

The General Session of the 2013 IASCOE Convention was held on Saturday, April 6, 2013 at the Ramada Tropics Resort and Convention Center in Des Moines, Iowa. The morning began at 7:30 with a breakfast buffet.

The Scholarship and Awards Committee Chairs presented the awards. The 2013 Scholarship winners were introduced by Tammy Pruin. There were four winners this year, the awards went to:

- Kiley Munkel of Crestwood High School. Kiley will be attending Coe College and is the daughter of Howard County PT, Patty Munkel.
- Kaylee Buch; Kaylee is a freshman at DMACC this year and is playing softball. Kaylee is the daughter of Norman and Dedra Buch of Clarinda. Dedra is a PT in Taylor County.
- Kelly Lines of Nashua. Kelly will be attending Wartburg College next fall. She is the daughter of Floyd County PT, Dean Lines.
- Ben Rurup of Oskaloosa. Ben will be attending ISU in the fall and has joined the National Guard and will be a member of the ROTC program at ISU. Ben is the son of Mahaska County PT, Debra Rurup

John Landgraf introduced Dee Ann Lehn to present the Distinguished Service Award. The DSA award went to Judy Dameron for her commitment to NASCOE/IASCOE and FSA.

Membership awards were presented by Karen LaCour. The Sick Leave awards were given for XXXX hours. She also presented the county Membership awards for consecutive years of membership. Two counties received an award for 50 years of membership, Louisa and Taylor. NASCOE President, John Lohr, assisted in the presentation of these awards. Also recognized was Carole Dawson for 50 years of individual membership. The family of Gordon Grau was presented with an Honorary Lifetime Membership award.

After the awards were completed, Vice President Cindy Pistek gave a short welcome to all the members and guests in the audience. Invocation was delivered by Alan Donaldson. The Presentation of Colors was performed by The Boy Scouts of Des Moines, Troop 43. Rex Wittrock and Roger Christensen led the group in the National Anthem and Mike Praska led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Cindy then introduced the Committee Chairs to give their reports from Friday April 5. The following reports were presented:

- Membership, Karen Lacour
- Publicity, Lynette Gruchow
- Scholarship/Awards, Tammy Pruin
- Benefits/Legislative, Kelly Cain

Vice President Pistek called for a motion to accept the Committee Reports. Dee Ann Lehn motioned to accept the reports as read. Judy Dameron seconded the motion, all votes were in favor, motion carried.

Deb Krusemark, Retiree updated the group on the Iowa chapter of RASCOE. She was pleased to announce that they had a Board of Directors and held an Election of officers. She encouraged anyone to become a member of RASCOE either upon retirement or to become an associated member. She also asked us to help spread the word that the Iowa Chapter was up and running. Members can fill out an application for membership on the NASCOE website or look for RASCOE of Iowa on Facebook.

State Committee Chair, John Judge addressed the group next. He updated us on the State Committee actions. He stated that despite concerns in the Agency we still continue to impress our customers. He had recently returned from Washington DC where the State Committee Chairs were attended a briefing on the actions of WDC. He said there were 27 presenters and they didn't learn anything that FSA has not already distributed to the field offices. There is a concern among the FLP team that they are approving loans with no funding. Someone in the group of STC Chairs expressed concern with RMA enforcing conservation compliance issues if we have no Farm Bill in the near future. RMA has not taken a stand on this issue and did not have any comments for the group. Mr. Judge informed the group that one of the assigned tasks of the State Committee is to hear appeals. There are far fewer appeals now than when he started and he feels that this "speaks volumes of what the county offices are doing" and thanked all the employees for the work they have done despite the current state of the agency.

Our next speaker was State Executive Director, John Whitaker. Mr. Whitaker addressed some of the concerns USDA as a whole is facing. He stated that often times he refers to our Agency as the "Food Security Agency". He also thanked us for our participation on the statewide conference calls each month. Those calls are a way for him to stay informed of what is going on in the field. He wants us to keep asking questions and he will give us answers if he has them. He also touched briefly on Outreach. DAFO wants USDA to do more Outreach. Mr. Whitaker encouraged us to do outreach to producers who are not the typical "corn and bean" farmers. A farmer maybe someone who has a few acre garden that produces crop to sell at a farmers market or supplements or supports their livelihood.

Dennis Ray, NASCOE Midwest Area Executive, addressed the group after a short break. He updated us on some of the negotiation processes in Washington. He said that the process had stalled badly in the last two years because of budget. The NASCOE Negotiation Committee decided they were going to Washington in 2013 no matter what. May 6 -7 has been slated for that session. On March 17 a new negotiation process was introduced, modeled after the Program Submission process. Negotiation items can be submitted on a continuous basis and will be reviewed and sent in once a quarter. The Committee will also begin doing negotiations via VTC.

Mr. Ray also updated us on the NASCOE budget. Just like our agency, NASCOE has begun the process of scrutinizing their budget. A Task Force has been appointed to review the annual budget and determine where cost saving measures can be made. Another task force has been appointed to review Shared Management. NASCOE will also be reviewing the Grievance Process. Mr. Ray encouraged us to use the face to face MIDAS training as an opportunity to promote NASCOE/PAC/NAFEC etc.

Our next speaker was John Lohr, President of NASCOE. Mr. Lohr outlined additional issues that NASCOE was working on.

- Farm Bill – talks on the new Farm Bill started in the summer of 2010. NASCOE knew that we would face several challenges in our Agency with high commodity prices, high land prices, crop insurance subsidies, etc. were not going to be friendly to our agency. Currently NASCOE is promoting our involvement in crop reporting, certification, and some claims. NOT SALES!!
- Salary & Expense Budget
 - Pressure is continuing to be downward but remained optimistic that furloughs could still be minimal. The 714 money will be huge if we get it.
 - Hiring freeze has saved the Agency 16.5 million through March. Not sure when it will end, could continue to avoid furloughs. He did state that some of our offices and staff was ‘not doing well’ and needed help soon.
 - Office closings. Not sure on any talks regarding additional closings. However the same language was extended in the Farm Bill Extension. NASCOE is pushing for any additional discussions to be at the local level, what makes the best business sense.
 - VERA/VSIP – if the situation of office closings comes up again, he would like to see the VERA/VSIP be offered to the receiving county as well as the closing county.
- COC/NAFEC membership. Mr. Lohr encouraged all of us to visit with our County Committees about joining NAFEC – they can present things that NASCOE can’t sometimes.

Mr. Lohr also addressed some of the items that NASCOE was looking at for the future. Items such as:

- PT positions – grades
- Hybrid PT’s and Key PT’s
- CED Classifications
- Mentoring programs
- Benefits training
- Cross training – CEDs/FLMs. DAFO is encouraging it!

John Lohr and Dennis Ray also read two candidacy announcements for NASCOE elections.

After all of the speakers, President Jeff Davis recognized the 2012-2013 Board of Directors and thanked everyone for their efforts. He also announced the 2013-2014 Directors. Election of officers was held on Friday, April 5 so Jeff passed the gavel to Curt Houk, IASCOE President for 2013-2014. Jeff also announced the other officers for 2013-2014, Vice President is Curt Goettsch, Treasurer is Judy Dameron and Secretary is Jennifer Comer. Elected President Houk addressed the group briefly and expressed his excitement for his new role. He then called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, motion was given by Karen LaCour and seconded by Tammy Pruin, all votes in favor, motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45AM.

Raffle winners were announced as follows:

\$25: Deb Krusemark, Mary Roberts, Sherry Rodman, Jim Birkhofer

\$100: Kevin Keagan

\$200: Shirley Manernak

Josh Katcher sponsored a \$50 gift card that went to Curt Houk

First Time Convention winner was Adrianna Foxxen

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Comer
Secretary