

IASCOE

The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

December 2011



2011/2012 IASCOE OFFICERS

President
Jeff Davis
 CED Plymouth County



jeff.davis@ia.usda.gov
tigerhawk89@hotmail.com

Vice-President
Cindy Pistek
 PT Hancock County



cindy.pistek@ia.usda.gov
Cindy.Pistek@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer
Judy Dameron
 PT Louisa County



Judy.dameron@ia.usda.gov
jldameron@iowatelecom.net

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
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
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

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SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Tammy Pruin

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Jeanine Diekhuis	Hancock
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

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2	Barry TerHark	Cerro Gordo
3	Rose Woerner	Black Hawk
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Kitty Benda	Marshall
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7	Carole Dawson	Taylor
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MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Karen LaCour

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4	Cathleen "Skip" Borst	Carroll
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7	Sue Beemer	Taylor
8	Marla Morlan	Monroe
9	Deanna Rood	Mahaska

PROGRAM CHAIR – Jessica Yuska

EMBLEMS CHAIR – Chris Grieder



2011 IASCOE Directors

Other Roles

CAPWIZ Co-ordinator

Tammy Eibey - FLO Cedar County
tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov
eibeyfarms@iowatelecom.net

IASCOE Web Manager

Brian Beach - PT Sac County
brian.beach@ia.usda.gov
bbeach@mchsi.com

Convention Registration

Devalyn Wilson - CED Cedar County
devalyn.wilson@ia.usda.gov
dawilly@iowatelecom.net

Newsletter Editor

Brenda Albright - PT Audubon County
brenda.albright@ia.usda.gov
tbttt@windstream.net

Newsletter Copy Editor

Anna Boecker, CED Tama County
anna.boecker@ia.usda.gov
anna3003@hotmail.com



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



Many years ago when I was President of the Iowa Farmer's Union, I was engaged in a lively discussion with someone about an issue in agriculture. The "discussion" reached the point where the other person said, "Everything changes, there is nothing constant, and you can either change with the rest of us or get run over." As I thought about that statement, I realized that what I was doing at the time was not standing in the way but instead, trying to shape change. I came to the conclusion that there is one thing which is constant and that is change. We do not stand in the way of change, we shape it. Secretary Vilsack recently held a conference call with all members of the State Committees and the SEDs. During the call, the Secretary made the statement that 'if we do not manage change, change will manage us.'

As I am writing this, we are under a Continuing Resolution (CR) but do not know what our allotments are for the CR. We are not certain if there will be changes to the Farm Bill. We are hearing rumors of more downsizing within the agency. As of right now, these are only rumors; there are no facts to go on. We know that we will not be operating as we were even one year ago, but we don't know yet what will shape our operation.

I can tell you that there are discussions occurring centered on the structure of our agency. We need a way to gauge how many staff we need doing each job and where the staff is needed. Does all policy work need to be done in Washington D.C. or can some be done at the STO level? Are there CO staff who could help answer the day-to-day program questions which come up? Actually, I know the answer to that one, and it is yes! How much repetition occurs between agencies within the Department?

We have many issues to work through. I can tell you that I believe there will be another VERA as like most states, we did not reach our new targeted ceiling with the VSIP. I can also tell you that I have been assured by everyone in D.C. that whoever wants to continue with FSA will have a job. From there, all else is just rumors.

FSA is known as a "can do" agency. Whatever we are asked to do, we will find a way to get it done!

John Whitaker



2011-2012 IASCOE President



Hello All,

It is hard to believe that it is that time of year again. This is the season to be busy I guess. As I write this, Thanksgiving is next week and Christmas is a month after that. Where has the time gone? In a couple of weeks we will be telling some of our comrade's goodbye as they retire. We have so many things to think about and with such a short time to get them done.

One more thing to think about is next years 2012 IASCOE Convention. The 2012 convention again will be a joint convention with IASE and IACS meetings the same day. I hope that IASE and IACS members will register and enjoy some evening hospitality with us. I know it is not until March but you can think about it now and then forget about it until after the holidays. The 2012 IASCOE Convention will be March 16th & 17th. We will be back at the Stoney Creek Inn and you can call for rooms to 515-334-9000 or 800-659-2220 and ask for the IASCOE Group. There will be more registration information come out on SharePoint after the first of the year. Keep your eyes open for that. With the date of the convention being what it is I would imagine there will be some kind of a St. Patrick's Day theme.

Participation is the word of the year I believe. Participate as much as you can. Your participation may come in the form of being a member of IASCOE/NASCOE and paying your dues. Participation at that level is great but I hope everyone can maybe step it up for the future of the agency and our association. IASCOE/NASCOE has asked us to participate by getting involved with notifying our Representatives and Senators. They have made it easy with the use of CapWiz. You can go to the IASCOE or NASCOE website and signup to receive CapWiz Alerts. If anyone has any questions please feel free to contact me and I will do what I can to get you some answers.

One thing I would like to take this time to do is to wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. Remember what we have and be thankful for it. A lot of people over many years have given so much and I would like to say Thank You. The Holidays are a time to take a step back and reminisce about the past and look to the future. Being the end of the year there will be some of our fellow employees that will be walking out the door for the last time and I want to say "Happy Retirement". For some, it will be a loved one that is not with us this Holiday season for the first time. For that I wish you understanding in knowing that they are in a better place. There may be some individuals that cannot be with loved ones as they wish and for them I hope that they are safe and can get back together soon.

Everyone have a Happy Holidays and I will see you in the New Year.

Jeff Davis, IASCOE President



2011-2012 IASCOE Vice-President!



Well, we have almost ended another year- 2011 will be history and we anxiously wait for the beginning of 2012. The past 12 months have been a whirlwind of events throughout the United States and around the world. President Obama announces budget cuts and freezes, Apple unveils iPad2, American Hikers were released from prison in Iran, Hurricane Irene hits the East Coast and we can't forget the football game! ISU beat UI in a triple-overtime game-go Cyclones!!!

The past 12 months have been full of activities and stress at the Farm Service Agency. We have said good-bye to many of our friends as they retire and look forward to enjoying time with their family and friends. We hit the road running with new programs, adjusting as things changed and evolved. The past year we have remained vigilant in watching what is happening with budget and Farm Bill discussions, making sure that our voice is heard. There is much to be done and we will be prepared.

Enough said about the past and how we can prepare for the future. Let's take a look at "today". This month of December is a special time for all Christians. We spend the first 24 days of December preparing for the celebration of the birthday of Christ. How well do we prepare? Do we spend every extra minute baking, shopping, fighting for parking spaces at the mall, running to Christmas programs, decorating the perfect tree and planning the perfect meal?

This year, maybe we should try some new ways to prepare for December 25th. Maybe we could:

- Visit someone in the nursing home who has no one to visit them
- Invite someone who is away from family to share a meal with you at your home
- Help someone put up their Christmas lights or decorate their tree if they are unable to manage it themselves
- Make cut-out sugar cookies and let the kids decorate them
- Spend a little time every day being thankful for all of our blessings

The possibilities are endless and I challenge each of you to find some way that you can make a difference for someone else this Christmas Season. One of the most gratifying things of all is to do something for another when they have asked for nothing-this is a true gift.

God's Blessings to all of you during this Christmas Season.

Cindy Pistek
IASCOE Vice-President



2011-2012 IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer



Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7, are up for election in 2012. Ballots are out and hopefully they all have been returned to me and you have voted for the best man/woman to represent your district. We will be counting the ballots at our January meeting and I will be sending each of the candidates a letter telling them whether they were elected or not. The newly elected directors will be reimbursed for two nights at the convention plus mileage at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ the government rate at that time.

By the time this newsletter is out, we will have had several retirements due to the VSIP. This agency will be losing some valuable knowledge and dedication. We all will be losing some great friends, who at times, were just like family. I want to wish these young people a great retirement and hopefully someday I can join them!!

Just a note to the employees who are retiring and have chosen payroll deduction in the past for your NASCOE dues, you will have to either pay the Associate Membership dues to continue being a NASCOE member or become a RASCOE member for this 2011-2012 membership year.

I hope that everyone had a great Thanksgiving and I hope that your Christmas is merry and bright. Remember the reason for the season and God bless you one and all.

Judy L Dameron
Secretary/Treasurer





MEMBERSHIP

The Thanksgiving holiday is just around the corner and planning of the menu and preparations for the meal is already on the minds of many. It may be contrary to belief but we in FSA do have a lot to be thankful for. Even amidst our looming budget crisis, along with our dwindling numbers in our FSA family, we have pulled together with three IASCOE Districts (1, 7, & 9) continuing to reach the 100% goal of membership enrollment. To couple this, the entire State came up with an astounding 93% enrollment figure. I wish to express a sincere Thank You to those new enrollees along with our Associate members that have chose IASCOE as their way to support our FSA family. This figure was only boosted by our commitment in FSA to stick together as a family to ensure that we are fairly represented to keep what we have, and to grow our benefits pool.

To say we are at 93% is only as solid as when it is first determined. We can still grow to our 100% goal as an entire State and I encourage everyone to consider what IASCOE has and continues to do in fighting for not only our payroll benefits but other benefits as well. Please visit www.iascoe.org and view the additional available benefits you can enjoy as an IASCOE member. Although payroll benefits do apply to any FSA member, the IASCOE benefits listed on the website are only available to IASCOE members and I personally have enjoyed utilizing those benefits and if you are not an IASCOE member I would encourage you to become a member and help out not only yourself but join to also help our your FSA family of friends and co-workers to hold on to and grow our benefits pool. If Iowa could grow to 100% membership we could be in the top ranks of other organizations fighting for benefit dollars on Capitol Hill.

Let's do our part and share the word of IASCOE, encourage enrollment, and come together this Thanksgiving Holiday! If you wish to join our IASCOE family, please contact myself or any IASCOE member and we will gladly help you through it.

Thank you and enjoy the holidays!

Karen LaCour
IASCOE State Membership Chair
cmego@evertex.net
712-330-1347

Scholarship Reminder!

Just a little reminder about the 2 kinds of scholarships that are available to students and adults who are interested in continuing education classes....

IASCOE student scholarships are available to high school seniors and college students up to the Bachelor's Degree level. The applicant must be a legal dependent of an IASCOE member.

The scholarship application is available on the NASCOE website and may be completed on line and printed out or you may choose to just print the application and complete manually. Be sure to print the checklist for the application so that you can be certain to have completed all the requirements.

Deadline to submit the application is **JANUARY 31st**! All applications are automatically forwarded to the Midwest Area to be judged at that level as well.

Mail the application to:

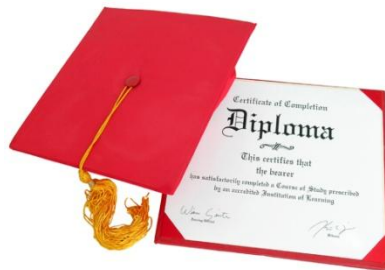
Tammy Pruin 16316 190th St Mason City, IA 50401

NASCOE member scholarships are used to defray expenses incidental to attending adult education classes. Applicants must be permanent county office employees and IASCOE members. The Midwest Area will be allowed to award one \$200 scholarship.

This application may be found on the NASCOE website as well. Deadline for consideration for a Member's scholarship is **MARCH 1st**. These applications are mailed directly to the Midwest Area scholarship chairperson:

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

Please keep these deadlines in mind. We hope to have lots of applications to judge!



AWARD NOMINATIONS

The IASCOE awards program recognizes members that have made outstanding contributions this past year resulting in a direct compliment and benefit to the Farm Service Agency, the producers we serve or the communities we live in.

Certainly we can all think of that special person that performs to such a degree, providing a constant positive benefit to those around them making life in general a little easier. They are the ones that complete the tasks that wouldn't ordinarily get done, fix what's broken, organize the process and pitch in and help out when and where it's necessary. These folks seek no attention for their effort as their focus is always on the next task at hand.

The Distinguished Service Awards (DSA's) program is your opportunity to recognize and show a formal appreciation to these folks that benefit our Agency and the communities we live in. The DSA's are given annually in three categories: 1) Service to FSA-Agriculture; 2) Service to Community and 3) Service to IASCOE/NASCOE.

The process starts with your nomination. You will find a user friendly fill able nomination form on the NASCOE website at www.nascoe.org. In addition, IASCOE also recognizes members who achieve milestones of unused sick leave, Extra Effort Awards, Professional Improvement Awards and First Time National Convention attendance recognition.

The guidelines and eligibility requirements are posted on the NASCOE web site to expedite the process. Give me a call if you have any questions.

Please send your nominations by February 1, 2012 to :

John Landgraf
6261 150th Avenue
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

MARCH 16-17, 2012

Stoney Creek Inn – Des Moines

5291 Stoney Creek Court | Johnston, IA | 50131 | phone: 515.334.9000

NAME: _____

COUNTY: _____ POSITION: _____

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING _____

Pre-registration: (by March 9th) \$30.00 Each _____

Extra Guest (Hospitality & Breakfast): \$20.00 Each _____

Registration at Door: \$35.00 Each _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Registration includes: Meeting Room Rental, Hospitality Room, (which will include snacks and beverages) Entertainment, and Breakfast Saturday morning.

First Conference Attended?

please circle one

YES

NO

Please check one of the Following:

IASCOE Member _____

IASE Member _____

IACS Member _____

IASCOE Associate Member _____

Out of State Member _____

Other _____

Please make all checks payable to "IASCOE"

All pre-

Mail completed form and payment to:

Devalyn Wilson

registration forms should be received by March 9, 2012

Two individuals who "pre-register" will also be eligible for a FREE room the night of the convention. *Directors and Committee members are exempt*

A Holiday message from the Publicity Corner

I was surprised and slightly taken back when I spoke to a teenager just 2 days after Thanksgiving. I asked her if she had a nice Thanksgiving with her family and she said "Yes, it was the best!" I asked her if she ate too much, and she said no, she actually didn't overeat like she has in previous years. She then added, "You know, it was just so nice to be with my family and I really enjoy Thanksgiving much more than Christmas because you don't have all the present stuff to have to worry about." Oh my.

How hard we all try as parents to make sure that we get everything we think our children would really like, or that they get gifts that will measure up with the comparisons of other families when they return to school and get the "So, what did YOU get for Christmas?" questions. It was with her comment that I wondered just how much we could all benefit from this conversation. We all have the best intentions in mind as we spend the time and the money trying to have the perfect Christmas for our kids and families. And don't we feel let down if they don't react with the emotions and the display of appreciation that we expect? It makes me think that in being so busy in trying to make sure that everything is perfect, we are totally missing the point of what that perfection is. To this 17 year-old girl, this holiday was perfect. Better than Christmas. What a feeling that should give us all.

As we enter in to this Christmas Season, the sparkling array of every twinkling color imaginable will start to come alive: from the delicate white lights either still or gently blinking, to the wondrous displays that seem to brighten a city block. We will view the amazing decorations as they begin to emerge, inhale the aromas of cinnamon, evergreen, and fresh- baked cookies, and sing along to our favorite Christmas songs as they play everywhere. "'Tis the Season" is here once again whether we're ready for it or not.

December will bring about an abundance of changes for the New Year. It will include not only seasonal changes but FSA changes as well. With VSIP/VERA and planned retirements, our agency family will be reduced in our offices. As our workload committee strives to do the job they've been directed to do, we shall see where our focuses will need to be. As our budgets are adjusted, we will continue to meet the reductions in the ways that become necessary. We will feel the weight of added responsibilities to those that remain and find our way thru a shift of duties that won't seem quite so bad down the road. As with any challenge, we will find our strengths and we will be okay. Without a doubt, we will all have stressful times ahead, but as we face each day, we need to remember that we're truly all in this together and that we all have things we are dealing with. In step with the Holidays, it will be a time to count our blessings and to have extra patience and compassion as we continue into our Fiscal Year of 2012.

In our newsletters we will try to pass on current information as we know it, as well as some interesting articles and pictures in addition. A special thanks to all who have submitted articles and stories and if anyone has any suggestions for future, or comments about current newsletters, please don't hesitate to let any of us know.

"Merry Christmas to everyone and Best Wishes for the New Year!"

Brenda Albright

Publicity Chairperson

Benefit Update

By Kelly Cain

As I was preparing for the quarterly directors meeting of IASCOE on October 29th, I thought I better take a look at the NASCOE.org website and go under the benefits tab to see if anything new was listed. Boy was I surprised. I hadn't been to the website for a few weeks and things had changed. I clicked on the Benefits Available to all Federal Employees tab (by the cute little gecko) and found a listing of several great discounts available to Government workers. There are discounts for eye care, resume writing, cell phone packages, rental cars, travel and a variety of other things. If you are traveling, there are several hotel chains that offer special rates to government employees. Go to the website and click on the tab and see for yourself.

One of the listings I found interesting was the Government Employees Marketplace. It is free to join and is exclusive to Government workers. You can find this marketplace at <https://gem.onebigplanet.com/d/public/login.html>. I couldn't believe all the discounts on the website. There were discounts to big name stores such as Target, Office Depot, Best Buy, and many more. After registering the site knows where I live and there were lots of discounts under the local tab to businesses and restaurants in my surrounding area. What a great discovery for me as I start my Christmas shopping.

Some of the benefits listed on the NASCOE.org benefits page require a Members only password. If you have already gotten your password but can't remember what it is send an email to Tammy Eibey. She will look and see what your password is. NASCOE has to pay for the password pro feature and only has 1000 accounts so please don't just request a new password using a different user id.

In these uncertain times it is nice to learn I have even more benefits than I realized being a Government worker. I know I am glad I have my 2011-2012 National Association of FSA County Office Employees Official Membership Card to carry in my purse.



What Are YOU Thinking!?

What are they thinking? Don't they know what that will do to me? How is that going to work? Why are they doing that? Wasn't there something else they could have done?

How often have you asked these questions when congress makes a decision? These could be decisions on programs, the budget, or the benefits that we as FSA and Federal employees are responsible for or receive. I think all of us realize that they have a tough job to do but we would hope they could arrive at the best possible option before making their final decisions. When you make a major decision in your life such as buying a car or house or what college your child may attend, you look at your options and take many things into consideration. In the end, you make the decision based on the information and resources you have available. NASCOE has invested in CAP WIZ so NASCOE members can provide our Senators and Representatives in Washington with information and options they can consider when making important decisions that will impact FSA and in particular CO employees. NASCOE looks at legislation that is being proposed, hearings being held, or important events such Farm Bill deliberations, and determines what impact it will have on FSA CO employees and establishes a position on the issue. A letter is written on the position and is posted to the Cap Wiz alert system. All of those that are subscribed to Cap Wiz will receive an alert on their home email asking that they take action on the topic. Everyone who takes action sends the same message to their Representative and Senators whether they are from Manchester, or Sioux City, Iowa or Georgia. The more people sending the same message, the more people will hear it in Washington. The goal is to educate and inform them so they can make the best decision that will be of the most benefit (or do the least amount of harm) to FSA and the county office employees.

There were two recent Cap Wiz alerts that were sent out. The first was on Dairy legislation. Whether you agree with the legislation or not, the important thing is that we/FSA want to administer this program. That is the message that we need to send. This could have a significant impact on FSA workload in the Midwest and in Iowa particularly. The second alert was regarding the reduction in the field office staff in order to meet the 2012 and 2013 budgets for FSA. NASCOE wants congress to make sure FSA management looks at all levels of the agency for staff reductions and not just those at the delivery point. Options and suggestions were included that would provide significant savings quicker and more effectively than eliminating staff at the county level.

The letters were written and with a couple of clicks you were able to send your message to your two Senators and Representative in Washington. How much easier could it be?

There are currently 4175 subscribers nationally to CAP WIZ. Iowa has 336 which is a great percentage of our membership. Unfortunately we haven't been sending these alerts to congress. When the Dairy alert was sent out only 781 people nationally and 73 from IA sent the message! When the FSA Reduction alert was sent out 946 CAP WIZ subscribers sent messages but only 107 from IA.

Now I have to ask; What are YOU thinking! Don't YOU want your Representative and Senators to know how their vote will impact YOU? Don't YOU want them to look at ALL of the options available before they start eliminating positions at the county level? Don't YOU want them to know that YOU are concerned! CAP WIZ can be and has been an effective tool in delivering messages to congress but only when it is used by the members. If we fail to educate congress on issues that are important to us or fail to let them know we are concerned about an issue they will make decision based on what someone else is saying. Do YOU want to take the chance they are protecting your interests? I certainly don't!

Less than 35% of IA CAP WIZ subscribers took action on the last two alerts we can and must do a better job of informing our people in Washington if we hope to remain a viable option in the delivery of farm programs to America's farmers and ranchers. If we are a viable option we will all be a victim of the budget cuts and lose our best benefit, our jobs!

If you have any questions or concerns about the letters in CAP WIZ or how NASCOE uses it please let me know. NASCOE signs a contract for this service and we need our membership to utilize it to justify the cost. If you don't like the alerts or messages being sent, you need to let NASCOE know what message should be sent, let your area directors and State Officers know what YOU are thinking. Don't let others speak for you.

REMEMBER YOU CANNOT USE YOUR GOVERNMENT COMPUTER OR EMAIL ADDRESS FOR ANY CAP WIZ OR LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES!!

Also make sure you check your filters and junk mail in case these messages are being blocked. If anyone has changed their email address or has signed up but is not getting the alert message, they can contact me, Tammy Eibey, NASCOE Cap Wiz Coordinator, directly so I can update or verify the email address in Cap Wiz. I can be contacted at siouxcitychick81@hotmail.com.

Respectfully submitted
Tammy Eibey
NASCOE Cap Wiz Coordinator
National Publicity Chair



CHRISTMAS 2011 – BIRTH OF A NEW TRADITION

This past week I received a very thought provoking e-mail from a good friend of mine. As I read through it I was inspired to think of Christmas shopping in a whole new way. I don't like all of the "hoopla" as you travel from each department store trying to find the perfect gift for everyone on your list. Many of our friends and neighbors struggle as they try to operate their small businesses and compete with the "department stores". Here is a "challenge" to think outside the box and support the American businessman.

A Christmas Shopping List:

Grandma: Gift certificate from her local salon for a pedicure, weekly "style" or a perm. The services of a local cleaning lady would make a great gift.

Grandpa: Gift certificate to his favorite local golf course, gift certificate for his favorite "coffee shop" so he doesn't miss any of the latest news, a gift of shoveling the snow on his driveway or mowing his lawn in the summer.

High School Age son/daughter: Gift certificates from the local theatre, clothing from a locally-owned business or gift certificates to their favorite local hang-out with their friends.

Young children: How about the "gift" of spending time doing an activity that could be enjoyed by the giver and the receiver like going to a high school play, music concert or ball game together. The time spent together could always be topped off with the food "treat" of their choice. Anyone for popcorn or ice cream????

There are lots of places to go for shopping:

Attend local craft fairs; you can find jewelry, rugs, quilts, candles, beautiful wood carvings -all kinds of things made by people in your neighborhood.

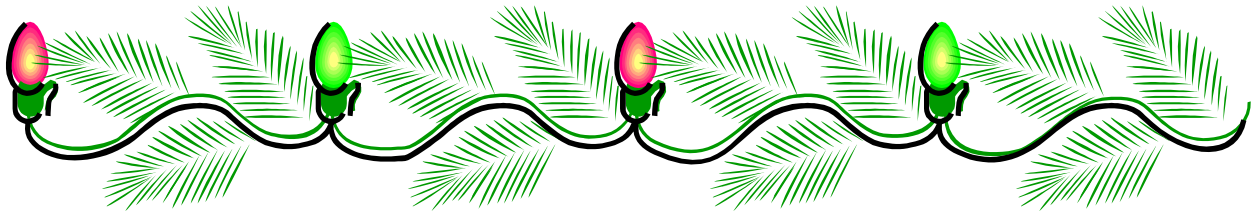
Attend those "in-home" parties, you can always find some great things to buy while helping the consultant and the hostess.

When the school in your town is doing their fund-raising; check out what they are offering that you could give as a gift

The words "Open House" bring all kinds of thoughts to mind when shopping. Have you been to the local winery/brewery and sampled some of their beverages? I know plenty of people (myself included-hint) who would love to have a good bottle of wine from an Iowa winery to go with my cheese and crackers on Christmas Eve.

The possibilities are endless and I realized that as I shopped in my own local town last weekend. The lines didn't exist and everywhere I went those people helping me were friendly faces who had all the time in the world to assist me with my shopping. When I got home, I had some great gifts and felt like I had just spent the entire day with my friends! Thanks to my friend who took the time to send me the e-mail- I had a great day.

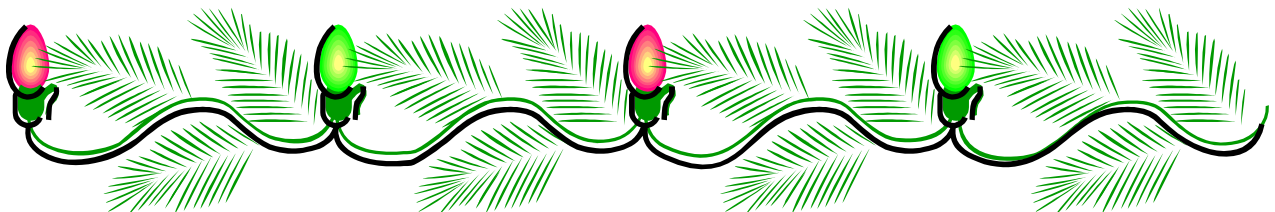
HAPPY SHOPPING!!!!



Days Gone By.....

Submitted by: Angie Reynolds, Muscatine County FSA

During the County Fair season one of our producers shared with us a story from her youthful days at the fair. She let us know that her favorite part of the fair was the Duck Pond. She loved to watch the ducks go around and around but she NEVER did win the big prize by choosing the correct duck. To her frustration a neighbor girl would memorize which duck was the winner and would choose it every time until they would not let her play anymore. So we decided to take her on a trip down memory lane by setting up a duck pond in the office and letting her choose the "winning" duck. To make sure we did not disappoint her we made each duck a winner! Isn't it nice to learn interesting little facts about our producers?



Halloween Pictures!!!



Front row: Zombie (Denice Winter), Witch (Carol Boos), Electrician (Lois Shattuck), Grinch (Mike Praska).
Back row: White Trash (Lisa Leyh), Surgeon (Linda Zubrod), UNI Cheerleader (Julie Offerman), Deadliest Catch Fisherman (Leon Kolbet), John Deere Salesman (Mary Jane Leach), Witch (Connie Straw).

Chickasaw County



Several offices had a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Frankenstein!!
AKA: David Kastengren, CED Wapello County; and Dee Lehn, CED Keokuk County



Dubuque County Staff



little Ava Wegner -- potentially a future FSA employee!! I think her Dad is scaring her by the look in her eyes ☺ (ha ha). Father is Jesse Wegner, CED in Fayette.



Davis County Staff



Hancock County

SAVE the DATE

IASCOE State Convention

March 16-17th 2012

Stoney Creek Inn – Des Moines

The One ~~Hit~~ Miss Wonder
By Rose Woerner, Black Hawk County

Back in the day, as a brand new wife, I made every effort to impress my husband with my culinary skills. The problem being, I had none. So, when he and his best friend, Tom, made plans to share a Thanksgiving meal, I agreed to help in the kitchen. "Of course she can cook," my husband told Tom. "Her mother taught her everything she knows."

As an aside, I would like to make note that my mother hated to cook. A holiday meal consisted of canned corn, a cherry Jello salad and a slimy turkey roll that swam in self-making gravy. By the time I said 'I do', I could turn the oven off and on, but little else.

Somewhere around ten o'clock, my husband and I made the sixty minute drive to Mount Pleasant to visit Tom, who I barely knew and his wife, Alice, who I knew only by sight. When I entered the kitchen, there was a fresh 23 lb. turkey on the counter with two bags of stuffing. Then there was Alice, standing barefoot in the doorway, wearing Daisy Duke cut-offs and a skimpy T-shirt. "Okay," she said as a greeting. "What do you want me to do?" In an instant, I had a two-part epiphany: Alice didn't know how to cook either and I was severely overdressed.

I remember we giggled a lot, even though we did everything wrong. It took both of us to wrestle the turkey out of the wrapping, slap it into an aluminum pan and shove it the oven. There were no pop-up timers back then, nor did Alice own a thermometer. Together, we decided that it was done when it turned brown and we were mostly correct. The bird was only slightly bloody around the bones, but what a surprise to find all those extra parts in the cavity.

While the turkey was cooking, we watered down the stuffing until it was soggy and put it in a baking dish, sans celery, onion, or anything else that might have made it even slightly palatable. I copied my mother's recipe for corn and opened a can like a champ. That can of corn was our only redemption, along with a frozen pie that I had thought to buy. It baked nicely, alongside the turkey and of course, we trimmed off the burnt pieces of crust before we served it.

Our husbands drank a lot of beer that day and took the failed meal in stride. Although Alice never improved her wardrobe much, she and I both learned to cook eventually. That first, big cooking experience has served a good story to tell for years and a helpful guide of What-Not-To-Do.

In the Spirit of Giving

Shelby County FSA Office

The sights and sounds of the holiday season are coming alive! People are beginning the hustle and bustle of finding the perfect gift for that special someone, cooking large meals and baking cookies and candies for their family gatherings.

It's a delight to receive gifts during the holiday season, but even more joyous and fulfilling to be on the giving end of gifts. For the past few years here at the Shelby County FSA Office, instead of doing a gift exchange among co-workers, or a Secret Santa, we have researched and found a very-well deserving individual or family and make a donation to them.

A couple of years ago, we made a donation of Wii accessories to an adult daycare center. The daycare center had received a Wii from another donor and was in need of remotes and other accessories for them to be able to play. The Wii provided exercise and fun for everyone!

Last Christmas, we pooled our monetary donations together and purchased a gas gift card for a transplantee and his wife. He had a heart and liver transplant and needed to make multiple trips to his doctors at Rochester for follow-ups. We know they appreciated the gift and it warmed our hearts knowing we helped someone that was in great need. We're happy to report that he has done very well since his transplant!

Currently we are brainstorming for an individual or family to make an anonymous donation to this holiday season. Help make someone else's holiday season a little brighter this year!



Almond Bark Snack Mix

Donna Schmidt, PT, Shelby County

3 cups each Corn, Rice, Wheat Chex cereal
20 oz. package almond bark
1 cup M&M's or chocolate chips or chocolate covered raisins
2 cups marshmallows
2 cups salted dry roasted peanuts
2 cups small pretzels

Mix all of the dry ingredients, except the M&M's. Add melted almond bark and stir with a rubber spatula. Add in the M&M's and stir. Spread on wax paper and let dry. Once dry, break up and store in air-tight container.



Following are the retirements from September through December 3rd

9/30/2011 Schaaf, Roberta A. Retirement STO
9/30/2011 Fry, Thomas D. Retirement Clarke
9/30/2011 Farrell, Jean M. Retirement Clayton
10/28/2011 Johnson, Gayle R. Retirement Appanoose
11/30/2011 Anderson, Cheryl VSIP-Retirement Buena Vista
11/30/2011 Ballinger, Mona M. VSIP-Retirement Cass
11/30/2011 Briggs, Cynthia VSIP-Retirement Mahaska
11/30/2011 DeBoer, Lorene B. VSIP-Retirement Lyon
11/30/2011 Gallagher, Mercedes VSIP-Retirement Hardin
11/30/2011 Havinga, Jon VSIP-Retirement Hamilton
11/30/2011 Hibma, Miriam VSIP-Retirement Osceola
11/30/2011 Slaymaker, Sandra VSIP-Retirement Iowa
11/30/2011 Smith, Patrice VSIP-Retirement Benton
11/30/2011 Wipplinger, Carol VSIP-Retirement Winnebago
11/30/2011 Holtz, Roger VSIP-Retirement Montgomery
11/30/2011 McConnell, Mark VSIP-Retirement Monona
11/30/2011 Schuster, Dixie VSIP-Retirement Dubuque
12/3/2011 Anderson, Dianna L. VSIP-Retirement Boone
12/3/2011 Elbert, Diana G. VSIP-Retirement Palo Alto
12/3/2011 Emery, Janice V. VSIP-Retirement Audubon
12/3/2011 Fairchild-Flemmig, Jennifer VSIP-Retirement Carroll
12/3/2011 Johnson, Sandra VSIP-Retirement Washington
12/3/2011 Carson, Illa J. VSIP-Retirement Clarke

We wish them all the best!!





Fall Apple Dip

2 pkg of cream cheese

3 C. Powdered Sugar

1 C. Caramel apple dip

½ C. Chopped pecans.

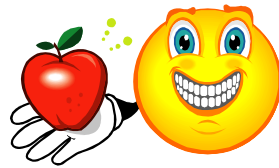
Apples cut into slices (you can dip in orange juice or sprinkle fruit fresh on so they don't turn brown)

Cream together cream cheese and powder sugar and spread evenly onto pie

plate or decorative plate. Top with caramel and then the chopped pecans.

Refrigerate till you're ready to eat.

Gretchen McLain,
County Executive Director
Jefferson County FSA



Do you know what this is???



Frosty the Snowman's Baby Picture!!!!



A Parents Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house
I searched for the tools to hand to my spouse.
Instructions were studied and we were inspired,
In hopes we could manage "Some Assembly Required."

The children were quiet (not asleep) in their beds,
While Dad and I faced the evening with dread:
A kitchen, two bikes, Barbie's town house to boot!
And, thanks to Grandpa, a train with a toot!

We opened the boxes, my heart skipped a beat....
Let no parts be missing or parts incomplete!
Too late for last-minute returns or replacement;
If we can't get it right, it goes in the basement!

When what to my worrying eyes should appear,
But 50 sheets of directions, concise, but not clear,
With each part numbered and every slot named,
So if we failed, only we could be blamed.

More rapid than eagles the parts then fell out,
All over the carpet they were scattered about.
"Now bolt it! Now twist it! Attach it right there!
Slide on the seats, and staple the stair!
Hammer the shelves, and nail to the stand."
"Honey," said hubby, "you just glued my hand."

And then in a twinkling, I knew for a fact
That all the toy dealers had indeed made a pact
To keep parents busy all Christmas Eve night
With "assembly required" till morning's first light.

We spoke not a word, but kept bent at our work,
Till our eyes, they went bleary; our fingers all hurt.
The coffee went cold and the night, it wore thin
Before we attached the last rod and last pin.

Then laying the tools away in the chest,
We fell into bed for a well-deserved rest.
But I said to my husband just before I passed out,
"This will be the best Christmas, without any doubt.

Tomorrow we'll cheer, let the holiday ring,
And not have to run to the store for a thing!
We did it! We did it! The toys are all set
For the perfect, most perfect, Christmas, I bet!"

Then off to dreamland and sweet repose I gratefully went,
Though I suppose there's something to say for those self-deluded...
I'd forgotten that BATTERIES are never included!

Author Unknown

