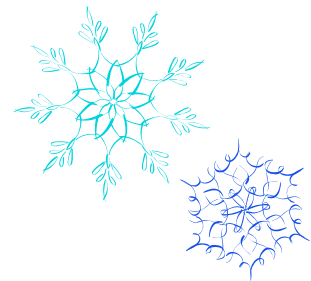
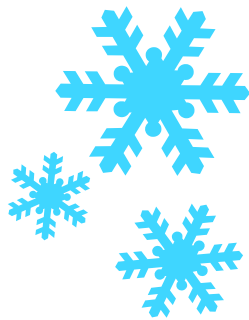
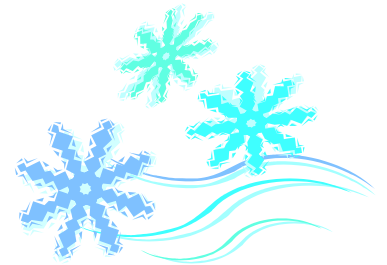
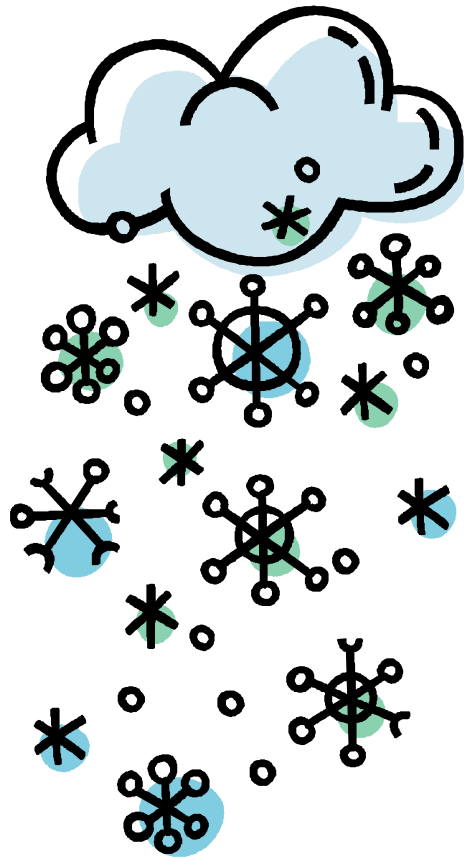


# IASCOE



The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

JANUARY 2015



# 2013/2014 IASCOE OFFICERS

## **President**

Curt Houk  
CED Poweshiek County



[curt.houk@ia.usda.gov](mailto:curt.houk@ia.usda.gov)  
[curt80houk@gmail.com](mailto:curt80houk@gmail.com)

## **Vice-President**

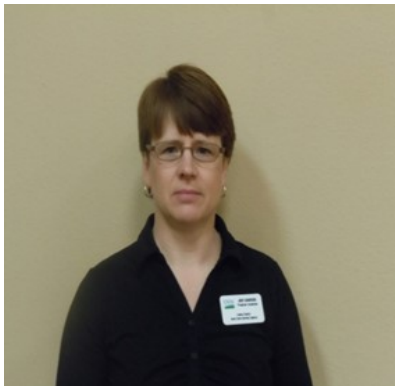
Curtis Goettsch  
CED Howard County



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## **Treasurer**

Judy Dameron  
PT Louisa County



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## **Secretary**

Jennifer Comer  
PT Page County



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## 2014-2015 IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

District	Program Assistant and County	County Executive Director and County
1 Director Alternate	Karen LaCour, Dickinson Samantha Erie, Pocahontas	Les Zobrist, Clay Larry Lago, Dickinson
2 Director Alternate	Cindy Pistek, Hancock Danielle Sidles, Kossuth	Barry TerHark, Cerro Gordo Angie Christian, Kossuth
3 Director Alternate	Andrea Carroll, Clayton Megan Koenigs, Howard	Curt Goettsch, Howard Heidi Nickol, Delaware
4 Director Alternate	Michelle Bruck, Shelby Cathleen Borst, Carroll	Steve Luke, Shelby Pat Warmbier, Harrison
5 Director Alternate	Alisha Lust, Jasper Travis Moore, Hamilton	Curt Houk, Poweshiek Justin Bahnsen, Polk/Dallas
6 Director Alternate	Joni Birkhofer, Muscatine Renee Schultz, Cedar	Kris Koth, Jones Randy Madsen, Muscatine/Scott
7 Director Alternate	Jennifer Comer, Page Monica Robinson, Cass	Cindy Bebout, Fremont/Mills Chris Irvin, Page
8 Director Alternate	Keith Wheeler, Madison Ronda Harrison, Lucas	Daniel Curry, Ringgold
9 Director Alternate	Judy Dameron, Louisa Deanna Rood, Mahaska	Dee Ann Lehn, Keokuk Gretchen McLain, Jefferson



# COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014

## LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Steve Luke

### BENEFITS CHAIR – Dee Lehn

District	Member	County
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
2	David Stromer	Hancock
3	Adriana Foxen	Buchanan
4	Pat Warmbier	Harrison
5	Teresa Simonton	Poweshiek
6	Renee Schultz	Cedar
7	Chris Irvin	Page
8	Kelly Cain	Madison
9	Patty Steffensmeier	Henry

### AWARDS CHAIR – Karen LaCour

### SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Daniel Curry

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Tammy Pruin	Wright
3	Connie Straw	Chickasaw
4	Donita Kenkel	Shelby
5	Kathleen Baker	Marshall
6	Amy Castillo	Johnson
7	Monica Robinson	Cass
8	Kathy Henely	Wayne
9	Lanie Benjamin	Davis

### PUBLICITY CHAIR – Kris Koth

1	Paul Berte	Pocahontas
2	Barry Terhark	Cerro Gordo
3	Heidi Nickol	Delaware
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Karla Novotny	Tama
6	Allison Vavroch	Benton
7	Mike Praska	Adams/Union
8		
9	Gretchen McLain	Jefferson

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Joni Birkhofer

1	Lisa Forburger	Palo Alto
2	Rosalie Carlson	Worth
3	Sheri Rodman	Clayton
4	Cathleen “Skip” Borst	Carroll
5	Tom Abbas	Hamilton
6	Randy Madsen	Muscatine
7	Susan Lange	Cass
8	Marla Morlan	Monroe
9	Deanna Rood	Mahaska

### PROGRAM CHAIR – Keith Wheeler, Madison

### EMBLEMS CHAIR – Kitty Benda, Marshall

### NAFEC CHAIR – Mary Roberts, Calhoun



## 2014 IASCOE Directors

### Other Roles

#### IASCOE Web Manager

Brian Beach - PT Sac County

[brian.beach@ia.usda.gov](mailto:brian.beach@ia.usda.gov)

[bbeach@mchsi.com](mailto:bbeach@mchsi.com)

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[dawilly@iowatelecom.net](mailto:dawilly@iowatelecom.net)

#### Convention DoorPrizes/Silent Auction

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#### Alt. Newsletter Copy Editor

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## A Message from our State Executive Director

The end of a year is often a time of reflection and as I reflect on this past year, one thing comes to mind, THANK YOU! A big thank you for all you do because I will not be able to mention it all.

Iowa FSA is ahead of other states in our implementation of the 2014 Agricultural Act, in large part because all of you and your efforts to serve our producers. As a producer, I see firsthand how dedicated each and every one of you are

to your local farmers.

As we implement significant changes to farm policy, that dedication is expressed not only at the FSA counter, but also in church, at school events, the grocery store, etc. Wherever you go, you are asked by farmers who know you for your expertise, "What is the best program for me?" This is a level of trust in a government agency that is unmatched!

You implemented the LFP for livestock producers with such expertise that Iowa was asked to volunteer staff for other states even though we were number six nationally in total number of applications. I turned down that request before it went to all of you because I felt that you had enough workload of your own at that time.

Thank you for taking time each month to communicate with me. I look forward to our monthly all employee conference calls even though I know that sometimes you just don't have the time to stop what you are doing. Communication is one the keys to success in any endeavor, so thank you for that opportunity.

I have a feeling that the next six months will be a challenge for all of us. Please know that even though I may not say it often enough, especially when you are so busy you can't even take a break, I am truly thankful for all you do. Thank you for being the best!

John Whitaker  
State Executive Director



## 2013-2014 IASCOE President



It is hard to believe that another year has come and gone. As my second year as President passes, I prepare to pass the gavel and reflect on the accomplishments of the IASCOE leadership team during my term. I am thankful for all of you who have made the Iowa Association of FSA County Office Employees – IASCOE – the impressive organization it is today. Over 90% of eligible employees in Iowa are paying their dues. Help us pass the word to those who are holding back.

Our FSA family has grown over the past year and at the same time is decreasing as after the first of the year some have made the decision to relax and see what the individuals who have retired before them are really talking about when they say it is great. These individuals have put in many years of dedicated service and have seen many different programs and projects come and go. They have earned a break and I wish them nothing but the best as it is a well-deserved life after FSA.

As we end 2014 and prepare for the changes 2015 will bring, let us remember the importance of NASCOE and NAFEC membership. With the pending uncertainty of the Farm Bill and possible program changes, it is important and vital that the county office and the county committee support organizations that can voice our concerns to the people that can make changes to benefit the interests of both organizations. With your help NASCOE and NAFEC can grow stronger and become an even louder voice. NAFEC will once again be sending out requests to join their organization. Please take time to share with your county committee. I want to encourage you to join as associate members as well. For more information please feel free to contact Mary Roberts, IASCOE NAFEC Committee Chair, or myself.

NASCOE officers and area executives will be meeting in January to prepare for negotiations with management and do the business of your association. This meeting will occur January 16-18 in Little Rock, Arkansas. NASCOE is always looking for suggestions from the membership to present to management—it's one of the things we do best. You still have time to submit negotiation items for consideration so take a few moments and complete the form on the NASCOE website. Pay special attention to the article in this newsletter.

I continue to work to make ensure that NASCOE is serving the membership. The next two years I will represent you and the Mid-West area on the NASCOE Executive Board. If you have any suggestions or concerns don't hesitate to contact me. It has been a pleasure to serve you over the last two years. This is my last newsletter article as your president. I am sure whoever takes on the role as president in the next two years will continue the great traditions we have.

In closing, I hope you have had time or will still take time to enjoy friends and family. We really do need to take time to pause and appreciate every blessing. Thank you! And take care.

Curt M. Houk  
IASCOE President  
NASCOE MW Area Executive



## 2013-2014 IASCOE Vice-President

Happy New Year

Wow! Another year has come and gone. Last year at this time we talked about how we had just had one of our hardest years in FSA. As it turns out there was a light at the end of that tunnel. Little by little things are looking up! This year's budget again has been passed. In fact, this year's budget ended up being more money for FSA than even was asked for by the President's budget. That is in large part to NASCOE's Legislative team. Proof that we can and will make a difference! Life in FSA is getting better. ISACOE and NASCOE will continue to fight the good fight for all FSA employees.



I would like to thank each and every one of our IASCOE members. We have a great membership here in Iowa. You might not know it but we (IASCOE Members) are very well thought of in NASCOE. In my mind that is because of the great people we have working in Iowa FSA. All of you are asked to do more with less, sure there may have been some grumbling but the fact is we still succeed in everything we do! I'm proud to be part of this awesome workforce!

We are still looking for people to chair and serve on committees for the 2016 NASCOE National Convention. Our goal is to put on one of the very best National Convention's ever. So far we had a great team that are 50+ strong and we still have lots of room for volunteers on all committees. If there is something you enjoy helping with please get in contact with me. You can find all my info below, also if you just have questions about 2016 NASCOE National Convention feel free to call me.

Another great way to find more information about 2016 NASCOE National Convention is by coming to the 2015 ISACOE State Convention. Join your fellow IASCOE Members for a Mardi Gras themed Convention, March 27 & 28, 2015 in Cedar Rapids at the newly opened DoubleTree by Hilton and Cedar Rapids Convention Complex! Rooms are only \$86.00 per night. That rate is good for 3 days before & after our meeting, so if anyone wants to stay for the weekend you may.

We have a block of rooms set up under Iowa Association of FSA County Office Employees. Link to book rooms: <http://goo.gl/3rAqdu> Simply click on the link and book your room or you may call 319-731-4444. We have some great speakers lined up again for this year. Your Board of Directors are working very hard to make it a new and exciting 2015 IASCOE Convention once again this year!

You are always welcome to voice a concern, comment, idea or question to your IASCOE directors, President or Vice-President. We can only gauge what the feeling is in Iowa on topics, based on what you tell us. We share these things often with the SED and the NASCOE leadership team. Our organization is only as good as our communications with our members. I look forward to hearing from you!!

Curtis Goettsch  
curt.goettsch@gmail.com  
319-290-6339

Greetings from SE Iowa!

I guess it's that time of year to reflect on the past. Personally, 2014 was a great year. I started a new lifestyle in January and within six months had dropped 30 pounds and am proud to say, I have kept it off. In April, I hit the milestone of 30 years with ASCS/FSA. It has been a good ride and looking forward to just a few more years. In July, I turned the big 5-0 and feel better than I did when I was 40.



We have seen a lot within the agency this year. It started out with a staffing freeze and now look how many new people that we have on board. Several of them have joined NASCOE/IASCOE and I thank them for that. I hope the others will join us too in our mission to make our jobs better.

"The best way to appreciate your job is to imagine yourself without one." *Oscar Wilde*

Judy Dameron  
IASCOE Treasurer



# REMEMBER WHEN

BY Paul Berte, Pocahontas CED

Its official I must be getting old I'm writing about times gone by and the way things used to be.

Remember when you couldn't wait until Christmas and when it arrived you thought you were on top of the world when you received a total of (4) presents for Christmas none of which cost more than \$20.00? Now kids are disappointed when they don't receive at least (10) gifts each with some costing over \$200.00.

Remember when growing up on a farm and having a two-party telephone line that you could listen in to your neighbors telephone conversations? Now the average household has one cell phone for each person in the house and a land line for the house itself. Contacting people is as easy as telling your phone to call them.

Remember when your typical house had just a one-stall garage and no storage buildings? How did we manage, now newly constructed houses have a two-stall garage at a minimum and most houses have at least a small storage building.

Remember when growing up and a family with just three kids was considered a small family? Now the average family has less than two kids.

Remember when the average sized farming operation was around 250 acres and almost all your neighbors had livestock? Now it's not uncommon for one operator to farm more than 1,000 acres and privately owned livestock operations are few and far between.

Remember when growing up you had just (4) stations with reception on your TV and an electric TV antenna controller which sat on top of the counsel TV? Now most household have at least (2) flat-screen TV's and 100's of TV stations that contain reality TV shows for almost every situation that you can imagine.

Remember when you acted out at school and the teacher would whack your fingers with a ruler or drag you out of the classroom by your ear? Now a teacher would be put on administrative leave and possibly fired for doing this just once.

Remember when middle school football was played by 12 – 14 year olds wearing nothing more than shoulder pads, helmet, and a good pair of jeans w/o holes in them? Now we drive our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders out of state to play Midwest Youth Football in full pads.

Remember when your family meals were home-cooked and always eaten at a kitchen table without a television set? Now take-out meals or eating on the run is normal and most meals are eaten while watching television.

Remember when growing up you shared one small bedroom with two other siblings and all your clothes fit into a dresser and small closet? Now most kids have their own bedroom and enough clothes to wear for 3 weeks without wearing anything more than once.

Remember when summers meant walking beans for at least a full month and it seemed like you would never finish? Now a majority of kids and some adults wouldn't recognize the term "walking beans".

Remember when only the luxury cars had power windows, door locks, and seats? Now you would be hard-pressed to find a car without power windows and power door locks.

Remember when it snowed and snowed a lot but school was not canceled? Now even the chance of a snowstorm usually means no school or at least a two-hour late start.

Remember when you spent hours in grade school memorizing math flash cards? Now this is looked harshly by Iowa Core standards as an improper teaching method.

Remember when growing up in a large family you stuffed 6-7 kids in a car with nobody wearing a seat belt and no car seats for infants? Now the driver could be ticketed and likely charged with child endangerment.

Remember when growing up on the farm milk was delivered by milk truck? Now this would be just plain weird.

Remember when you filled your car with gas and looked at price per gallon of \$0.98 and you had to pay for the gas in the store? Now we think \$2.50 per gallon is cheap and most people don't step foot in the store to pay for it.

Wow things have really changed. Can't imagine "a remember when list" from my parents or their parents. We are so lucky to live in this country with all the amenities we have and need to be thankful for them over this holiday season.

## NEGOTIATIONS & PROGRAMS UPDATE

Keith Wheeler, IASCO Programs Chair

If you are not familiar with the negotiations and program submission process, you should look into becoming more aware of how this process can help you have a better workplace. As you work with your day to day responsibilities, the negotiations and programs processes are a valuable tool for you to have a voice in how you would like to see agency improvements and changes. All you have to do is submit your idea or change to management.

There is actually a difference between the negotiations and the programs submission processes. Items submitted through the negotiations process are items that are procedural or structural in nature, whereas items submitted through the programs area are quick program fixes. An example of a negotiations item would be a deadline change; an example of a programs item would be suggesting a button be added on a computer screen. The deadline for 2015 negotiations submissions is December 15, 2015.

You can submit suggestions at any time during the year. The submission is completed with an online form that can be found on the NASCOE website under "Negotiations" and "Programs". Since items can potentially benefit the agency, management allows you to submit the items from work and on the work computer. If the item suggested is considered to be a programs request it will be forwarded up the chain as soon as possible. These items are considered quickly because NASCOE works directly with the National Office Program Specialists. Negotiation items are submitted year-round but only negotiated with management once a year in the spring.

When submitting items, NASCOE encourages you to include as much information in the submittal as possible, including procedure references. You might even consider having a friend or co-worker review your suggestion to see if it makes sense. Every item submitted is reviewed and considered, so please submit anything that is important to you as an employee. If it is important to you, it will likely be important to another employee.

Be assured that your NASCOE Leadership works long and hard through this process. Nothing that is submitted is taken lightly. Many of the submitted items actually see results which are a great thing for the employees who work for FSA. The negotiations process is the key to the relationship between your NASCOE organization and management. We are here to represent you!!

Quick tips on where to go if you have suggestion...

If you have a good idea or a suggestion ask yourself the following questions:

Is the suggested item procedural in nature?

If so, go to: <http://www.nascoe.org/Pages/Negotiations.aspx>

OR

Is the suggested item a quick program fix that makes work a bit easier?

If so go to: <http://www.nascoe.org/Pages/Programs.aspx>

Manual submissions can be completed using the [Manual Programs Efficiency Submission Form](#). After completing the form, you can email it as an attachment to: [Keith.Wheeler@IA.USDA.GOV](mailto:Keith.Wheeler@IA.USDA.GOV)

Government computers and government time is allowed when submitting a NASCOE Programs Efficiency Submission Form.

Please contact me with any questions and I hope to see you at the IASCOE Convention this spring.



## IASCOE/NASCOE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

It's that time of year again. Students interested in earning scholarships for higher education need to be aware of the following benefits of IASCOE/NASCOE membership.

The traditional IASCOE/NASCOE Scholarship Program is provided to the children and legal dependents of eligible NASCOE Members. This award may only be used to defray expenses for a student at an accredited school.

Applicants must be a NASCOE member's child or member's legal dependent. The NASCOE member's dues must be paid and membership kept current for the past 5 years, or if less than 5 years, continuous membership has been maintained since becoming a NASCOE member within the first 12 months of employment. The evaluation criteria are based on academics, extracurricular involvement, and work and community contributions. A state committee reviews the applications that are submitted and scores them.

IASCOE is planning on doing 3 scholarships of \$400 each. An applicant may only win one time.

Each and every application submitted to the State Scholarship committee is forwarded onto the Area competition regardless of whether they won at the state level or not. Area winners are selected from State entries. Each Area awards \$1,500.00. The National winner is selected from Area winners, and the National winner receives \$2,500.00.

IASCOE deadline to submit applications is January 31, 2015 which is earlier than some states so please be aware of the date! The application can be found on the NASCOE home page ([www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)) and is in a fillable format. Be sure to print the entire application as there is a good checklist of items that need to be submitted along with the application.

All applications may be hard copies or electronically submitted with appropriate signatures, copies of letter of recommendation and copy of the official transcript(s).

Entries should be submitted by the Jan. 31 deadline to:

Daniel Curry  
2007 County Hwy J55  
Mount Ayr, IA 50854

OR

[daniel.curry@ia.usda.gov](mailto:daniel.curry@ia.usda.gov)

Also NASCOE offers 2 different Scholarship opportunities.

(Continued on next page)

The **traditional NASCOE Scholarship Program** is provided to the children, legal dependents, and spouse of eligible NASCOE Members. This award may only be used to defray expenses for a student at an accredited school. Applicants must be a NASCOE member, member's spouse, member's child, or member's legal dependent. The NASCOE member's dues must be paid and membership kept current for the past 5 years, or since becoming a permanent FSA County Office Employee. The evaluation criteria are based on ability, incentive assistance, and other personal characteristics. Nominations for Scholarships are competitive. Area winners are selected from State entries (Note: Some States have their own Scholarship program and use their own application; Thus the NASCOE scholarship application must be submitted along with your State application for consideration for the NASCOE Scholarship Program), and each Area awards \$1,500.00. The National winner is selected from Area winners, and the National winner receives \$2,500.00. The time schedule contained in the NASCOE Awards/Scholarships booklet must be followed.

For you the Members of NASCOE and/or Members or students of eligible Members in their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of college, we are offering the **NASCOE Continuing Education/Collegiate Education Program**. The applicants must be either Members based on ASCS/FSA experience, courses attending or currently enrolled to attend, and a short essay explaining how this continuing education will further their career within FSA and/or Members or students of eligible Members in their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years of college working to earn their bachelors degree. There will only be one national winner of \$1,000 per year. The scholarship applicant cannot apply for both NASCOE Scholarship programs. The winner of this scholarship program may only win this award once

The applications are available on the NASCOE website ([www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)) and are in a fillable format for your use. Also included are all of the eligibility requirements and filing deadlines on the applications so you do not have to flip between multiple web pages. If you need additional information the current edition of the NASCOE Awards/Scholarships Handbook is also posted on this site, and/or you may ask your Area Scholarship Committee Chairperson or myself for assistance



## **THANK YOU, I APPREICATE YOU, YOU'VE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND!**

These are the words that keep everyone motivated and engaged! So please, don't forget that there are ways to express this appreciation right at your fingertips. Please check them out below and online at [iascoe.org](http://iascoe.org).

### **IASCOE AWARDS**

IASCOE provides some of those opportunities that you can take advantage of. Please be sure to request, submit, or nominate those that are deserving of recognition for the categories below:

#### **Extra Mile Award**

This is one of the nicest certificates NASCOE offers to its members! The beauty of this particular certificate program is that you can request an Extra Mile Award certificate for virtually ANYONE, not just IASCOE members, that has gone the "Extra Mile"! Do you know a young person that donated hair for the Locks for Love program? Or how about a USDA Service Center that went all out for Breast Cancer Awareness day? Or how about an elderly neighbor that raked your leaves while you were at work? Bottom line is that with this certificate, you can show your appreciation to anyone, NASCOE Member or not to say "Thank you!" for what you have done. The certificate does not come wrapped with ribbons or bows, nor is it framed, it is a professionally prepared certificate to honor the deserving recipient. Guaranteed to put a smile on the giver and the receiver every time! Just fill out the online form under the Awards tab on the NASCOE web- site ([www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)) and the certificate will be mailed to you within days!

#### **Distinguished Service Awards**

The three Distinguished Service Awards honor fellow NASCOE Members that have gone over and above in their:

##### **Communities**

##### **Service to NASCOE**

##### **Service to FSA- Agriculture.**

To nominate a fellow NASCOE Member please complete the online form that can be found under the Awards link on the NASCOE website at [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org) and send it to your State Awards Chairperson no later than February 1st. The nominations do not have to be lengthy, just point the facts/highlights for the Judges. For help in preparing the nomination, please see the nominations for the winners last year under the Awards link on the NASCOE website.

#### **Sick Leave Certificates**

The NASCOE Awards program offers sick leave certificates to persons that have reached a new sick leave milestone during their career with FSA. Sick leave certificates are a great way for a state to recognize dedicated NASCOE Members whom have reached 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, or 2,500 hours of unused sick leave as of February 1st. NASCOE also provides a plaque for NASCOE Members whom have achieved 3,000 hours of unused sick leave and is awarded at the National Convention. Simply send the name, county, and # of hours reached to your State Awards Chairperson no later than February 1st.

If you have any questions on any of these awards, please do not hesitate to contact your IASCOE District Committee person as listed on the [IASCOE.org](http://IASCOE.org) website or myself.

IASCOE State Awards Chairperson

Karen LaCour , 2320 110th Ave., Lake Park, IA 51347

Phone: 712-330-1347 Email: [cmego@evertek.net](mailto:cmego@evertek.net)



## Retirements in 2014

1/3/2014	Donaldson, Alan D.	STO
1/3/2014	Groen, Carol	Lyon
1/3/2014	Lundquist, David	Lucas
1/3/2014	Hanson, Linda	Ida
1/10/2014	Agne, Mary	Cedar
1/10/2014	DeWulf, Virginia	Cedar
1/24/2014	Frazier, Paula	Benton
1/24/2014	Crane, Neil	Monroe
1/31/2014	Steffens, Mary	Cherokee
1/31/2014	Oltmanns, Wanda	Plymouth
1/31/2014	Brown, Carol	Page
1/31/2014	Dubois, JoAnn	Buena Vista
2/11/2014	Diekhuis, Jeanine A.	Hancock
2/28/2014	Delay, Nancy	Warren
2/28/2014	Coats, Terri	Sac
3/21/2014	Reints, Thomas	Butler
3/21/2014	Brinning, Louise	Washington
3/21/2014	Hoffman, Charles W.	Monona
3/31/2014	Heaberlin, Judy F.	Jasper
4/25/2014	Peters, Sandra J	Clinton
5/2/2014	Kramer, Kathleen	Dubuque
5/2/2014	Snakenberg, Melia	Iowa
7/25/2014	Gordon, Judy A.	Cherokee
7/25/2014	Klaschen, Robbie	Cherokee
7/26/2014	Straw, Colleen L.	Chickasaw
7/31/2014	Veit, Thomas J.	Buena Vista
8/29/2014	Braddock, Robin	Cedar
9/26/2014	Steffens, Luanne	Montgomery
9/30/2014	Juilfs, Kimberly M.	Pocahontas
11/1/2014	Reichter, David	Clayton
11/30/2014	Trout, Mica J.	STO
12/26/2014	Willis, Cynthia J.	Cerro Gordo
12/26/2014	LaCarte, Shawn M.	Clinton



## Sending Son to Washington, D.C.

By Bev Nelson, CED Van Buren County

What kinds of parents send their 12 year old son to Washington, D.C. alone? I guess that would be my husband and I. Not only did we do it once, but two years later we sent him again! Alone, not knowing anyone!

When our son, Trenton, was invited by People to People to go to Washington, D.C. it must have been me channeling my inner wants to him, as I've never been there. Trenton has always been a history buff so willingness does not even come close to the excitement and enthusiasm he had when we said, "Yes, you may go". People to People is a student ambassador program dedicated to enhancing cross cultural communication across communities and nations.

The anxiety I felt putting this 12 year old kid on a plane by himself was palpable. We did find him a direct flight from Chicago, which helped a bit. People to People representatives met Trenton at his gate and thus began a whirlwind week with 300 other students. First stop was Philadelphia, by bus, where they visited the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. Later a dinner cruise on the largest sailboat still in operation was highlighted by some girls sunbathing in bikinis on another boat. Then it was back to D.C, to start a very long list of memorials and museum visits. Memorials such as the Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington, WWII (where Trenton found the Iowa pillar), and Vietnam were visited. The Korean War Memorial was particularly fascinating in that no matter where you stand the soldiers' eyes look like they are looking at you.

A breakfast boat trip on the Potomac took the group to Mt. Vernon George Washington's home and burial site. A "drive-by" the White House did allow for a few minutes stop for some pictures. Then it was onto the Smithsonian Museum for tours through the American and National History areas. The Spy Museum captured these young students' interest as no cameras are allowed. There is spy equipment from decades ago, plus modern technologies, including items from James Bond movies. Their imaginations were going wild with the things they could do with the spy equipment! There wasn't enough time to see all there is to see at the Air and Space Museum. The exhibits of space crafts, planes, and helicopters, to name a few, got many wanting to explore not only the museum but also a career in this area.

Arlington National Cemetery is one area Trenton said he'd never forget. Learning about the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the dedication of those soldiers watching over the tomb, and seeing the miles of markers made quite the impression on a 12 year old. That evening Cookie Roberts, (yes, the news woman), spoke to the group of 300 on careers in journalism and media. A big highlight of the trip was being in Washington, D.C. on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July; watching the million dollar fireworks with over four million other people, while his family watched it on TV. Surprisingly, no students got lost or were left behind. Trenton said they have fireworks that light up the sky and you see Washington or Lincoln's face in it. Totally spectacular!

Each evening the students met at the hotel conference room to discuss their day, complete questions, and do reports. The great thing with People to People is they have lots of chaperones, and do not let the students leave their rooms without the other roommates. Still, Mom and Dad felt a huge sigh of relief when he got off that plane in Chicago.

Two years later the memories of anxiety and worry must have faded (or maybe my old age) enough that when Trenton was asked to attend a National Youth Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. we said yes again. This was a bit different. There were a smaller number of total students - 150. At age 14 he was one of the youngest attendees. Attendees were required to wear a suit and tie each day; big change from tee shirts, blue jeans, and boots.

(Continued on next page)

Some of the same sites were toured but at the Spy Museum this group got to do a reenactment of spy surveillance, collecting intel, breaking into a house (always good to teach a teenager??), and solving a mystery.

During the forum, small groups were given an international crisis situation and asked to solve it. Each member of the group was given an assignment. Trenton had to GPS the crisis site during one exercise, and another time he was the communication tech between countries. During these reenactments, two four star generals came in and spoke to the leadership students. What was interesting with this leadership forum was that many students were from military academies or from other countries. This freshman from Fairfield High School got a big eye opener about a military academy from his roommates; I don't think he's ready to sign up for that kind of school. Trenton's chaperone for his group just happened to be from Kalona Iowa, which we found very funny as there were chaperones and students from all over the world.

After two amazing experiences in Washington, D.C. there is talk of a career in our nation's capital. Time will tell....and Mom still wants to visit the attractions.



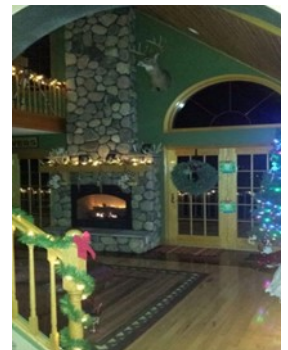
## Holiday Traditions:

What are your Holiday Traditions? Is it putting up that Christmas tree the day after Thanksgiving? Or maybe, it is spending a weekend with your family and friends baking holiday treats to share. Regardless of the tradition it is that time of year when we all seem to put aside the hustle and bustle of the rest of the year and share our Holiday cheer. This year I was asked to write an article for the newsletter; Struggling with what to write about and what is fitting I decided that I would write about a Holiday Tradition that I have started with my family and friends.

Seven years ago on the first weekend in December, my older sister and I decided to start a new holiday tradition for us, we started a baking day. We spent the day with our children baking and making all the holiday goodies we could remember as kids. The children (twins) too small to frost a cookie, the holiday music in the background, and talking of family Christmas's with relatives that are only with us in spirit. For my sister this was wonderful. So year one came and went and the baking day was a success. We baked from 8 a.m. and finished around 6 pm. We had more goodies than we knew what to do with so we donated several plates to other family and friends. It felt so good to see the cheer of the season and true appreciation from everyone that received our holiday goodies. Since the first year of our annual holiday baking day has grown. For those of you reading this, if you know me you know that I enjoy planning gatherings, family outings, and friendly events. Anytime I can find a reason to have a big meal, have lots of people over to my house, make memories and laugh, I am all in. So, for those of you, it is probably not shocking for you to read that in more recent years we have anywhere from 13-15 women as well as 23-27 children baking. As you can imagine it takes a lot of planning and organization to have something for everyone to do. Just for picking up the groceries I use up four hours of annual leave and spend three hours shopping in the local grocery store; and the other hour drinking some holiday cheer to prepare me for the upcoming chaos! I start off with a clean house but by the end, cleanliness is out the door!

Now, with that many people it is hard to move in my house, my cousin says I only have an eight butt kitchen. The moms set up decorating stations for kids to rotate to. Holiday music is playing in the background (of course with all of the talking, giggling, and chaos you can't hear it, but it is playing). The kids decorate goodies for a while, then go outside to play or upstairs, down stairs, in the kitchen and rotate back around again. Often times several of us will just look across the room, the joy of seeing the kids decorate a sugar cookie, or putting sprinkles on top of the chocolate covered pretzels, the laughs, the smiles, or the licking of a spoonful of frosting is all you see. It's the one time of year the utter chaos of that many people in one house or one kitchen puts a smile on your face. Now, with that many people you can imagine the sampling going on! J Our Holiday Tradition is slightly changing as the children get older. Instead of the annual baking day being about my older sister and I baking and remembering the things of our childhood that make us smile, it is about making memories with our children, extended family, and friends that someday will make them smile. As you go through this holiday season and into the New Year, I challenge each of you to think of the holiday traditions you have, that bring you good cheer. For me this holiday tradition is the best gift I will ever get. I get to embrace the season and jump start the holidays with my favorite holiday tradition. Baking goodies, being with family, friends, and making memories that I hope last far beyond my lifetime.

Have a blessed Holiday Season!! --**Angie Christian**





## **Twas The Month After Christmas**

Twas the month after Christmas and all through the house  
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.

The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste.  
All the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a number!  
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).

I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;  
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,  
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese  
And the way I'd never said, "No thank you, please."

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt  
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt --

I said to myself, as I only can  
"You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!"

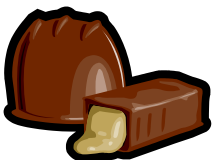
So--away with the last of the sour cream dip,  
Get rid of the fruitcake, every cracker and chip  
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished  
Till all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie--not even a lick.  
I'll want only to chew on a long celery stick.  
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,  
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore --  
But isn't that what January is for?

Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.  
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!

- Anonymous



## MEET MARIE



I would like to introduce you to Tama County's newest employee....  
Marie Mann.

Marie and her husband, Larry, live in Toledo with their two teenage daughters, Leah and Megan. Marie enjoys attending the girls' music, sports and dance activities and participating in the local Farmer's Market. Marie and Larry also own a sanitation business.

Before coming to FSA, Marie worked for 20 years for the Department of Human Services with Juvenile Delinquents.

Marie came to our aid as a temporary office employee on April 20, 2014, in anticipation of the heavy workload for the Livestock Forage Program. Like many other counties.....we got buried with LFP and certification!!

I can NOT imagine what it must be like for a new employee to start working for FSA! With so many producers, so many programs, so many handbooks and so many acronyms!! I was always surprised to see Marie come back for more! What a trooper!! Marie took this all in stride and worked through one application after another and quickly learned some of those acronyms!

I believe it was mid -June when the announcement was first posted that we could hire a permanent employee, and then reposted in July with a closing date of July 16<sup>th</sup>. On September 22, the applications finally made it to the county level and on October 19, Marie was offered the position. And she ACCEPTED!!!!

Since then she had learned of a few more programs, and has been fortunate to be able to attend some face to face meetings on ARC/PLC and NAP. It's good that she can get out and meet some of the FSA family.

Marie says she enjoys working with her co-workers! 😊

But guess what, Marie!? We like working with you too!!

And WELCOME to the FSA FAMILY!!



Written by Karla Novotny



**IASCOE 2015**

“Let the Good Times Roll!”

March 27 & 28, 2015

Join your fellow IASCOE Members for a Mardi Gras themed Convention in  
Cedar Rapids

At the newly opened DoubleTree by Hilton and Cedar Rapids Convention  
Complex

DoubleTree by Hilton will also be the location for the  
2016 NASCOE National Convention in August 2016

So come get a sneak peak.

Here is a website to book rooms for IASCOE 2015 at \$86.00 per night.  
That rate is good for 3 days before & after our meeting, so if anyone wants  
to stay for the weekend you can.

Link to book rooms: <http://goo.gl/3rAqdu>

**More info on the 2015 Convention to come soon!**