

A winter landscape featuring a stream flowing through snow-covered rocks and bare trees. The scene is captured in a soft, golden light, likely during the "blue hour" of late afternoon or early morning. The water in the stream is dark and reflects the surrounding environment. The rocks are partially covered in snow, and the trees are without leaves, their branches creating a complex, web-like pattern against the sky.

The Iowa Association Of FSA
County Office Employees

IASCOE NEWS

December 2004

FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL MCLAREN, SED

Christmas '04 is upon us, and we have much to be thankful for. To say that Iowa had a bountiful harvest is an understatement. It was HUGE! The smiles on farmers' faces is a daily reminder of the bumper crop of LDPs and loans produced as a result of their good fortune. Who could have predicted this situation as farmers began planting last Spring? We should be thankful for this workload at FSA, for it serves as a testament to the integral part we play in the livelihood of producers and communities, alike.



Last minute tax “planning” on the part of farmers should spread-out our workload for loans and DCP sign-up. Meanwhile, you will methodically process the mountain of LDPs, one at a time, until we can again see daylight. Just in time, for there is disaster legislation to implement at some point – no details yet. Otherwise, the course for 2005 is a replay in terms of issues and, thereby, priorities.

The New Year will begin with a pay increase of 3.5% to be distributed between salary and locale. Yeah! The budget is extremely tight, and Washington will continue to control state employment levels through prior approval. We have 7 COTs on board, and congratulations to them. We have requested additional FLOTs, are backfilling a DD, have authorization for an additional DD, and we are requesting backfills of CO PT positions (sensitive to state ceilings).

GIS and e-GOV are THE hot priorities for 2005. So far the lid is still on the pot when it comes to these issues, but I foresee the water soon coming to a boil. Digitizing will be completed by Spring, and the race will be on to certify CLUs and notify farmers of their new official acreages. I cannot stress enough the importance of this process. Those that fall behind will heap unnecessary workload upon themselves. New BPMS performance plans in 2005 WILL reflect these priorities.

Congratulations to all of you for the progress we have shown in e-Gov! Iowans are quick to accept innovation, and we lead the nation in level 2 e-authorizations. The rest of the states can only see our progress from the back-side, and therefore we are a target. So keep up the good work! E-Gov is our future, and the future is here. Farm loans have already made the transition to WEB-base, and commodity programs need to get there as quickly as possible. Why, you ask? The old System 36 is antiquated, and an integrated WEB-based platform is our future delivery system. We won't be able to function without it.

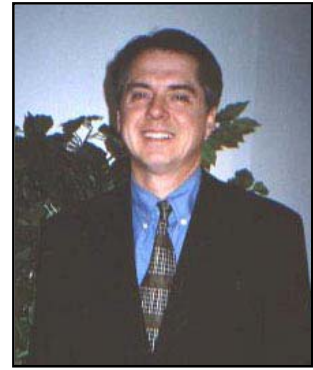
As 2004 comes to an end, I want to extend my personal thank you to all of you for your dedication, diligence, and perseverance you have demonstrated yet another year. This is truly a family we have here at FSA, and I have felt personally the warmth and caring nature of your collective conscience. Please take home to your families my best wishes, and we will together strive to make 2005 a memorable year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derryl McLaren". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Cover Photo Taken By Brian Beach - IASCOE Webmaster & PT Sac County

What a Difference a Year Can Make

By Alan Donaldson - IASCOE President & CED Sioux County



I am trying to sort through where the year went. A lot has gone on. Remember last year when grain prices were good and we weren't bombarded with LDP's? Or how the promise of web- based program processing was kind of a small vision of how we would do business in the future. As time goes on it seems like changes come faster and faster on the job and in our personal lives.

In our office the last few weeks, we have been consumed with getting new office furniture, setting up the workstations, and while we're at it, having the landlord paint and put in new carpet. Any of these changes individually don't seem like too much, but when added to everything else that's going on, they can seem overwhelming at times. I'm sure the same is true for all of you. You sometimes wonder how you are going to get it all done or if you can handle one more change or deadline. This can be a problem especially during the Holidays when we aren't just busy at the office, but we have plenty to do in the community and at home.

One of the changes that has taken place this past year has to do with IASCOE. As you know, Tom Lane transferred from Henry-Lee to Jackson County. According to the IASCOE by-laws since Tom was no longer employed by the district he represented, he was not eligible to remain an officer. For that reason Tom resigned his position as President, and as Vice President I took over his duties. Other directors and I saw a problem with this procedure and for that reason we are proposing an amendment to the by-laws. It states the following:

In the event that a duly elected officer (ie) President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer accepts another position within the state in a position entitling them to full membership within the association, and the new position is not located in another officer's district, be it resolved that the officer may retain his or her position as an officer until the end of his or her specified term.

The directors will be discussing and voting on this amendment at the next director's meeting in January. If you have any input, please contact your directors and let them know what you think.

At anytime we would like your input and ideas about how IASCOE could do a better job for you and improve your benefits. I would also encourage you to consider becoming a member of the NAFEC (National Association of Farmer Elected Committeemen) organization. This organization cooperates with and supports many of NASCOE's goals. Cap Wiz is another means we can use to further our goals. It is a system approved at the NASCOE convention this past year, which you can put on your computer at home. It will update you on issues important to agriculture and your benefits and let you contact your congressman directly on-line. It is quick and convenient, but it must be accessed only through your home computer and on your own time.

In these days of tight budgets and changing priorities, it is important for all of us to work together to maintain and improve our working conditions.

Also during the Holidays, it's appropriate for us to share with those who are less fortunate. The Holidays put a lot of pressure on public and private agencies to help those in great need. As an office or individually you may wish to help out by contributing to a food bank, homeless shelter, Gospel Mission, or other worthy charities. You can donate money or volunteer your time or both. You can make a difference and save or improve a life.

I wish you all a happy and blessed holiday season.

Alan

Greetings From Your Secretary - Treasurer



Thanksgiving is over and the Christmas season is getting a great start. Christmas is my favorite holiday but I do wish the weather could be warmer.

Taylor County had a terrific harvest. The weather has been very good and the yields have been the best we have ever had. I certainly hope the rest of the state is as fortunate as we are. The great yields do make for lots of loans and LDP's - guess that just keeps us girls busy at the office. Along with all the work I hope you take time to enjoy the season with friends and family.

May you be blessed by the love that was born on that night so many years ago.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Sue Beemer - PT Taylor County



IOWA TRIVIA

*Submitted By Richard Kleppe - CED Cedar County
Answers are on the last page*

1. Where is the highest point in the state?
2. Where was the first city in the nation to have its own electrical power system?
3. Where was the first bridge built across the Mississippi River?
4. Where was the original Delicious apple propagated?
5. Where was the first train robbery in Iowa?
6. What county has two highways named after presidents and where do they intersect?
7. Where in Iowa did former president Nixon serve in the Navy?
8. Where is the Squirrel Cage Jail?
9. Where was Johnny Carson born?
10. Where is a five-story flour and feed mill on the Wapsipinicon River?
11. What county was named after the first governor of the Iowa Territory?
12. Where was Henry A. Wallace born in 1888? He was Secretary of Agriculture from 1933-1940 and was Vice President from 1941-1945.
13. Where was George Reeves (Superman on TV in the '50s) born?
14. Where is the house in the background of Grant Wood's "American Gothic" located?
15. Where is the largest cereal mill in the world located?
16. Where is the nation's largest builder of aluminum livestock and utility trailers located?
17. Where is Albert the bull?
18. Where is Snake Alley?
19. Where is the only gold domed courthouse in Iowa?
20. Which state does not have any counties?
21. How many counties do these states have: Alaska, Texas, Iowa, Delaware and Georgia?



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

Submitted by Connie Safley - IASCOE Awards Chairperson
PT Dallas County FSA Office

It is time again to start thinking about recognizing someone that has made an outstanding contribution in areas of: NASCOE; FSA – Agriculture; or Community Service. This program encourages recognition of NASCOE members who make outstanding contributions in one of the three areas. Any member of the Association may make a nomination. Only members of the association who are in good standing, who are serving under a permanent appointment, or who have voluntarily retired during the current year are eligible to receive these awards. Nominations need to be mailed NO LATER than FEBRUARY 1st, 2005.

INFORMATION FOR EACH CATEGORY

SERVICE TO NASCOE: Years of NASCOE membership; committee activity; offices held; contributions to the organization; FSA background and any other pertinent information may be included.

SERVICE TO FSA-AGRICULTURE: How long has nominee worked for FSA? What program or special project have they worked with? Size of county and number of farmers; Any outstanding contribution to FSA and /or Agriculture? Has nominee received any special awards or promotions? NASCOE background and any other pertinent information can also be included.

COMMUNITY SERVICE: What organization(s) has nominee worked with? Do they hold an office or any special committee assignment?; their church affiliation, family status, children, etc.; What has nominee done to improve the community he/she lives in? Any special recognition received; FSA and NASCOE background and any other pertinent information can also be included.

LENGTH OF NOMINATION

A nomination should be brief, factual, and specific! It cannot exceed two (2) double-spaced typewritten 8 1/2" X 11" pages, plus the cover sheet. The pages must not be reduced by photocopier or other means to enable more print on the two pages. No attachments, and conclusions not backed by facts should be avoided. Specific examples and details should be given to support the nomination.

SUBMITTING NOMINATION

Mail the original and five (5) copies of the nomination to Attention – Connie Safley, Dallas County FSA, P.O. Box 70, Adel, Iowa 50003 before February 1st, 2005. If you need a cover sheet or more information contact Connie Safley at 515-993-4205 or you can go to the NASCOE website (www.nascoe.org).



Contribute To The Next IASCOE Newsletter

If you have any stories, photos, jokes, quotes, or information that you would like to include in the next IASCOE Newsletter, send them to Tammy Eibey at tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov.

Final Membership Report

December 2004

By Daniel Wells

State Membership Chairperson / CED Adair County

The numbers are finally in!!! The 2004 IASCOE Membership drive turned out to be another success. Our IASCOE membership is up this year to 85.92%. Thanks to all of you and the hard work of your membership committee. Our continued goal is to have as many members as possible in Iowa. Hopefully each of the upcoming years we will see a continued growth in our membership.

For those of you who have recently retired, we would like to suggest that you become an associate member of IASCOE. Many of you have been receiving benefits through IASCOE and to continue those benefits should consider becoming an associate member. We have 33 associate members in 2004.

Each year your IASCOE directors draw five (5) members for the "Early Bird" special. Each IASCOE member whose dues are received before June 15th is eligible for a refund of \$50. This year the following IASCOE members were drawn:

Michelle Stevenson - Mitchell County
Teresa Heck - Polk County
Dave Lundquist - Lucas County
Jill Shannon - Fayette County
Charlotte Shelp - Carroll County

Congratulations to the winners!!! Remember next year to get your dues in early to be eligible. You have to play to win!!!

Thanks to those who choose to be members of IASCOE we are able to receive and maintain benefits that do not come automatically like many people think. All the benefits we receive as County Office employees are a direct result from the efforts of NASCOE/IASCOE. It is very important for us to maintain a strong membership to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. As you are all aware, NASCOE continues to work to ensure the fair treatment of all our employees and to provide a work environment beneficial for all. This process would be virtually impossible without your continued support and a strong membership.



The following is an amendment to the IASCOE By-Laws:

In the event that a duly elected officer (ie) President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, accepts another position within the state in a position entitling them to full membership within the association and the new position is not located in another officer's district, be it resolved that the officer may retain his or her position as an officer until the end of his or her specified term.



From Dan Root - NASCOE Vice-President

A new fiscal year is upon us, but it seems that many of the concerns that consumed so much of our time and energies in the last couple years will again carry over and continue to demand our attention this year. Budgets, full time staff, temporary needs, office closing and consolidations, PT reclassification, and E-Gov are just a few of the things that will keep all of your Officers and Execs busy in the coming months/year. All of these items and more are of great importance to membership and your executive board.

This year the NASCOE Organizational meeting was held in Rapid City, South Dakota, which is the site of the 2005 NASCOE National Convention. At this meeting there was a lot of discussion on how NASCOE has been doing business and how we might need to look at doing business differently to meet the ever-changing times. A new President will bring new ideas and new ways of doing business. We are not talking a wholesale change in NASCOE but rather some refinements of our past operating policies and procedures. You will see changes in how we involve membership and how we plan on keeping membership informed. First there is going to be a change in the number of newsletters and the articles in the newsletters. Our goal is 4 newsletters this year and the authors of the articles will be attempting to construct articles that are more informative and relative to the issues at hand. We are going to try and eliminate duplication of subject content and involve more than just officers, area executives, and/or national chairs when it comes to writing and submitting articles for publication.

Secondly I would like to talk a little about something that was approved as a result of a vote of the delegates in attendance at the National Convention. Recently we have entered into a 3-year agreement with Capwiz. Capwiz is a grassroots political action web site service that will allow us to make contact with our political leaders with a very short notice. This service will bring an easy method of contacting our congressional representatives with emails, and to keep the membership abreast of congressional actions of interest. The only way we can make this system work is for NASCOE members to register and use the system. There is a link to the registration page on the NASCOE web site. Remember – You must use your personal email and computer for this service. Please do not use your government email or computer.

I would like to address one last issue before I close, the issue being attitude and consequently perception. We are all part of a changing world and FSA is included in this world of changes. We are starting to see changes in the way we will be delivering farm programs with the advent of E-Gov and web based software. It is often said that attitude is everything and we all have either a positive or negative affect on attitudes. It is contagious and infectious, resulting in both good and/or bad reactions. Over the past few years and the years to come, our jobs have and will be changing rapidly and dramatically. Think about it, we have merged with another agency in which most of us thought would never work, we are using modernization to do tasks that we once did manually, we are forced to become more creative in how we do our job to get the job done and we are forced to react and respond to changes much more often and quicker than ever before. When I first started with ASCS/FSA, we were recognized as the “Can Do Agency” and I still think we are. I think our attitudes are also changing with times. It is not uncommon to hear such phrases as “We are not the can do agency we used to be”, or “This is not what I was hired to do”, or most often, “Does anyone know what is going on or do they even care”.

Your NASCOE Board does care, and we are aware of the changing times. Over the past few years we have fully realized that FSA is a workforce that is overloaded and understaffed. We have repeatedly stressed this to the administration and congress. I feel there are some who have started to use this message to work against us. I want to stress that it is one of our top priorities to continue the push for more permanent employees but we may be at a point where we need to stress the need to keep the permanent employees we have. I also think we need to look at our message and be careful in how we continue to address our needs. Look at what we do. We provide a service that is far above any other agency in government, we have a product that many people need to stay profitable and we can do it cheaper than anyone else.

In closing, I appreciate the opportunity to serve all of the great NASCOE members and encourage you to go into tomorrow and the days to come with a strong positive attitude that will help restore the "Can Do" attitude that conveys the perception to others that we do our jobs better than others, that we can do whatever is assigned to us, and that we can do it when no one else can.

Dan Root



Friends

Submitted By Rosie Kahl - PT Lyon County

A simple friend has never seen you cry. A real friend has shoulders soggy from your tears.

A simple friend doesn't know your parents' first names. A real friend has their phone numbers in his address book.

A simple friend brings a bottle of wine to your party. A real friend comes early to help you cook and stays late to help you clean.

A simple friend hates it when you call after he has gone to bed. A real friend asks you why you took so long to call.

A simple friend seeks to talk to you about your problems. A real friend seeks to help you with your problems.

A simple friend, when visiting, acts like a guest. A real friend opens your refrigerator and helps himself.

A simple friend thinks the friendship is over when you have an argument. A real friend calls you after you had a fight.

A simple friend expects you to always be there for them. A real friend expects to always be there for you!

IASCOE SICK LEAVE AWARDS

Sick Leave Awards are given to permanent employees who are NASCOE members and have accumulated sick leave of 1000, 1500, 2000, and 2500 hours. The national level recognizes 3000 accumulated hours. Send the names of people with accumulated sick leave hours as of December 31, 2005 to; Connie Safley - 1252 230th St - Linden, Iowa 50146.

Thank you, if you have any questions let me know.
Connie Safley - Dallas Co FSA Office



IASCOE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



IASCOE will again this year be offering 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. Also the applicant must be a legal dependent of an **IASCOE** member, a member's spouse, or even an **IASCOE** member themselves. 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.

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.

Two chances...one application. In addition to an Iowa scholarship award, all applicants are automatically eligible for the Midwest area NASCOE scholarship award(s).

Applications can be obtained by contacting Cindy Pistek, 2145 Maple Ave, Britt IA 50423 or by calling 641-843-4573. ***The application can also be printed off the NASCOE website.*** Please note the checklist return date should be January 31st for the Iowa Scholarships. **So please return the completed applications to the address above by January 31st, 2005.**

DON'T PUT IT OFF, GET YOUR APPLICATION TODAY!!!

All applications may be found at the NASCOE website at www.nascoe.org
Look for Awards on the bottom and print off checklists and applications.

***IASCOE scholarship applications are due January 31, 2005,
not the NASCOE deadline date on the national form.***



IASCOE Scholarship Application Checklist

The IASCOE scholarship application **MUST** be returned to Cindy Pistek, 2145 Maple Ave, Britt, IA 50423 by **January 31, 2005.**

Eligibility:

1. Applicant must be an IASCOE, NASCOE member, member's spouse, or member's legal dependent. The member must be a county FSA employee who has their dues paid and membership current for the past 5 consecutive years or since becoming a permanent FSA employee, whichever is less
2. Applicant must be either a high school senior or graduate with a minimum of a "C" average in both the junior and senior year **or** may be a full-time (minimum of 12 credit hours) college student with a minimum of a "C" average up to the Bachelor Degree level.

Instructions:

1. Complete this application if you meet the criteria above. Your state scholarship chairperson must receive it no later than **January 31, 2005.**
2. Include an official transcript of your high school grades with a letter of recommendation from your counselor. If you are a college student, include an official (copy) transcript of your grades. College students must also include a high school transcript if they wish to have them considered for rating.
3. All grade point averages must be on a scale using the 4.0 system. Letter or numerical grades need to be converted by your counselor.
4. Area winners will be asked to submit a recent color photograph.
5. Please type or print legibly in ink.
6. Keep a copy of this application for your records.

Please make sure that all of the following are attached or enclosed, as required, with our application. Failure on your part to provide the required information may result in your application not being considered. Copies of transcripts are acceptable.

Completed Application _____
 High School Transcript _____
 And/or College Transcript _____
 All required signatures _____
 Letter of recommendation _____

NOTE: DO NOT RETURN THIS SHEET WITH YOUR APPLICATION!!

This is a great opportunity—two chances for scholarship with one application. If you have any questions please contact me at lpistek@fbx.com, 641.923.3666 (day-time), or 641.843.4573. (nights and weekends).

Cindy Pistek - Scholarship Chairperson & PT Hancock County

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!
2005 IASCOE/IACS/IASE CONVENTION

APRIL 1 - 2, 2005

Best Western Regency Inn in Marshalltown, Iowa

Room Rate: \$66.00 plus tax

JOIN THE FUN!!!

We are planning a full schedule of informative speakers,
committee meetings and exciting entertainment!!

More Details will be announced soon.



LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE NOTICE!

Plan now for your State to attend the Full Legislative Conference
FEBRUARY 26 through MARCH 2, 2005.

Conference will include TWO hotels:
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront (Baltimore, MD)
Hotel Washington (Washington, DC)

February 26-28 Baltimore Marriott Waterfront

<http://marriott.com/property/propertyPage.mi?marshaCode=BWIFW>

For reservations call 1-800-228-9290 or 1-410-385-3000 (must ask for NASCOE block of rooms)

February 26 - Travel Day

Rooms available at \$133 plus tax

February 27 - Meeting Day

Rooms available at \$133 plus tax

February 28 - Buses Arrive At 8:00am To Transport Attendees To W.D.C.

February 28-March 2 Hotel Washington

www.hotelwashington.com

For reservations call 1-800-424-9540 Group Booking ID 22279

February 28 Arrive by Bus at Hotel Washington

Meeting in the afternoon

Evening meetings with Congressional Aides

Rooms available at \$155 plus tax

March 1 Meet with Congressional Aides

Rooms available at \$155 plus tax

March 2 Head For Home!!!

2004/2005 IASCOE OFFICERS

President
Alan Donaldson
CED Sioux County



Vice-President
Currently Open

Secretary/Treasurer
Sue Beemer
PT Taylor County



2004/2005 IASCOE DIRECTORS

District 1 Directors
Rosie Kahl - Lyon
Alan Donaldson - Sioux
Alternates
Nancy Heideman - Clay
Larry Lago - Dickinson

District 2 Directors
Cindy Pistek - Hancock
Alternates
Vicki Heeren - Franklin
John Bahnsen - Floyd

District 3 Directors
Tammy Eibey - Delaware
Cindy Mensen - Clayton
Alternates
Karen McNeil - Winneshiek
Kevin Keegan - Buchanan

District 4 Directors
Cheryl Nickolisen - Monona
John Landgraf - Sac
Alternates
Lynette Irwin - Shelby
Steve Luke - Shelby

District 5 Directors
Connie Safley - Dallas
Steve Kennedy - Jasper
Alternates
Twyla Brede - Dallas
Bob Wegand - Grundy

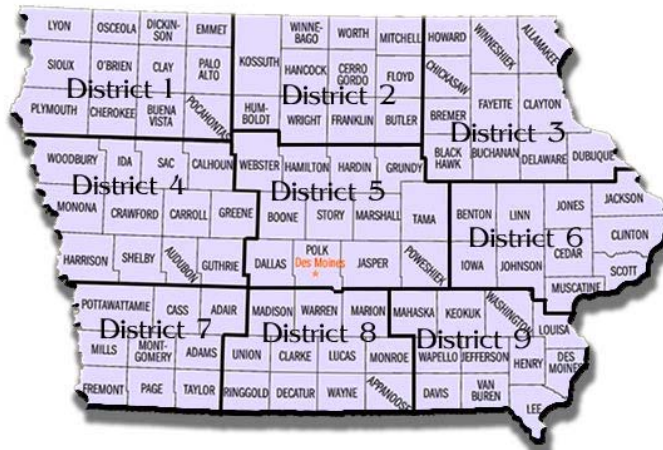
District 6 Directors
Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine
Rich Kleppe - Cedar
Alternates
Carma Reiss - Benton
Randy Madsen - Muscatine

District 7 Directors
Sue Beemer - Taylor
Dan Wells - Adair
Alternates
Cindy Bebout - Fremont
Bill Bartenhagan - Cass/Adams

District 8 Directors
Elaine Gordon - Union
Terry Pauling - Warren
Alternates
Dave Lundquist - Lucas

District 9 Directors
Sandy Johnson - Washington
Alternates
Judy Dameron - Louisa
John Bartenhagen - Louisa

IASCOE **DISTRICTS**



Visit our website at www.iascoe.org

STATE OF IOWA- OFFICERS

President: Alan Donaldson Office: 712-737-4801
CED Sioux County Fax: 712-737-4654
714 8th St SE – PO Box 255 Email: allen.donaldson@ia.usda.gov
Orange City, IA 51041-0255

Vice Pres: Currently Open

Sec/Treas: Sue Beemer Home: 660-582-7737
PT Taylor County Office: 712-523-2118
1508 Oak St Fax: 712-523-3591
Bedford, IA 50833-0236 Email: sue.beemer@ia.usda.gov

STATE OF IOWA-COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Awards: Connie Safley Office: 515-993-4205
PT Dallas County Fax: 515-993-4713
1918 Greene St – PO Box 70 Email: connie.safley@ia.usda.gov
Adel, IA 50003-0070

Benefits: Steve Kennedy Office: 641-792-5019
CED Jasper County FAX: 641-792-8252
709 1st Ave W Email: steve.kennedy@ia.usda.gov
Newton, IA 50208

Legislative: Terry Pauling Home: 515-961-2128
CED Warren County Office: 515-961-2587
909 E 2nd Ave Suite A Fax: 515-961-5738
Indianola, IA 50125-2812 Email: tpauling@prodigy.net

Membership: Dan Wells Office: 641-343-7033
CED Adair County Fax: 641-743-2017
705 NE 6th St Email: daniel.wells@ia.usda.gov
Greenfield, IA 50849-9549

Publicity: Tammy Eibey Home: 563-927-6849
FLPO Delaware County Office: 563-927-4250
200 S 12th Fax: 563-927-4535
Manchester, IA 52057-2306 Email: tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov

Scholarship: Cindy Pistek Office: 641-923-3666
PT Hancock County Fax: 641-923-3660
190 State St - PO Box 40 Email: cindy.pistek@ia.usda.gov
Garner, IA 50438-0040

Emblems: Sandra Johnson Office: 319-653-2138
PT Washington County Fax: 319-653-2700
1621 E Washington Email: sandra.johnson@ia.usda.gov
Washington, IA 52353-0502

Webmaster: Brian Beach Office 712-662-7159
PT Sac County Fax: 712-662-3263
406 Morningside Dr PO Box 158 Email: brian.beach@ia.usda.gov
Sac City, IA 50583-0158 Website: www.iascoe.org



Thanksgiving time, mmmmmmm, I can smell that delicious turkey baking along with stuffing. My mouth waters for the mound of mashed potatoes all smothered in gravy. Sleeping in and watching the parade on TV and then it's over and here we go in high gear. Hitting the road at 4:00 a.m. the following day to get all the bargains, which I do believe! I can only handle every other year though. An organized list and only getting things on your list is most effective. And then the ticket is finding the check out in the corner or in electronics that no one is waiting at.

Then I sit back and try to enjoy the sounds of Christmas. Trying to listen to all my Christmas CD's is almost a chore! That is without skipping songs. I think it would take from Thanksgiving until Christmas to get through them all. I also enjoy a good old fashion grade school Christmas Concert, equipped with a 4th grade band. There is nothing better to get you in the Christmas spirit.

Then we have to bake a little, but in the Forburger house, you immediately eat it. When it is gone you make another goodie and keep doing that during the month of December. You also need to share with neighbors and co-workers, so you check off that task!!!!

We also enjoy the free \$3.50 movie (popcorn) at the Algona Theatre the 4 weeks between holidays. I sit where ever I am told, which is usually in the front row which isn't all bad because there are no heads to contend with and I get to see the movie without usually falling asleep for very long.

Christmas Eve and Day is a day of 3Fs, family, food and fun!!!! Both of our families are very large and it is so fun to find a new face in the crowd and then tease them because it is serious enough that they brought them to meet the family!!! It could be worse, but not real sure how.

Anyway, that is the way my Christmas goes, I hope that you will share with me your holidays. May you have a great holiday season and enjoy!!!!

Lisa Forburger - PT Kossuth County



This is the time of the year we all need to remember all the things we are thankful for. So many times in our day-to-day busy lives we forget to stop and take a breath, kiss our loved ones or hug the kids. Life in the Agency goes so fast that we don't always have time to stop and smell the roses and be thankful for all the things we on a daily basis take for granted. There truly is a rhyme and reason for everything that happens but we, as humans may not understand. Please take time this year to do now the things that we think we will do later.



*Have a Joyous and Safe Holiday Season.
Kathy Boots – PT Benton County*



Men's Polos still available and we're still offering the SPECIALS on them. Check out these specials at www.thenascoestore.com. When our supply of the 3 styles of men's short sleeve polos are gone, we will not be offering these any longer. We have some XXL and XXXL sizes available also. Order them while they last.

Here's what we have in different styles in colors, quantities, and sizes:



SKU 3003.
 Corporate Blue - 1 Small and 2 Large
 Butter Yellow - 1 Small, 2 Medium, 1 Large, 5 XX-large, and 3 XXX-large
 Black - 2 Small, 2 Medium, 1 Large, 3 XX-large, and 1 XXX-large
 Moss Green - 2 Small, 2 Medium, 1 X-large, 3 XX-large, and 1 XXX-large

SKU 3029.
 Aloe - 1 Medium and 1 Large
 Clay - 2 Medium and 1 Large
 Deep Red - 1 Small, 1 Medium, and 1 Large
 Surf Blue - 1 Small, 2 Medium, and 1 Large



SKU 3035.
 Black - 1 Small and 1 Medium
 White - 1 Small and 1 Medium
 Stone - 1 Large
 Wine - 1 Small, 1 Medium, 1 Large, and 1 X-Large
 Dill - 1 Small, 1 Medium, 3 Large, and 1 X-Large
 Red - 1 Small, 1 Medium, 2 Large, and 1 X-Large

Go to www.thenascoestore.com and order them today while supply lasts.
 First Come! First Serve!



SKU 3044 Ladies ¾ Sleeve V-Neck Shirt

The ladies spandex spring products were soooooo popular, we're adding something for fall and winter wear made of the same fabric. This shirt, made of 7-ounce 95/5 cotton spandex, 1 x 1 rib construction, offers a flattering fit. The spandex in these shirts helps help retain its shape. Embroidered with USDA-FSA design. Georgia Emblems Chairperson Marcia Baker ordered this shirt to sell at the 2004 GACOE Convention with the Georgia USDA logo embroidered on it and reported that it was an immediate SELL OUT. The ladies loved it. How to measure: Measure under your arms, around the fullest part of your chest.



What a wonderful season Christmas is!!!! We want to wish everyone a joyous Holiday Season and a New Year full of Blessings. Everyone has a special way of celebrating the Christmas Season, whether is decorating a tree or hanging bright lights from the eaves. Usually we see a bright star shining from the top of a silo or the roof of a house. It's really a time of year to pull out all the stops and decorate to the hilt. Always we see the Nativity scene in many yards and smaller ones in house windows. Sure does take a lot of time to get everything done though!



Food is always on our minds at Christmas. What shall we have this year? What are you cooking or baking this year that is new and different? The old stand-bys are usually the choice for most families. Turkey, dressing, sweet potatoes, cranberries, and pumpkin pie are the traditional favorites. How do you roast your turkey? Maybe marinating in a brine would be a thought for this year. The traditional bird with a different method of preparation could be interesting. You can't beat the wonderful pumpkin pie piled high with fresh whipped cream. Yum!!!

Shopping is always high on everyone's priority list and each year it gets more difficult to find just the right gift for that special person. There is no shortage of television commercials to give us all the ideas we need for that perfect gift. Usually the kids have more fun with the box a gift comes in than the gift itself. This time of year is the time to evaluate the extreme gift giving that creates a credit card bill in January that scares us half to death.

Football is always a major attraction during the holidays, especially this year with the Iowa Hawkeyes making an appearance in the CapitalOne Bowl in Orlando on January 1st. Most of the guys and SOME of the gals will find themselves in front of the TV on New Years Day. A good guess is that most of gals will be spending the entire day cooking the meal and entertaining the kids while the GUYS watch football. No matter how everything turns out, a good time will be had by all. Enjoy this wonderful time of year and the entire New Year!

Happy Holidays to Everyone and a Blessed New Year!

Paulette Henkle - PT Benton County FSA

Troops in Need

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn – CED Keokuk County

Our local Family Support Group has provided a list of items the troops need when stationed overseas. The Keokuk County Office opted last year to send care packages to the troops instead of exchanges Christmas gift among ourselves and we are doing the same this year.

Here are some ideas of things the troops seem to always need if you would like to show your support by sending care packages to those men and women serving overseas. More information is available through the USO at www.uso.cares.org.

Personal Care Items:

(Send unscented items if possible)

Lip and hand care products
Hair care products
Foot Care Products
Body Wash
Kleenex packets
Sun Block SPF 30+
Toilet Paper
Large Baby Wipes
Non Medicated eye drops
Toothpaste and toothbrush
Soap
Hand Sanitizers
Facial cleansing pads
Dental floss
Razors and shaving cream
Nail clipper and tweezers
Q-tips
Roll on deodorant
Black or white tube socks

Entertainment:

Games (cards, travel size games)
Nerf Balls
Disposable cameras
International phone cards
Stationary and pens
CD's and DVD movies
Novels and magazines
Word puzzles

Snacks:

(No pork allowed)

Slim Jims
Flavored instant tea or coffee
Gum
Dried fruit or nuts
Individually wrapped candy
(no melt-able chocolate)
Crackers and peanut butter
Cheese spread
Small dry cereal packages
Power bars

Miscellaneous:

Small pillow and Case
Blanket, flat sheets
Work-out stuff
Fold-up beach chair
Battery operated mini fan
Febreze
Clothes pins and clothes line
Plain shower curtain
Small picture frames
AA & AAA batteries
Mouse and rat traps
Fly Swatters
Flip flops
Freezer Ziploc bags
Plastic containers
Insect repellants



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A MIGHTY IMPORTANT GUY

Author Unknown



A farmer is a paradox – he is an overalled executive in his office; a scientist using fertilizer attachments; a purchasing agent in an old hat; a personnel director with grease under his fingernails; a dietician with a passion for alfalfa; aminos and antibiotics; a production expert with a surplus; and a manager battling a price-cost squeeze.

He manages more capital than most of the businessmen in town. He likes sunshine, good food, State Fairs, dinner at noon, auctions, his neighbors, his shirt collar unbuttoned and, above all, a good soaking rain in August.

He is not much for droughts, ditches, throughways, experts, weeds, the eight-hour day, grasshoppers or helping with housework.

Farmers are found in fields – plowing up, seeding down, rotating from, planting to, fertilizing with, spraying for, and harvesting. Wives help them, little boys follow them, the Farm Service Agency confuses them, city relatives visit them, salesmen detain them and wait for them, weather can delay them, but it takes Heaven to stop them.

A farmer is both Faith and Fatalist – he must have faith to continually meet the challenges of his capacities amid an ever-present possibility that an act of God (a late spring, an early frost, tornado, flood, drought) can bring his business to a standstill. You can reduce his acreage, but you can't restrain his ambition.

Might as well put up with him – he is your friend, your competitor, your customer, your source of food, fiber, and self-reliant young citizens to help replenish your cities. He is your country-man – a denim-dressed, business-wise, fast growing statesman of stature, and when he comes in at noon, having spent the energy of his hopes and dreams, he can be recharged anew with the magic words: "THE MARKET'S UP"!!



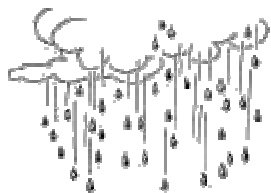
All FSA Employees:

Just a reminder that CapWiz is a new tool, purchased by NASCOE, that can be used to contact our congressional representatives and stay informed of activity in Washington D.C. which affects FSA, particularly the FSA Budget items, and issues relevant to changes in the Farm Bill.

Use your home computer to signup. There are only 8 persons in Iowa who have joined CapWiz to date. There is no fee for an individual to join. You do not have to use the letters generated by CapWiz to our legislative delegation, yet they can inform you of what is really happening. If at least one person in each office signs up for the service, each office will be able to stay abreast of any activity in D.C. with very little effort. The web address is - <http://capwiz.com/nascoe/home/>

Once again---make sure you use your home computer!!!! If you have any questions do not hesitate to call or e-mail me.

Terry Pauling



Rainy Days and Mondays *Submitted by Joni Birkhofer - PT Muscatine County*

It seems that there are two things that make people ask funny questions: Rain and Mondays. Have you ever noticed that when it is raining outside, there are 20 people standing in the lobby, and the phone rings, it is always someone with a stupid question? **Many** times in the past 2 months this has happened to our office. It has happened so many times that we have decided to keep a record of our very favorite ones.

As you all know, we sent out our Final 2004 Direct Payments in the first week of October. This prompted many many phone calls, asking reasonable questions, such as, "Why does this payment statement say I received \$3000 and my bank statement say \$0?"now we all understand a question like that and we of course patiently answer it. But the question that totally unnerved me on that rainy Monday was: "Can you tell me which farm number is across the road?" Now let me tell you right off, that question took a lot of follow up questions and research before it was answered to the customer's satisfaction. The bright side of that question, I thought, was the fact that someone out there is getting these payment statements and is trying to match them up to farm numbers.....right?

Now during the month of October we started getting calls on the "LPD's". I am not certain exactly when the rain started in the month of October, but I do know that it addled the brains of anyone caught out in it. That is the only explanation that I have for the questions that we repeatedly got regarding the "LPD's". The most common one being: "Can I LDP the corn/beans that are still in the field?" You just want to tell those guys....."Heck yes! And you can LDP the neighbor's too!"

Our second most frequent request was to do a "90 day lock in on my loan that I don't have yet." You know how busy those guys are in the fields.....they want to get a loan but just can't

tear themselves out of the cab of that combine to do it. They don't really feel the urgency of it until some radio station tells them that the LDP price is "going away".

But my favorite LDP question was: "Now when you say stored grain.....does that mean AFTER harvest?" Yep, that is what I mean.

The next thing we did in October was make CRP payments. Oh yes, of course there was confusion when we sent those payment statements out too. Sometimes I just take those statements that we send out and study them.....what can these people be seeing in those things that I don't? What on earth triggers those questions? I think it HAS to be either rain or Mondays. We got a phone call 2 days after the CRP mailing with the following question: "I've forgotten, can you tell me who owns my land?" My gut reaction was to answer.....Holy Cow! Who in the heck pays taxes on it? Contact that person and thank them! But in the end, it was a perfectly legitimate question. It turned out it was her LLC that owned the land and not her personally.

The day we got this question, however, was a very busy rainy Monday. The phone rang and one of the customers that had their CRP renewed for the second 10 years was on the other end asking: "Can you tell me exactly how many bushels I am paid for on my CRP?" Now how do you answer something like that? Do you ask how many bushels they raised on the CRP and then answer? Exactly what do you think that guy was wanting to know?

I was born and raised on a farm and married a farmer, so I have always felt that I understood them a little better than most. I have come to the conclusion that the reason customers ask these questions is one of two things.....rainy days or Mondays.

Needless Fluff

A short story by Opal Albright

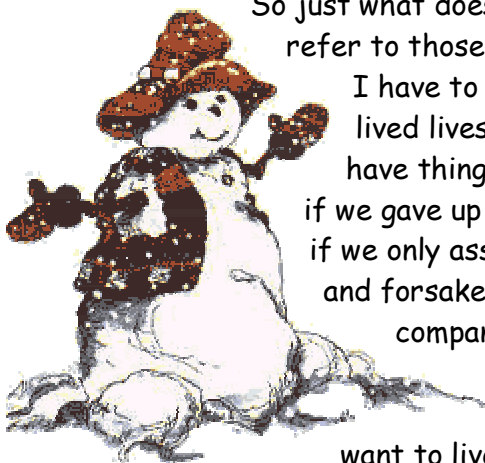
(Yea, that's a pen name)

I often think of myself as a small town Carrie Bradshaw. You know, the newspaper columnist from the HBO series "Sex in the City". I'm Opal Albright, a reporter for our local paper, The Clarion, which is published just once a week on Thursdays. Once a month I'm given a few lines in the entertainment section on page two to express my deepest thoughts in my own personal column.

I would give you a little background on myself but I always get hung up on my name, Opal. What were my parents thinking? Well, I know what they were thinking. I had a great aunt named Opal and I was born in October, the month with the opal designated as its birthstone. I guess they hoped I would find great signification in the name instead of just finding it an embarrassment. I'm a 30-something thoroughly modern woman with one divorce behind me and a whole string of bad boyfriends to my credit. Hence, I've gone through numerous break-ups which leave me wondering if my heart has actually been broken or if I had just suffered another blow to my pride. Until I can figure that one out, I'll probably just continue with the trend. Currently, I'm involved with the equivalent to Carrie Bradshaw's Mr. Big. You know the kind, he's not really good for me but I just can't seem to resist.

Anyway, let me get to the point of this story. At this week's staff meeting, one of my fellow reporters made one of those remarks that stuck in my mind and has been haunting my thoughts ever since. He was referring to some of our regular items on the entertainment page as "Needless Fluff". That one simple remark has continuously nagged at me. I can't help but think that this rather descriptive phrase might just apply to me—am I just "needless fluff"?

The phrase wouldn't have bothered me quite so much if my current boyfriend didn't seem to be losing interest in our relationship. I've been having that "he thinks he can live without me" feeling lately. All of the sudden, not only did my job seem to be "needless fluff", but I was seriously considering that I, myself, was "needless fluff".



So just what does it mean to be "needless fluff"? I suppose the phrase would refer to those things in life that are nice but not necessary to survival. Yet, I have to wonder what the world would be like without it. What if we all lived lives that only contained basic items of survival? What if we didn't have things that were pretty to look at or felt nice or smelled good? What if we gave up doing the things we do just for the sheer pleasure of it? What if we only associated with those people that helped us meet our basic needs and forsake the people we hung out with just because we enjoyed their company? Would the world be such a wonderful place? The more I think about the concept of "needless fluff", the more I like it. I like the needless fluff. I need the fluff. I for one do not want to live in a world without the fluff. I'm thinking that phrase which initially threw me for a loop was a compliment after all! Hey, just call me "Fluffy".

THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.

PART THIRTEEN

Written By Roseanne Woerner, PT From Wapello County
Created by Dee Lehn, CED From Keokuk County

Visit our
website at
www.iascoe.org
for the entire story
of "The Perils of
Polly PT"

I mutter under my breath when I walk in Stevie's office. "Stevie," I say. "I need to talk."

Gracie Lumpkis appears at Stevie's door. "You have a call on line two," she tells him.

"Thanks Gracie," Stevie says. Then to me he says, "Just a minute Polly." He picks up the receiver and has a brief conversation with someone about a counter-cyclical payment. When he hangs up the phone he returns his attention to me.

"What's that?" he asks and points to my hand.

"This? Oh, I guess I need to talk about this too." I hold up a sizeable piece of brown paper sack, emblazoned with a logo from the Piggly-Wiggly. "Wilbur Simmons brought this in last night. It's his hand-written bill for his CRP seeding. I was wondering if I could accept it."

Stevie extracts the paper from my hand and chuckles. "Pretty creative," he says. "Doesn't he own...I don't know...say, a spiral notebook perhaps or some sort of tablet?"

"Probably so, but I think Wilbur has a recycling bug."

Stevie turns the paper this way and that. "Obviously," he says. "And in a big way."

"But can I accept it?" I ask.

Stevie shrugs. "I don't see why not. Everything you need is plainly documented here, however uniquely."

Gracie appears at the door again. "I hate to interrupt," she says. "But we're swamped out

here. Polly, could you help us out at the counter?"

"Okay," I say. "I'll be out in a second." I say to Stevie, "I still need to tell you something."

"So, come back in when the counter is clear."

As I approach the counter, I see that Roger Simmons is next in line. Roger inherited his ground last year from an aunt on his mother's side, so government programs tend to overwhelm him. "What's your LDP today on corn today?" he asks.

I glance at the board that hangs on the wall next to the calendar. "Looks like it's thirty cents."

"Sounds good," he says. "I want to LDP then."

"Is your corn harvested?"

"You mean this year?"

"Yes."

"No. It's still in the field. Might be there till spring if I can't find someplace to store it."

"You can't LDP your corn until it's in a bin," I tell him. "Unless you're going to sell directly out of the field, and then you need to do a 709."

"I have corn in a bin," he says.

"This year's crop?"

“No, last year’s crop. I wasn’t smart enough to get rid of the stuff when prices took off. That’s why this year’s crop is still out in the field.”

“You can’t LDP last year’s crop this year,” I tell him.

“Why not? I couldn’t LDP it last year.”

“There wasn’t an LDP last year Roger.”

He bangs the counter with his hand and smiles. “My point exactly. If fair was fair, I should be able to go back and collect an LDP that wasn’t around last year on grain that was.”

“This is one of those twisty, theoretic scenarios you like to dream up isn’t it?”

“Well,” he says as he puffs out his chest a bit. “Am I right or am I right?”

I pull out a couple of forms from the drawer. “Okay,” I say. “Let’s start from scratch.”

I spend over twenty minutes with Roger and by the time I finish, we’re both shaking our heads. However, I think he now understands, the LDP process, DCP signup, and I’m hoping like crazy he realizes that if he does plant an acre of grapes

next year, he remembers to request a base reduction.

As soon as Roger leaves, I head back to Stevie’s office. He’s reading his email and murmuring something, but he looks up when I walk in. “Is this a good time?” I ask.

“Sure,” he says. “Come on in.” Then he gestures to his chair and says, “Have a seat.”

I would just as soon stand, say what I have to say and make a speedy retreat, but I guess it’s only fair to look him in the eye when I deliver my news. I probably owe him that. “I’m leaving,” I say.

“Yeah right,” he says. “When the walls tumble down.”

“No really. I’m serious. I requested a transfer to northwest Iowa.”

“I don’t understand,” he says.

“I guess I just feel it’s time for a change. But I’ll write,” I say. “I promise.”

THE END

Iowa Trivia Answers

1. In Osceola County – 1,670 feet
2. Fairfield in Jefferson County about 1878.
3. Davenport in Scott County in 1856
4. Madison County in 1872
5. Frank and Jesse James robbed a train near Adair in 1873
6. Cedar County, the Lincoln highway and the Hoover highway intersect in Lowden.
7. The Naval Air Station in Ottumwa, Jefferson County.
8. Pottawattamie County has a three-story drum surrounded by a metal cage.
9. Corning, in Adams County
10. In Independence in Buchanan County.
11. Lucas County after Robert Lucas.
12. Orient, in Adair County
13. Webster, Keokuk County
14. Eldon, in Wapello County.
15. Quaker Oats plant is located in Cedar Rapids in Linn County.
16. Cresco, in Howard County
17. Audubon in Audubon County
18. Burlington in Des Moines County
19. Dubuque
20. Hawaii has no counties. Louisiana has parishes.
21. Georgia – 158, Texas – 97, Iowa – 99, Alaska – 30, and Delaware - 3