

General Assembly
April 5, 2013

The General Session of the 2014 IASCOE Convention was held on Saturday, April 5, 2014 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 2014 Scholarship winners were introduced by Daniel Curry. There were seven applications this year and three winners selected, the awards went to:

- Chantel Schmidt , also Midwest Area Scholarship recipient.
- Maria Derdzinski
- Hannah Reifschneider

The Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Jeff Davis for Service to IASCOE/NASCOE and Barry Terhark for Service to FSA/Agriculture. Both nominations have been forwarded to the Midwest Area for ranking.

Membership awards were presented by Karen LaCour. There were 16 sick leave awards submitted their year, 3 over 1000 hours, seven for 1500 hours, and six for 2000 hours. She also presented the county Membership awards for consecutive years of membership.

After the awards were completed, Vice President Curt Goettsch gave a short welcome to all the members and guests in the audience. Invocation was delivered by Jeff Davis. The Presentation of Colors, Pledge of allegiance, and the National Anthem was presented by The Girl Scout Troop 806 of Des Moines.

Committee reports from Friday April 5 meetings were presented by the following Committee Chairs:

- Membership, Joni Birkhofer and Justin Bahansen, NASCOE Membership
- Publicity, Kris Koth
- Scholarship/Awards, Daniel Curry
- Benefits/Legislative, Dee Ann Lehn and Steve Luke
- Programs: Keith Wheeler

Deb Eshelman Beard, NASCOE Secretary, and member of Military Moms presented a tribute to our Veterans. She wanted to remind us to 'thank a veteran' for their service to our country and encouraged us to support our troops both in the United States and those serving in foreign countries.

SED Remarks:

SED John Whitaker shared with the membership some remarks of things happening at the National and State level. He discussed the CBS model currently being proposed in WDC. The model includes a workload study to be done nationwide to determine where each county office fits into this model. States will have the opportunity to look at CBS and see how it will work for them. As for closing any offices, STATES will determine if that portion of the CBS model will fit their workforce. Mr. Whitaker also encouraged us to become the 'voice of agriculture in Iowa'. He wants FSA to be the first agency people think of when they need information about agriculture. He challenged us to teach others about our agency and increase the positive aspects of what we do.

State Committee Chairman John Judge:

STC Chairperson introduced the STC members and gave a brief bio on each of them:

- **Gary Lamb:** Gary is an East Central Iowa farmer and veteran. He has been a farm activist for many years. He was one of the instrumental organizers of Farm Aid, he served on Staff for Harkin and was an agriculture advisory member for President Clinton.
- **Richard Machacek:** owns and operates a 1000 acre farm in Buchanan County. He is an Iowa State graduate with a Master's degree in Physiology. He was a member of the National Guard and a Super Delegate to the Democratic Party.
- **Matt Russell:** member of the Drake Law school staff, he owns and operates a 100 farm of fruits and vegetables to sell at local Farmer's Markets.
- **Marie Rossman:** own and operates a 600 acre organic farm in Shelby County providing a commercial size niche operation custom butchering hogs and cattle. She also owns a retail store.
- **John Judge:** he is a livestock farmer in southern Iowa. He spent 20 years in the commercial banking industry servicing loans and buying loans.

NASCOE President, Mark VanHoose

Mark addressed the group with some of NASCOE's concerns and areas of interest for the upcoming year. Some of the areas of concern are as follows:

- 60% of workforce will be eligible for retirement within the next 10 years. FSA needs to 'ramp up' staff.
- How will the COC structure be utilized in the future?
- Why are reorganization 'talks' happening at the State and National level – need to have county input.

Some of the "Must Haves" NASCOE is wanting for the upcoming years are as follows:

- We need to have a 'seat' at the table for any meetings for restructuring county offices.
- Reconsider the DD position as it stands today (perhaps combine DD/COR job descriptions)
- Don't hire from the top down.

Other topics Mr. Van Hoose discussed were:

- There are talks of promotion opportunities for grade 7 PT's.
- We have always 'gotten the work done', the new farm bill and the staffing numbers we have might challenge that.
- Continue building relationships with elected officials. They don't know we exist unless we are contacting them.
- It is no longer enough to just be a 'dues paying member' of NASCOE, younger members need to step into leadership roles at both the State and National levels.
- NAFEC: working closely with NAFEC leadership to provide support for them both in Washington and to help them build their membership.
- Benefits/Retirement Training: stay on the State Office for more of this, there is money there, it needs to be used.
- Performance Ratings: it is discouraging that CO PT's lag behind GS, not sure why there is such a difference but NASCOE is working with leadership on more training for all staff.
- NASCOE is very diligent in watching what 'management' is doing. When the Key PT positions were advertised, they were advertised as an 'off the street' job. NASCOE caught this and ensured it was a within hire.

RASCOE President Deb Krusemark addressed the membership on the progress that Iowa is making on establishing a RASCOE group. RASCOE does have connections with people in Washington and will not only address concerns with their benefits but will also have a voice for current employees to keep the benefits, opportunities and ensure a positive work environment. If any retirees want information on membership, please direct them to Deb. Associate membership is also available for current employees.

After all of the speakers, President Curt Houk recognized the 2013-2014 Board of Directors and thanked everyone for their efforts. He also announced the 2014-2015 Directors. Election of officers was held on Friday, April 4 officers for 2014-2015 will remain the same;

President: Curt Houk
Vice President: Curt Goettsch
Treasurer: Judy Dameron
Secretary: Jennifer Burgoin-Comer

President Houk addressed the group briefly and expressed his honor to have served the members for the last year and that he was looking forward to continuing his service. He expressed that if anyone has concerns, ideas, etc. to please share them with the directors. A motion to adjourn the meeting was presented by Dee Ann Lehn and seconded by Curt Goettsch, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:45AM.

Raffle winners were announced as follows:

\$25: Sam Madsen, Jolene Fechter, Michell Stowe, Donna Weise

\$100: Mary Lageschulte

\$200: Elisha Smith

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Burgoin-Comer
Secretary