

IASCOE

The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

October 2011



2011/2012 IASCOE OFFICERS

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 CED Plymouth County



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Secretary/Treasurer
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2011-2012 IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

| DISTRICT NUMBER | PROGRAM ASSISTANT AND COUNTY | COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COUNTY |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| 1 Director Alternate | Karen LaCour, Dickinson Nancy Heideman, Clay | Jeff Davis, Plymouth Larry Lago, Dickinson |
| 2 Director Alternate | Cindy Pistek, Hancock Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock | Tammy Pruin, Wright Barry TerHark, Cerro Gordo |
| 3 Director Alternate | Karen McNeil, Winneshiek Kevin Keegan, Buchanan | Cindy Mensen, Clayton |
| 4 Director Alternate | Brenda Albright, Audubon Mary Lageschulte, Ida | John Landgraf, Sac Heidi Nickol, Ida |
| 5 Director Alternate | Chris Grieder, Polk Teresa Heck, Polk | Steve Kennedy, Jasper Lee Ann Davis, Boone |
| 6 Director Alternate | Jessica Yuska, Scott Joni Birkhofer, Muscatine | Devalyn Wilson, Cedar Randy Madsen, Muscatine/Scott |
| 7 Director Alternate | Sue Beemer, Taylor Judy Lundgren, Page | Cindy Bebout, Fremont Lynette Gruchow, East Pottawattamie |
| 8 Director Alternate | Julie Derby, Marion Connie Bence, Madison | Kelly Cain, Madison Joyce Frost, Wayne |
| 9 Director Alternate | Judy Dameron, Louisa Dawn Stewart, Henry | Dee Ann Lehn, Keokuk Gretchen McLain, Jefferson |



COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2011-2012

LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Dee Ann Lehn

BENEFITS CHAIR – Kelly Cain

| District | Member | County |
|----------|------------------|-------------|
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| 2 | David Stromer | Kossuth |
| 3 | Karen McNeil | Winneshiek |
| 4 | Pat Warmbier | Harrison |
| 5 | Teresa Simonton | Poweshiek |
| 6 | Joni Birkhofer | Muscatine |
| 7 | Chris Irvin | Page |
| 8 | Kelly Cain | Madison |
| 9 | John Bartenhagen | Louisa |

AWARDS CHAIR – John Landgraf

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Tammy Pruin

| | | |
|---|------------------|-----------|
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| 3 | Connie Straw | Chickasaw |
| 4 | Denise Dugan | Woodbury |
| 5 | Connie Safley | Dallas |
| 6 | Angie Reynolds | Muscatine |
| 7 | Phyllis Reineke | Taylor |
| 8 | David Wynn | Monroe |
| 9 | Carol Long | Mahaska |

PUBLICITY CHAIR – Brenda Albright

| | | |
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| 2 | Barry TerHark | Cerro Gordo |
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| 5 | Kitty Benda | Marshall |
| 6 | Jessica Yuska | Scott |
| 7 | Carole Dawson | Taylor |
| 8 | Rhonda Cooper | Union |
| 9 | | |

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Karen LaCour

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|
| 1 | Mark VonArb | O'Brien |
| 2 | Janine Schwarck | Mitchell |
| 3 | Sheri Rodman | Clayton |
| 4 | Cathleen "Skip" Borst | Carroll |
| 5 | Rodney Biensen | Story |
| 6 | Renee Schultz | Cedar |
| 7 | Dan Wells | Adair |
| 8 | Marla Morlan | Monroe |
| 9 | Cynde Briggs | Mahaska |

PROGRAM CHAIR – Jessica Yuska

EMBLEMS CHAIR – Chris Grieder



2011 IASCOE Directors

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2011 Awards & Scholarship Committee



2011 Publicity Committee



2011 Membership Committee



2011 Legislative and Benefits Committee

PAST IASCOE PRESIDENTS

1959-61 Kenneth Hatcher
1961-62 Raymond D Vanderhorst
1962-63 Luther Stock
1963-64 William H Holiday
1964-65 Charles Bacon
1965-66 Gaylor A Thayer
1966-67 V. Deane Thornton
1967-68 Marguerite Liddle
1969-70 Warner C Walrath
1970-71 Janet Hemm
1971-72 Carl Lantz
1972-74 James A Riekens
1974-76 Cecil F Zollars
1977-79 Garnita Ewart
1979-80 John Ace Parker/Gary Brewer
1980-82 Gary Brewer 1982-84 Larry Niles

1984-86 Joe McLaughlin
1986-87 Pat Drew / Ronald Parker
1987-88 Mike Houston
1988-90 Ronald Reuvers
1990-92 Steve Abbas
1992-94 Kevin Fitzpatrick
1994-95 Jerry Frank
1995-97 Kevin McClure
1997-99 Jolene Fechter
1999-01 Trice Smith
2001-03 John Landgraf
2003-05 Tom Lane/Alan Donaldson/
John Landgraf
2005-07 Dee Lehn
2007-09 Steve Kennedy
2009-11 Cindy Mensen

A Message from our State Executive Director



Change is easy if we don't have to give anything up in the process. This year, many of the changes we have gone through have not been easy. Our budget situation has caused us all quite a bit of stress starting with the continuing resolutions to the final negotiations and passage with only five months to implement the changes and reductions. Throughout all of this, I have tried to present as much information as I had at the time or had permission to share.

The process of getting by with fewer staff both in the counties and the State Office will not be easy, but we will do what it takes to get the job done. I know that the VERA/VSIP process has caused a lot of questions about the future of our agency. It makes me worry about implementing a new Farm Bill in 2013 or sooner depending on when changes occur. Sure, we are comfortable right now in what we are doing, but what if our farm programs contain a modification or combination of ACRE and SURE? I do remember the implantation process of both of these programs in 2009.

There is one thing I am sure of, that is the ability of the Iowa FSA employees to handle whatever job they are asked to do! You have all demonstrated to me your strengths in the jobs you do every day. This is an agency I am proud to represent!

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the producers of Iowa. Our producers provide our nation with a safe, secure food supply and we should be proud to support them in that endeavor.

I am also very thankful to all of you who helped with the Feds Feed Families Food Drive this year! We doubled our goal because of you! Thank you.

2011-2012 IASCOE President



Hello everyone,

Just got back from Texas and the National NASCOE convention. To say it was a hot time in Texas might just be an understatement. We saw lots of old friends and met many new ones. It was somewhat of a different atmosphere because of the election process for a couple of different things. We had an election for a new NASCOE President which was not as much an election as it was a succession into the presidency of NASCOE. John Lohr, former Vice President, will be a good president and has big shoes to fill as the successor to Myron Stroup our now past President who did so much for you as President. I really do not see how he had time to do anything back in his office and he must not have slept very often because he was always working for you as NASCOE members. The real election occurred when there were two individuals that were vying for the Vice-Presidency of NASCOE. Two well qualified individuals that know where NASCOE has come from and where we would like to head in the future. Cindy Hall from Nebraska and the Northwest Area and Mark VanHoose from Ohio and the Midwest Area. After listening to the candidates announce that they are running for the Vice Presidency, then hearing the nomination speeches, Mark was elected to Vice President. I have talked with Mark on a number of different occasions and I believe he will do a good job for you and me.

One of the things that was noticeably absent from this convention was someone bidding for a future convention. There was no one that through their hat in the ring for the 2013 National NASCOE Convention. That was kind of different because there is usually at least one and sometimes numerous states vying to host the National Convention. The NASCOE leadership did say that there is possibly one state (that remained nameless) that would possibly be interested in hosting the 2013 NASCOE Convention. I was asked a number of times if Iowa was that state. Since I only got two replies when I asked the question in the past if Iowa might be interested in hosting the National Convention, I would say emphatically "NO". A National Convention would be kind of fun, but it is also a bunch of work and not something that only 10 or 20 individuals can do. You would need 100+ individuals that would be willing to put in the time to undertake a monumental job like that.

One thing that that was brought up, was about having a joint NACS/NASE & NASCOE Convention in 2013. One of the drawbacks was that the NACS & NASE employees associations would want the convention to start on Monday and dispense on Thursday night or Friday morning and everyone leave by the weekend. One of the reasons for that is because a number of the NACS & NASE individuals that attend their convention are on the government time and dime. In other words they are not taking leave to attend and their expenses are being paid by FSA. That is a hard thing for me to swallow in this time of tight budgets. We, as the representatives of IASCOE or any of the state associations of NASCOE are not given administrative leave to attend the NASCOE convention and thus we are on our own time and dime in attendance and that is why we try to go from Wednesday through Saturday with Tuesday and Sunday being travel days. I really do not think that the joint convention would be a good idea because the other associations only wish to use NASCOE to get a better rate and NASCOE doesn't get much out of the joint convention. We talked about a lot of what is going on now and what may be going on in the future with NASCOE and FSA. With the budget the way that it is, it will make us (FSA) look a lot different in the future. We need to be able to do the job and do it well. We need to be willing to maybe do other jobs that may be considered outside of the realm of what we do right now.

We need to be in tune with what is going on around us. That brings up CapWiz, we all need to be signed up for CapWiz so we can always be in touch with our Congressman or Senators. If you have any questions please get in contact with me and I will answer any questions that you might have. If I can't answer your question I will call the national CapWiz coordinator, Tammy Eibey, and she should be able to answer any questions that you might have.

Another thing that was discussed was the PAC and that is something that I would much rather talk directly to you if you have any questions.

By the way we did have a National Award winner and the award went to Brian Beach for the IASCOE Website. I received the award for Brian at the Awards Banquet held on Saturday evening. Congratulations Brian and keep up the good work.

Again, if you have any questions about anything please feel free to contact me. Any Ideas that you may have I am open to. Hope to hear from you soon.

Jeff Davis, IASCOE President

2011-2012 IASCOE Vice-President!



National Association for County Office Employees (NASCOE) recently conducted their National Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas. As your vice-president I was honored to represent IASCOE as one of the Iowa Delegates. This convention brings information from the upper levels of the agency right down to the county office employee level. It also gives us an opportunity to bring our concerns directly to the upper levels of the agency. The agenda of the convention is full of meetings and exchanges of information/concerns in the small span from Wednesday evening until Saturday noon.

The convention begins with a short meeting of voting delegates on Wednesday evening. Thursday morning we heard from Juan Garcia (Acting Deputy Administrator Farm Programs) and Bruce Nelson (FSA Administrator). Thursday afternoon the group breaks and separate committee meetings are conducted for Awards, Benefits, Legislative, Membership, Publicity and Programs. The ideal situation would be that a representative from Iowa would attend each of the meetings, but since the meetings are held at the same time only a few of the break-outs can be attended. During these sessions discussions are conducted in regards to any concerns and/or issues that should be addressed. After these meetings are completed, all attendees go to their respective area meetings.

During the area meeting all discussion from the committee meetings just attended is brought to the area meeting. Any other concerns of the area are also discussed at this time. On Friday morning a Q & A is conducted with several individuals from the agency. We were pleased to have Juan Garcia (DAFP), Bruce Nelson (FSA Administrator), Brent Orr (DCP Program Manager), Laura Schlote (MIDAS) on the panel for the Q & A session. Some of the remaining members of the panel were not able to attend due to budget concerns. The intent was to utilize a video conference, ironically that did not go well and those individuals in DC were unable to contribute to the session due to video difficulties. The entire room used this failure as a demonstration to upper level management that technology is not always a good substitution for face-to-face discussion. On Friday afternoon the area meetings are once again conducted to complete any unfinished business and elect their area executive and alternate executive. Finally, the committee meetings are then conducted to bring any discussion from the areas to the committees. On Saturday morning we hear all of the committee reports from the past two days, discuss NASCOE business, announce the newly elected area executives and conduct the election of the NASCOE Executive Officers. The new President of NASCOE is John Lohr and the new Vice-President is Mark VanHoose. Of course this is a very brief recap of the "mechanics" of the convention.

The main topics of discussion of course were budget and the next Farm Bill. In 2012 our budget will be reduced 87 million compared to the 2011 budget. A working group has been organized consisting of 6 SED's. Their job is to look for cost savings. President Myron Stoup reported that NASCOE asked to be at the table during these sessions, but the working group indicated we would be included "when the time was right". Office closure and consolidations are possible options in these cost savings efforts. Bob Redding (NASCOE Legislative Consultant) reported that anything is on the table in regards to budget savings and it is difficult to know where the budget savings will fall. NASCOE will have to be prepared to respond to any proposed legislation using the PAC (Political Action Committee), Capwiz and personal contact with your legislators. This is not the time to sit back and wait for whatever happens. It is our job to protect the interests of the farmer by preserving our County Committee system, continue to offer face to face communications while embracing modern technology, and administer the programs assigned to our agency with the integrity that has always been a part of FSA.

Bob Redding indicated that Congress is in a new climate, one that we have not seen before. We are in a hostile political environment, we have no money and commodity prices are high. We have 93 new members in Congress and they were elected to make a change. The House Ag and Senate Ag committees will have to come up with Ag cuts by October 13th. On November 23rd the House Deficit Committee will compile a report and on December 31st a balanced budget must be agreed upon. If it is not done by then they will go to sequestration with a 4-5% across the board cut to capture cost savings. Bob noted that Crop Insurance, CRP, Food Stamps etc are most likely safe from cuts with sequestration. Things like eliminating the Direct Payments and revising the AGI to \$250,000 are some items that have been discussed in regards to Farm Bill changes.

We have a long road ahead of us. We have been in a tight budget before, but this is a road untraveled and we need to be diligent on our journey. We need to support the farmer, the agency and each other. Please take this as an opportunity to be part of the solution and become active in NASCOE. We need to encourage new membership and we need all members to be active.

Cindy Pistek, IASCOE Vice President

2011-2012 IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer



Greetings from SE Iowa

Wow! Is it October already?!? I am so looking forward to the cooler temps and everything else that comes with autumn and fall. This is my favorite time of year!

I attended the NASCOE National Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas in August. There was a lot of great information, great discussions, and good times with old and new friends. The temperatures were hot, hot, and hot. Next year's convention will be in Boise, Idaho and hopefully temperatures won't be as hot. As soon as I see that the minutes and Q & A session have been posted on the NASCOE website, I will make sure to let you all know so you can read all the good stuff that happened. I believe Cindy Pistek has hit on some highlights in her article.

As IASCOE treasurer I have been busy recording dues for the 2011-2012 membership year and reconciling them with a NFC report that I get every pay period. One of the issues I have is when someone gets a grade increase and they move into a different payroll deduction category. If this happens to you, you must submit a new FSA-444 to the State Office. If you don't, then the incorrect amount will be deducted from your pay. Also, if you have been using payroll deduction and wish to write a check for the entire year's membership, you must remember to fill out a FSA-444 to terminate that deduction. If you are not currently a member of IASCOE I would appreciate you considering doing so. IASCOE/NASCOE works very hard for all FSA employees and there are a lot of benefits we wouldn't have without the hard work of a lot of dedicated people. The larger our membership, the more influence we have in Washington D.C. If you have any questions or concerns about IASCOE/NASCOE please contact one of the directors in your district or feel free to contact any one of the officers.

This first 6 months of being your Secretary/Treasurer has definitely been a learning experience. I have had to set up a desk at home specifically for the IASCOE computer and printer, so that it is accessible at all times. Hopefully by the time I have done this for a complete year, I will be a little more organized and know exactly what is expected of me and when!!

Judy Dameron
PT Louisa County
IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer

Information from National Convention

Bob Redding spoke about the climate in Washington, DC. We are in a perfect storm for the Ag Department with 1) A political hostile environment 2) No money and 3) High commodity prices. We have 93 new members in Congress and they were elected to work on spending; typically the Ag department does not do well in this climate. Senator Chambliss was one of our advocates in the past and he is no longer there for us. Senator Baucus is the only Ag committee member with Ag history so this definitely is not our game. The timeline for Congress consists of several dates. The House and Senate Ag Committees will have to come up with Ag Department reductions by October 13th. This is the first test for NASCOE to see what they present in our favor. Conservation, Ag Research and our programs is always an easy target for cuts. On November 23rd the House Deficit Committee will have to present a report. On December 23rd the House and Senate will give their proposals and on December 31st a balanced budget must be agreed to decrease the National budget by 1.2 Trillion dollars. If a balanced budget is not agreed upon it goes to sequestration which is a 4-5% cut across the board for ALL. This is not a good option since this would apply to the Department of Defense as well. We need a strong education piece. We need to get facts and numbers to the legislators. We will have that data for lobbying after September. We need traditional Farm Bill meetings to get to know the Congressmen and introduce ourselves to the Ag Sector. NASCOE will need to be there for committee hearings and field hearings. The Farm Bill is going to be difficult and eliminating Direct Payments will be a big target.

In FY2012 VERA's will be offered again. VSIP's, they will be targeted to tailor workforce management. We wanted to extend the same opportunity to COC as DC so we have requested buy-out authority from OMB also. If we hadn't asked authority from OMB we could have had to deal with RIF. Asking for VSIP evidently stops the RIF's possibility? Not entirely sure about this, but it's what I took from the many conversations. In regards to back-filling positions; once the State gets below the FTE ceiling you can do an outside hire. All levels of employees are at the table for reductions.

Directed re-assignment (if that comes to pass); the manager decides who is re-assigned and has to justify who is being kept in the current office and who is being moved. Only PT's can be directly re-assigned.

COC: In 2012 there is no promise that COC meetings will improve compared to 2011. Bruce Nelson (FSA Administrator) said we need to get creative in order to empower the COC. USDA Attorneys are looking into the fact that COC monies (according to statute) are supposed to be coming out of Programs. If this is a fact and can be worked as such, money for COC would cease to be a problem-or at least become less so. The general assembly asked Nelson and Garcia if they believed in the COC system-each solidly stated an affirmative yes.

There is a 6 SED member working group put together to look for cost savings. NASCOE asked to be at the table for these discussions and we were told that we would be invited at "the right time".

Cultural Transformation: The Secretary of Ag is committed to this. It's about the "Golden Rule". Treat others with respect and dignity. It's our job to see the task carried through. We want a work-force that represents the area residents and dynamics. It would promote job-share, flexible work hours. We will continue to serve those who don't have access to modern technology or those who don't want to use the technology. We have added twitter accounts and 7000 people have joined as of the convention time. I don't use twitter and don't have a clue☹.

Juan Garcia (Acting DAFP and TX SED) says change is exciting and FSA can learn to live with change and with less. Progress isn't possible without change. Leaving the system 36 behind is a prime example of change. Many resist change, but resistance is really a lack of clarity. County office employees noted to Mr. Garcia that better and more training could alleviate some of that resistance.

There are many bills drafted out there that could affect our benefits. These are just some of the things being "talked about on the hill".

Senate Bill 644: Eliminate FERS Annuity, Health Benefits at retirement for any new hires. We would have to purchase our own annuity and health benefits at retirement.

HR 657: Hire one new employee for every 2 that leave

HR 1779: Prevent new hiring unless there is no projected deficit.

Go from high 3 to high 5 for determining retirement. COLA change (.5% less/year). Up to 1-3 year additional freeze on COLA. Health-care-reduce the percentage of the amount the insurance covers. Maybe pay so much money to you, after that it's your dime.

Government currently pays 70% of our health insurance. If Congress gets their way, we would move to paying 45% of our cost (a 15% increase in our cost). Side-note: The average non-government employee doesn't contribute any of their cost of insurance.

They also would consider freezing salary for 5 years and cut work-force by 10%. Retirement contributions, they could increase our amount to 6% instead of the current .8% we pay.

NARFE (National Active and Retired Federal Employees) is working to preserve our benefits in addition to NASCOE. They are working towards spreading the word about what our agency does. This is another organization we should consider becoming a member of as they work in conjunction with NASCOE. There is always power in numbers.

Negotiations: Each year in the past there have been two negotiation sessions, paid for by DC. This year DC indicated that they couldn't fund two this year, but would do one. NASCOE opted to fund the fall meeting with DC to fund the spring meeting. When spring came, DC withdrew their offer to fund citing no money. NASCOE had already secured hotel etc and had a contract for that. NASCOE declined to fund that second negotiations meeting in order to not set a precedent that these sessions could be funded by NASCOE entirely in the future. Strategic meetings were held at that time in DC with no negotiations handled at that time. The purpose was for planning, convention issues, etc.

Scholarship auction brought a total of \$7552 this year, a new record. Iowa brought a bottle of Templeton Rye (\$40 value) and it was purchased for what I believe was \$130.

JM Marketing now offers a Federal Benefit Analysis for retirement.

These items are just snippets of my notes from the convention. The information we received was in large volumes and since short-hand is an ancient form of note-taking I'm sure I missed/didn't gets things quite right sometimes. This information at least gives us all some insight to what MAY occur in the next year or so and how we can be pro-active in our responses.

Cindy Pistek
IASCOE Vice-President



Tammy & Jeff



Myron & Tammy



Iowa Group



Iowa Group

Trimming the Fat from the 2012 Farm Bill

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
IASCOE Legislative Chair Person

Forums are already being held gathering input for the 2012 Farm bill and budget certainly could have a huge effect on the outcome of the new Farm Bill. The House Ag Committee is charged with reporting their cost-saving recommendations by October 14th to the "Super Committee" formed by President Obama. If the super committee upon reviewing recommendations accepts the basic framework the Ag Committee has submitted, the Ag Committee can then work toward a new Farm Bill under regular order in the spring and summer of 2012, however, if the super committee is unable to meet budget cut thresholds and ask for drastic changes in farm bill policy, Congress might have to write a new Farm Bill this fall.

Due to budgetary constraints affecting all areas of government, Congress will likely reconsider several aspects of the current Farm Bill such as direct payments, disaster relief programs, crop insurance and conservation programs. Congressman Peterson of Minnesota stated that subsidy programs could be phased out over the next 20 years and crop insurance programs could be strengthened. If the new Farm Bill includes such changes, farmers may consider options to further diversity their farming options spreading out their risks.

Some in congress believe direct payments could be affecting land values and cash rents. One idea that will possibly be part of the new Farm Bill discussion is an expanded "green payments" program which would reward farmers for environmental stewardship instead of placing incentives on overproduction. Other also want to see issues like of water quality, soil erosion, increasing local food production, revitalizing rural communities, climate change and our dependence on fossil fuels emphasized in the new farm bill. There is a school of thought that we should move from commodity subsidy programs to programs that contribute to an all-around healthier food system.

Congress must find a way to preserve the integrity of farm policy while trying to incorporate considerable savings into the new Farm Bill. There are several new freshman congressmen now serving on the hill and NASCOE will be there building relationships with those new congressmen and strengthen relationship with veteran congressmen so our voice will be heard. It's too early yet to know what will be in the Farm Bill but it's certainly not too early to let congress know how FSA can be a part of that new Farm Bill.

Scholarships! Scholarships! Scholarships!

Who couldn't use some additional help with the cost of higher education these days? Whether it is a child heading off to college or you yourself taking some adult education college courses - IASCOE and NASCOE have scholarships to help you out!

IASCOE Scholarship Program

School has just begun but it is never too early to be thinking about scholarships!

IASCOE will again this year be offering 4 scholarships to high school seniors, graduates, or full time college students, up to the Bachelor Degree level. (Full-time is a minimum of 12 credit hours). Eligibility requirements are a minimum of a "C" average (using the 4.0 system) in **both** junior and senior years of high school or as a college student. These scholarships are worth \$300 and are paid after the completion of the first semester of post secondary education. The applicant must be a legal dependent of an **IASCOE** member or a member's spouse. The **IASCOE** member must be a county FSA employee with membership during the last five consecutive years or has been a member since becoming a permanent FSA county employee, including the current year. Applicants may only win one time.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY!! Part of your annual dues goes directly to the **IASCOE** scholarship fund. If you or someone you know is an active member and will have a college bound student or has a student currently in college, take advantage of the **IASCOE** scholarship program. The scholarship application may be printed from the NASCOE website @ www.nascoe.org. Once you are at the site, click on "scholarship" and you will find the scholarship application. You may type in your information and print the application, or print the application and complete. **BE SURE TO PRINT THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION CHECKLIST** as well as this page will assist you in making sure you have all required information submitted.

Because our convention is held a little earlier than other states, please note the return date is **January 31st** for the Iowa Scholarships. All state applications are forwarded on to the Area Scholarship committee to be judged for Area and National awards.

Please return the completed applications to me at the address below by January 31st, 2012.

Tammy Pruin
16316 190th St
Mason City, IA 50401

NASCOE Members Scholarship Program

This award must be used to defray expenses incidental to the member's attendance of adult education courses. An applicant must be a permanent County office employee and a NASCOE member. 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. This is a special NASCOE scholarship that will be awarded to NASCOE members that are taking additional adult education courses to advance their career within FSA.

The Midwest Area will be allowed to award one scholarship winner \$200.00 to broaden their educational portfolios! An applicant may only win one time. This award must be used to defray expenses incidental to the member's attendance for the adult education courses. One of our Iowa members received this award a couple of years ago!

The evaluation criteria are 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. The scholarship application may be printed from the NASCOE web-site @ www.nascoe.org. All applications may be hard copies or electronically submitted to the Midwest Area Scholarship committee person. Deadline for consideration for a Member's Scholarship is **March 1st**!

Her address:

Nicki Miranowski
Faribault County FSA
PO Box 185
Blue Earth, MN 56013

2011 IASCOE Scholarship winners

Just a little update on our 2011 scholarship winners!

Collin Schmidt is attending Iowa State University and is double majoring in Mechanical Engineering and Business and after 2 weeks – loves it! His mom just hopes that continues through the next 5 years of study! Collin received his scholarship check and is very appreciative. Collin attended our convention last spring and is shown here accepting his certificate.

Marie Pistek has started her 3rd year at University of Northern Iowa. She is majoring in Management Information Systems (MIS). This is a degree concentrating on information technology and it's applications in business. She enjoys all aspects of the program, both the business end and the hands-on technology. Marie wishes to thank IASCOE once again for the scholarship and plans to use it towards purchasing books.

Jenna Manternach is attending Hawkeye Community College in Waterloo majoring in the Dental Hygiene program. Since there is a waiting list for this program she is currently taking the pre-classes necessary and next year will enroll in the Dental Assisting program. She is enjoying the college life so far and has a part-time job.

Nick Winters is enrolled at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. He is majoring in Agricultural Business & Economics. He's in his third week and although he has some challenging classes he is really enjoying himself. Thanks again for the scholarship! He appreciates it very much.

Jessica Leyh is attending UNI, University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, IA. She is majoring in Biology and she is planning on going into graduate school to pursue Physical Therapy. These are big plans with a lot of college. So far so good....she has had 3 weeks of college, and she is still on board with the biology thing...and she seems excited with all she is learning at this point.

Her mom shares this cute little story..."she was SO EXCITED when she got the letter in the mail that she had been chosen for the scholarship; she was like in shock with so much excitement that they picked HER!! It was so fun to see her excitement...and it was a "Yes" moment for momwho had introduced her to doing those dreadful scholarships because you never know... you might get chosen?? There is always Hope!! So thank you to IASCOE for doing this program...it was very much appreciated."

NASCOE Benefits Update

By Kelly Cain, Benefits Chair

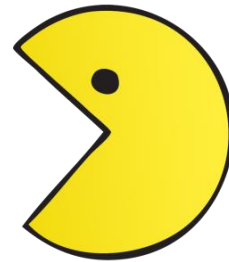
The summer flew by so fast and I can't believe fall is almost here. Just like the days and weeks go flying by so do the years. The next thing you know 10, 15, 20 or more years of FSA service have been accumulated. Are you going to be ready financially to retire? JM Marketing can help you determine if you will be ready or if you should make some changes now with their Federal Benefits Analysis. This analysis is provided at no cost to NASCOE members. The detailed analysis report is comprehensive, customized to you, and easy to understand. It provides you with an in-depth snapshot of your current benefits and what they might look like in retirement. Contact JM Marketing to prepare your analysis.

Are there benefits to belonging to NASCOE? You bet there are. Besides great representation for the employees in Washington D.C. there are many "extras" you can get as a NASCOE member. Check out the benefits page on the NASCOE website. When you visit the benefits site you will see that some of the options now direct you to a NASCOE Members Only login/registration page. You will need to request a password if you do not already have one. Your membership is verified with the State Membership Chair so it may take a few days before you get your password emailed to you. So remember now more than ever, membership does have its advantages!



Playing PAC MAN

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn
State Legislative Chairperson



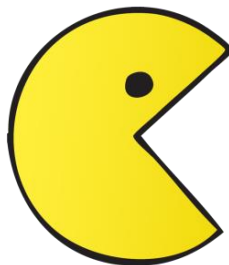
You've all heard of the video game PAC MAN right? The PAC MAN gobbles up power pellets and PAC-DOTS in an effort to overpower the ghosts and ultimately win the game. Let's apply that same game plan to participating in the PAC. If we as employees contribute enough power pellets and PAC-DOTS (our dollars) to the PAC, we can increase our chances of defeating ghosts (those bills which do not support FSA programs and threaten our benefits) and ultimately win the game (keeping our jobs and our benefits).

Our PAC is one of the best tools we have available to deal with all the issues our agency and we, as employees are facing today. We are not buying votes with PAC money; we are investing in our futures! We are investing in rural America ensuring that FSA will be there to serve our farmers and ranchers for years to come.

Last year, the number of members contributing to the PAC increased by 45% which is great but that still only represents 4% of our total membership! We can do better than that! The recommended amount to contribute is just \$3.00 a pay period but you certainly can contribute whatever amount you chose. Are your job and benefits worth a few dollars a month?

Do any of us like the idea of needing a PAC to get our voices heard—no, not really. Yet, that is the only game in town when it comes to Washington D.C. and the ones who play the game the best are the ones who come out the big winners. We need to get in the game folks and we need to play to win which means we need a strong PAC and we can only build a strong PAC with your contributions.

Become a PAC MAN or a MS. PAC MAN by contributing to the PAC today!





Just a note from the Publicity Corner

It seems impossible that fall is here and we are in the new fiscal year already. What a year 2011 has been! So many ups and downs, anxious moments, countdown preparations, budget crunching, and more crunching, and heart-wrenching decisions of “should I stay, or should I go now?” It was the birth of the Business File, and the final reasons why the CRP contracts (that were entered before the AGI information was updated and given the time necessary to keep the steps in line for a smooth payment process) were kicking out on the prepayment reports. We cross our fingers that the decisions that are made in our interest by the people elected to represent us will be to our favor, though we don’t wish the decisions to be unfair to anyone. We have become such an “instant results” type of society that the amount of time our nation’s budget decisions are taking to be made seem hard to fathom. On the outside looking in, it’s time to relax the shoulders, drop the tough-guy persona, and take a breath and work to find solutions together. As we all know, it’s just not that easy and that’s not how it will go, but I keep hoping.

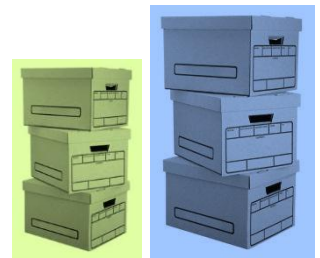
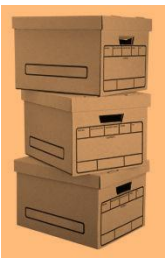
I apologize that this newsletter didn’t get out in September, since that’s the scheduled time. I hope that I will be better prepared for the future issues. With a few extra unexpected obstacles this last month, I will definitely be working on my time management skills so that the newsletter is out every three months as it should be. I appreciate everyone’s time and efforts to offer their reports and human interest stories and I welcome all comments and suggestions so that the information provided is helpful and of interest to you.

Please enjoy the issue and best wishes for all in our new fiscal year. I’m sure it will continue to be eventful and the challenge as each is presented to us. Have a safe harvest and I hope you have a wonderful fall season!

By Brenda Albright

Publicity Chairperson





TALK about a BUSY summer!!!

I was hired as the Tama County CED in June. My husband and I immediately began looking for a place to rent. We had decided that we would rent for 6 months to a year wherever I was hired, to give us time to decide where we wanted to live. We found a house in the country to rent, and signed the lease.

The day after we signed, the owners had an offer and 10 days later, they sold the property. We had known that it was for sale, but since it had been on the market for over a year, didn't think about it selling that fast. The owners felt really bad about the timing, but we teased them that we should get a commission for selling it. However, we had to find somewhere else - but at least we had 60 days! We only moved a few things into the rental house after they had the offer. Then we had to decide - do we look for another rental or go ahead and buy a place? Since good rentals are hard to find and you pay almost as much as you would on a house payment, we decided to go ahead and buy.

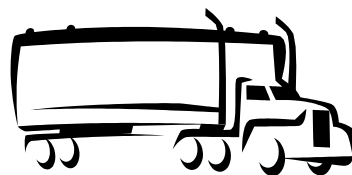
That began the marathon house-hunting! During this time, Tama County was hit with the 110 mph wind storm on July 11th. Work became a LOT busier dealing with STORM, ECP, LIP, and destroyed FSFL's. In the evenings and weekends, I was looking at houses. I never thought that I would ever get tired of doing that - but I did!! We finally found our perfect house and agreed on a price. By this time, we are down to just a little over 30 days left on our lease and of course, it takes time to get everything done.

A week after we signed the purchase agreement, friends of ours back in Van Buren County had a fire in their home and it was destroyed. We went back to our home and packed up the personal items and they moved into the house. They could use our furniture, dishes, etc and that gave them time to begin settling with insurance and start purchasing items. Then the weekend before we closed on our new house, we went back home and packed and loaded almost everything into a semi trailer - good thing my husband owns a semi!

We closed on the new house on August 10th and moved out of the rental house that afternoon. That weekend, another trip back to Keosauqua and we finished packing the last items and brought the semi to the new house. Thank God for family willing to drive over 2 hours to help unload that semi!! Great new friends here helped by providing a lunch for everyone!!!

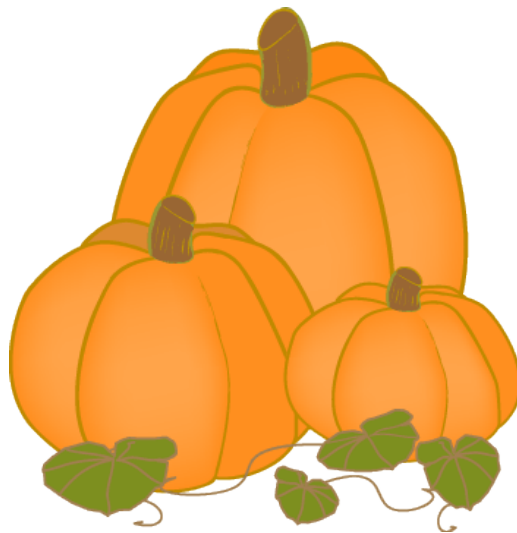
I really do not recommend moving twice within 3 months time, but it did all work out for the best in the end. Our friends are still renting our old home, but only until the end of this month. After they move out, that home will be for sale. So guess our busy time isn't over yet!!

Anna Boecker



Congratulations to Alan and Steph Kiewiet on the newest addition to their family

Alex and Jaxon Kiewiet are excited to share the birth of their baby sister, Macey Jayne. Macey was brought into the world on August 25th to Al and Steph Kiewiet. She weighed 8 pounds and 7 ounces and was 20 ½ inches long. Macey is enjoying being home as she finds plenty of time to eat and sleep during the day and keep dad up at night. Everyone is doing well and getting along great. Her brothers tend to her every noise and make sure that mom and dad don't forget about her as we get a report from at least one of them every 5 minutes or so on what she is up to now. Al is CED in Marshall County.



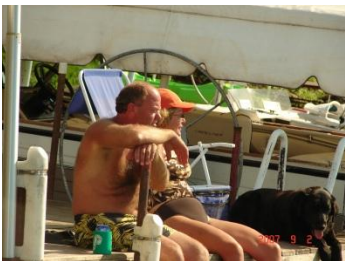


Dollar Bill Forburger 1999-2011

Dollar Bill Forburger was born near Kanawha Iowa on August 6, 1999. He joined the Forburger family in October of that same year on opening day of pheasant season. It did not take long for him to learn the ropes and soon graduated from the school of hard knocks and was allowed into the house on a special rug at the end of the kitchen table where he became a part of the family.



It did not take long and Dollar began taking long walks with his mom, who never wanted a dog, but fell in love with him. But his true love was hunting. He loved the sound of gunfire, the site of an orange vest and was never afraid of a storm or thunder. Dollar became very excited when October rolled around every year to begin hunting season. He was quickly trained and never missed an opportunity for the sport. He often went with Richard who put him in his kennel and strapped him on the back of the 4wheeler because he was too young to drive a car. He was an excellent hunter. During the fall he disowned his mom and refused to go on walks, because he was a hunting dog, not a pet and she understood.



Dollar loved Lost Island Lake like the rest of the family and spent 9 years there in the summertime. He rested all week but layed behind the truck when Friday rolled around because he knew that it was the weekend and he feared he would be left at home. But of course, he never was. He sat in the front of the boat and rode many hours and never made a peep. We even used him as a spotter for skiing and if the skier wiped out, he jumped up to alert the driver. He enjoyed riding on the back of the paddleboat while his mom paddled and read her book. He followed the rules and never barked at the lake but did all the way there and back. Dollar loved jumping off the dock into the water but rarely did it without

the command “go get it”.

Swimming was a passion and no matter what time of year it was, if there was open water, he was in it. Dollar loved the lake and when that season ended he spent a lot of time at the gravel pits. In his later years when walking was next to impossible, he could always find the energy to swim. He splashed water with his paw and tried to eat it while swimming. He loved retrieving rocks in the water. He would find them and bury his head under water until he could grab it, and then would sit with it in his mouth and whine. Dollar also loved campfires even though he was stepped on many times because he was so hard to see in the dark. In later years he enjoyed listening to Christmas music and spending time in a warm house on his rug in the kitchen.

Dollar was a man with many barks. He had a special bark “let me in” going from house to house in the neighborhood. He loved spending time with Larry in the warmth of his kitchen was given a bowl of warm milk even when it was forbidden. And he always knew there was a bone or a cookie waiting at Aunt Karen’s. He would find Pam on occasion and she too would open the door and allow him some time in the kitchen. It did not take us long to figure out he was visiting but would always find his way home. He had a special bark when he sited a bird on a high line wire. And he loved chasing red cars, and only red ones. And he was even trained not to bark when kids arrived after curfew.



You always knew what Dollar wanted. He had a way with gestures and was very patient until you understood. He never ate alone. He waited until you watched him and then he would eat. He loved bones from the table but always politely took them outside before eating.



He never felt alone or needed another companion, he had his family, but in January of 2010, a brother, Woody joined the Forburgers. Although he did not feel it was the best idea in the world, he tried his best to accept the new addition. But when Woody was naughty, we knew by his expression that we should have asked him first.

Dollar never felt he was a dog. He was a person covered with fur, and was given that kind of life. He earned respect and in his later years had the run of the house. His love to all of us was unconditional. He waited patiently for each of to return if we were gone for any length of time. And he rested comfortably when everyone was together.



Dollar was laid to rest on Saturday, July 23rd, and buried at the “Shack” a place he loved to spend time with the guys. He will always be remembered as the best ole dog in the whole wide world and was told that most days. He is deeply missed by his family but was given and lived a good life. He could never be replaced. May he rest in peace and keep a continued watch over all of us. We miss you Dollar and we will always treasure the years we had with you. You are the best dog anyone could ever have asked for.

←—————→

A FATHER'S ADVICE:

(You know how this goes. You hear the words from your son that he has something he wants to talk to you about. You stop in your tracks. Your shoulders immediately droop just a little, and you look at his face in an attempt to get a clue on what he's about to say. Without success, you calmly ask what he would like to talk about. Through the barrage of possible problems and dilemmas that are racing through your mind, you hear the words "Dad, I need to buy a house." As you think to start through your list of multiple reasons why this is NOT a good idea, you know there will be a time that you need to paint a clear picture of your opinion. And you are right. Thank goodness for electronic communication.)

A father's advice to his house hunting son

Before you buy a house and dive into a mortgage you need to understand that

Life is all about stages...

1st there's the "where's my bottle and blankie" stage
2nd there's the "where's my game controller" stage
3rd there's the "what kinda car am I gonna get" stage
4th there's the "where's my cell phone" stage
5th there's the "raise hell with my buddies" stage
6th there's the "stage 5 needs to make another beer run" stage
7th there's the "where's the girls" stage
8th there's the "I just gotta get a new pick-up truck or I'm gonna die" stage
9th there's the "move out of the house so I can live by my own rules" stage
10th there's the "get a job and go to work" stage so I can pay for stage 6,7,8 & 9
11th there's the "I never thought Menard's would turn out to be as neat a place as dad thinks" stage
12th there's the "there's just one girl and she's all I can think about" stage
13th there's the "knee pads required followed by the 80 foot church walk" stage
14th there's the "mortgage stage"

Then after you finish picking the scabs off your knees left over when you wear out your knee pads in stage 12 & 13, the cycle starts all over when you create a new stage 1.

Stages 3,4,5,6,7 and 8 kinda blur together and seem like one stage because they happen in what seems like a relatively short period of time (while you got your high school and college education) but they are technically 5 different stages spread out over 8 years.

I figure since you are all ready in the Menard's stage that you're not too far away from creating the 1st stage of a new cycle like your older brother did!

Remember this as you contemplate the location of stage 14 before you complete stage 13 as stage 12 may want to weigh in on the decision!

Love,
Your dad

P.S.

I know that stage 14 is the farthest thing from your mind but you need to understand how vulnerable you are now that you got a college education and a good job. To put your current situation into perspective think of yourself as a 24 point buck and it's OPEN SEASON !

* * * * *

There are similar stages that daughters go through except they don't require knee pads. And life, in general, is different for them. Their thoughts are consumed with decisions like what color should I dye my hair this week? Which one of the 65 pairs of shoes in my closet should I wear today? Will my cats like this new kitty litter? Why is the vehicle I'm driving throwing sparks all over the road just because my back tire fell off? etc etc etc.....

Daughters tend to rearrange some of these life stages as if they were living room furniture which is probably why your sister switched the position of stage 14 with stage 13.

It's just simpler to keep these stages in order.....

Love,
Your dad

Celebrating his 102nd birthday on July 10, 2011, Donald R. Whitcomb lives in Osage in northeast Iowa, which isn't far from the Minnesota border. Two years ago, he was still climbing the silos at his house, until his daughter and renter decided to take the ladder down. He still mows his lawn and does work around the farm.

The Mitchell County FSA office staff loves to have Don stop in to tell us his wonderful stories and share the history of agriculture he has lived. It's an honor to have him respond to my questions. His answers are sometimes humorous and always interesting.

How long has Don been farming? And what does he enjoy about it? "I've lived here on my farm all but seven years of my life," he says. "Farming is a very enjoyable occupation."

He explains, tongue in cheek, "It is so much fun to get out there in the rain and carry a new born calf from the mud to a dry place in the shed, stepping out of a boot in the muck midway. Another fond memory is wading through the snow at 30 degrees below zero in winter, searching for the snow-covered shovel. Then heaving the snow away from the barn door so, as to enter, and then milk 20 cows by hand that have frozen teats."

Taught school for many years

Don was a music instructor for 39 years while also farming. What year did he start teaching high school band? What did he enjoy most about it?

When Don graduated from the University of Minnesota, he began teaching band in the public schools in the mid-1930s. It was the middle of the decade of the Great Depression.

He began teaching "so we could have something to buy groceries. I continued teaching instrumental music in the public schools for 39 years. It was wonderful to hear all my band students make progress on their instruments from month to month and year to year. They were learning to do many mental and physical skills per second in coordination with each other, which helped them later in life to manipulate all of the modern farm equipment that requires similar skills today."

What does Don think of FSA programs? He's participated in a number of them over the years. "Except for the first few years when I began farming, I've been involved with FSA every year since the farm program was started. I would say that all of my experiences with FSA have been good and have helped our farm operation turn out for the better."

Huge gains in productivity

What kind of farming operations has Don had? "My type of farming has gone from chickens, ducks, turkeys, sheep, pigs, cows (both dairy and beef) and from horsepower to tractors. Crops have varied from timothy grass to alsac clover to red clover to alfalfa to corn and soybeans. For the past few years we've had corn, soybeans, alfalfa and feeding cattle."

Obviously, Don has seen many changes in farming over the years. What's the biggest change he's experienced, the one that really stands out to him as a farmer? He says it's the tremendous gain in efficiency and productivity, the amount of work and production one person can accomplish, and do it in a shorter period of time.

"I planted corn at one time with a Hayes 2-row corn planter pulled by a team of horses," Don recalls. "Now corn is commonly planted 16 to 24 rows at a time with fertilizer and herbicide applied at the same time."

Don says he was happy farming and raising his family in Mitchell County. What's his secret to a long life? Don't worry too much, enjoy life and "just keep living." I think we'll take your advice, Don. --Erin Myers, Osage



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FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND CIRCLE THEM CAREFULLY. WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, WRITE THE UNUSED LETTERS IN ORDER FROM THE TOP LEFT TO THE BOTTOM RIGHT AND YOU WILL SEE A MESSAGE. GOOD LUCK!

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RETIREMENTS

After many years of service to FSA, the following individuals have decided to retire and begin a new chapter in their life. We wish them well

- 6/30/2011 Mary Ann Oldenburger, Grundy
- 7/15/2011 Connie K. Safley, Dallas
- 7/29/2011 Sheri M. Steffen, Black Hawk
- 7/29/2011 Vikki Jungferman, West Pottawattamie
- 7/29/2011 Vicki L. Heeren, Franklin
- 7/29/2011 Rhonda S. Cooper, Union
- 8/26/2011 Debra L. Grudle, Retirement Fremont
- 8/27/2011 Joseph P. Rieck, Mahaska
- 8/26/2011 Susan Badding, STO
- 8/31/2011 Debra L. Blom, Sioux
- 8/31/2011 Ronda S. Fry, Wayne
- 8/31/2011 Mary K. Neumann, Ida
- 8/31/2011 Rhonda S. Grasz, Plymouth
- 8/31/2011 Marilyn R. Scott, Henry
- 8/31/2011 Debra J. Toenges, Bremer

We have tried to include the names of all individuals who have retired. Our apologies if we have missed someone.

