture or the Farm Service Agency. Being an old hand FSA employee and a new CED I generously offered to help him any way I could to increase his knowledge and become better acquainted with the FSA. Agriculture is the number one business in Congressman Jordan's area. A year had gone by and we ran into each other again and I offered to help broaden his horizons with FSA. The next day I followed through with an email telling my offer was sincere and that I look forward to meeting him whenever he was in town.

He took me up on the offer to discuss what FSA is about and how it tied into Ohio's agriculture scene. My head began to swim as I tried to figure out what information to give him. I printed off fact sheets, statistics, and maps, put them in a nice USDA folder and headed to the coffee shop.

It became clear that most of the things he thought we were, we were not. I clarified we were a grassroots, farmer driven agency that did not subsidize farm industries but provided the critical needed "safety net" programs.

Several weeks later I received an email stating Congressman Jordan would be in the area and would like to meet with me. He also invited some area farm owner/operators to attend the meeting. I was so excited to think I would actually meet with the congressman and then...I think I literally had a panic attack.

Random thoughts went through my head. What can I say without getting in trouble? What information is pertinent that I can cover and let the farmers talk all in a 45 minute time span? What are his thoughts on agriculture? I don't know how this political stuff works, what was I thinking? What if I say the wrong thing, could I lose my newly acquired CED position? Yes the "what about" and "what ifs" list went on and on. So I may be a little bit of a worry wart.

So I contacted the Ohio Legislative Chair Mark Van Hoose who pointed me to Kay Lumsden, MWA Legislature Chair. She was right on it and pulled in MWA Representative Chris Hare, National Leadership Chairperson Donnie Green and NASCOE Lobbyist Hunter Moorehead. All those "what about" and "what ifs" were answered. Kay, Hunter and I held a conference call and covered the items I would want to know about Congressman Jordan and items of interest about our agency he needed to know. Let me just say he was spot on.

Items discussed:

- the County Committee and how they are elected to serve the community and make decisions to insure the programs are administered correctly to make sure the needs of the farmers are met in their county.
- the realignment under FPAC to incorporate efficiency in the agencies of FSA/NRCS/RMA. He was not aware of FPAC
- being actively engaged in farming is required that just anyone cannot collect but must have a direct interest in the farm
- the \$900,000 rule under the adjusted gross income, which peaked his interest
- that each program comes with a payment limitation on the amount of funds they can receive and that it was not a bottomless pit.

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

- the safety net program of ARC/PLC, the number of farms participating from Shelby County. He asked the amount of money each farm receives. I had the total we disbursed for 2016 but not by farm, and explained the amount fluctuations and in Shelby County the dollar figure to be disbursed for the 2017 crop year is projected at \$0 for several bases due to the good yields and prices over the past several years. I explained that the money is a year behind and they actually do not receive the funds in the year they would have the bad year.
- Let him know we had livestock disaster programs but we have not had to administer any the last several years in our county.
- explained the FSFL administration of funding to producers and what a benefit it is to farmers to have the storage to take advantage of MAL
- explained the cash flow benefits of the MAL program of having the stored grain at harvest when typically the price is at it lowest and borrowing the money to pay creditors and then selling the grain later at a higher price and paying off the loan.
- CRP and its benefits, the need we have in the county due to being located in the Lake Erie Watershed and having a large section of the county with HEL acreage. That we currently had a list of producers interested in the program but that it was closed due to the acreage cap being reached in the country. The benefits of the cost share available for installation of the practices. How the annual rental payments are calculated based on soil types.

Comments by the producers following my information:

- The payment received last year was only 4% of his total farm income from ARC/PLC and conservation
- There is a large need yet for the installation of waterways and filter strips in the county.
- When it comes to water quality that the issue didn't happen just overnight and cannot be fixed overnight. When it comes to chemicals the farmer doesn't want to put on any more than they need to as it cost money and their bottom line. In addition they lie here with their families and they don't want the issues anymore than anyone else.
- that he needs to be aware that citizens in his district understand he believes in agriculture but that he doesn't always come across that to his district which has a large number of farmers in the state and hopes that he carries their voice to WDC
- That agriculture community is hit hard with the tariffs and world trade issues. With current events it has dropped the price farmers can receive less than it now cost to put out the crop and there is no backing out for farmers because it is in the ground now.

I thought it went well and the producers were very supportive. They were all very constructive with their comments and supportive of our agency. I couldn't have done a better job picking the six farmers that attended as all actively participated in our programs. The farmers thought the 45 minutes was the best meeting that had had with Congressman Jordan to discussed agriculture in Shelby County in quite some time.

After the meeting all I could think was...that wasn't as bad as all the things I was imagining. I am so thankful for the fantastic support that was given unselfishly by the rest of the NASCOE team. They gave me the information I needed and "you can do this" moral boost. Quoting Kofi Annan, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating". So true, so true. At this point I'm thinking if I could do this anybody could and everybody should speak up. We can never assume that the people representing us know what we do or how things are going unless we speak up...and that begins with NASCOE.

Missouri

Jared Singer, President

Many areas in Missouri are currently dealing with drought. Several counties in northwest, north central, and central Missouri are D-3 on the US Drought Monitor. Crop reporting went well overall, with many offices transitioning immediately to LFP, emergency release of CRP, ECP for livestock water, and finishing the CRP re-enrollments, extensions, and certain new enrollments. All FSA staff in Missouri is feeling the pressure of continued high workload and limited staffing.

With Richard Fordyce's appointment as FSA Administrator in May, Missouri is without an SED again. MASCOE got off to a great start with Mr. Fordyce and we look forward to developing a relationship with the new SED once they are appointed.

The 2018 MASCOE Convention will be held August 27 and 28 in New Haven, Mo. We're excited about this year's convention. The planning committee, led by Vice-President Mandi Bird, has worked hard to plan a great event featuring a professional speaker, tour, and of course the business of the organization. Our STO has been very supportive of the convention and many will be in attendance.

In 2018, MASCOE has made a concerted effort to outreach to all employees. One means was partnering with our farm loan counterparts, and our STO to provide refreshments during Missouri's PT Skills for Success Trainings. This worked very well, providing an opportunity for MASCOE leadership to interface with employees and provide them a token of our appreciation of their work. It also resulted in new regular and associate memberships.

As I have previously reported, I am very proud of the MASCOE Board and the energy and enthusiasm building in our organization.



Wisconsin

Jon Williams, Vice President

The year started with optimism but as the year has progressed we received no support and minimal communication from the SED. We are no longer allowed to have a page in the monthly Employee newsletter, we are not allowed to promote anything including association scholarships or awards using the government email or share point, and we even had to send out the memo for administrative leave for the MWA rally through our Association email. She did not feel it was FSA business even though the memo came from DAFO. The administrative leave for the NASCOE convention was posted on our share point site and there is actually a link to the WASCOE webpage as well.



We have had one meeting with the SED and another meeting with the SED and State Committee. Topics focused on shared management plans for the state and being proactive instead of reactive. We asked for more transparency in the process as well. This was met with significant resistance. We also talked about providing opportunities for PTs to serve as PT in Charge or having specialized COT training for PTs so they could be available to fill a CED vacancy in their home or a surrounding County if the COC feels they could potentially fill that vacancy.

The SED has also indicated that she would prefer to have meetings with just her via conference call and then she would relay the conversations to the management team.

The suggestion to schedule the STC meeting or management team meeting around the WASCOE convention in April was also met with deafening silence.

Finally, WASCOE is in a state of transition as many states are. We have many members who are directors, officers, and committee chairs who are near retirement or retiring and we have been challenged to bring on the new hires and find people willing to serve in leadership capacities.. These challenges include uncooperative CEDs, inability to communicate, and limited opportunities to promote the association. We have had some successes by making office visits to some counties with low membership and even phone calls to individuals.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Williams

WASCOE VP

