

# IASCOE

The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

March 2011



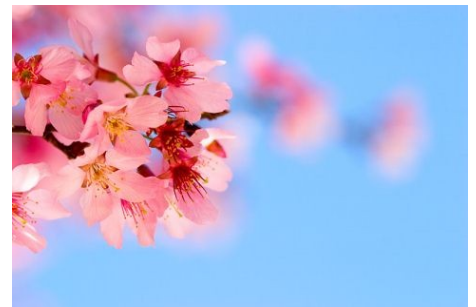
From: Dee Lehn

This looks like a snow sculpture by the patio. The fence is 6 ft high.



Judy Dameron and her grandkids!!

Still winter  
BUT THINK SPRING!!!



# 2010/2011 IASCOE OFFICERS

**President**  
**Cindy Mensen**  
**CED Clayton County**



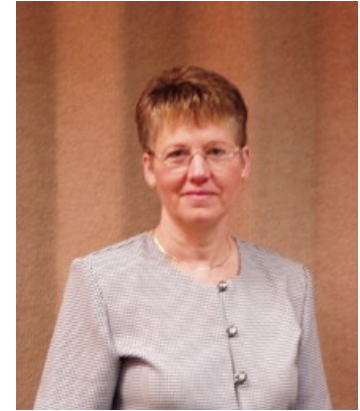
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**Vice-President**  
**Jeff Davis**  
**CED Plymouth County**



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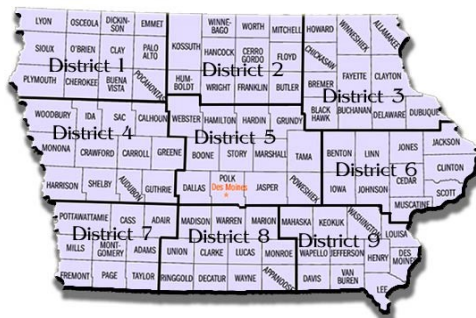
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Sue Beemer**  
**PT Taylor County**



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## 2010/2011 IASCOE DIRECTORS

DISTRICT	P.T. DIRECTOR	CED DIRECTOR
1	<b>Karen LaCour - Dickinson</b> Alt - Nancy Heideman - Clay	<b>Jeff Davis - Plymouth</b> Alt - Larry Lago - Dickinson
2	<b>Cindy Pistek - Hancock</b> Alt - Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock	<b>Tammy Pruin - Wright</b> Alt - Barry Terhark - Cerro Gordo
3	<b>Karen McNeil - Winneshiek</b> Alt -	<b>Cindy Mensen - Clayton</b> Alt - Kevin Keegan - Buchanan
4	<b>Mary Lageschulte - Ida</b> Alt - Amy Carlson-Hammen - Calhoun	<b>John Landgraf - Sac</b> Alt - Kevin Fitzpatrick - Greene
5	<b>Chris Grieder - Polk</b> Alt - Teresa Heck - Polk	<b>Steve Kennedy - Jasper</b> Alt - Lee Ann Davis - Boone
6	<b>Jessica Yuska - Scott</b> Alt - Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine	<b>Devalyn Wilson - Cedar</b> Alt - Randy Madsen - Muscatine/Scott
7	<b>Sue Beemer - Taylor</b> Alt - Judy Lundgren - Page	<b>Cindy Bebout - Fremont</b> Alt - Lynette Gruchow - East Pottawattame
8	<b>Patsy Bence - Madison</b> Alt - Connie Bence - Madison	<b>Kelly Cain - Madison</b> Alt - Joyce Frost - Wayne
9	<b>Judy Dameron - Louisa</b> Alt - Dawn Stewart - Henry	<b>Dee Ann Lehn - Keokuk</b> Alt - John Bartenhagen - Louisa





2010 IASCOE Directors

### 2010/2011 IASCOE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

#### Legislative

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#### Membership

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## 2010/2011 IASCOE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### District 1

Benefits/Legislative: Rex Wittrock, Buena Vista  
Awards/Scholarship: Larry Lago - Dickinson  
Publicity: Kelsey White, Emmet  
Membership: Mark VonArb - Cherokee

### District 3

Benefits/Legislative: Karen McNeil - Winneshiek  
Awards/Scholarship: Connie Straw - Chickasaw  
Publicity: Rose Woerner - Black Hawk  
Membership: Sheri Rodman - Clayton

### District 5

Bene./Legislative: Teresa Simonton - Poweshiek  
Awards/Scholarship: Connie Safley - Dallas  
Publicity: Kitty Benda - Marshall  
Membership: Rodney Biensen - Story

### District 7

Benefits/Legislative: Chris Irvin - Page  
Awards/Scholarship: Phyllis Reineke - Taylor  
Publicity: Carole Dawson - Taylor  
Membership: Dan Wells - Adair

### District 9

Benefits/Legislative: John Bartenhagen - Louisa  
Awards/Scholarship: Carol Long - Mahaska  
Publicity: Anna Boecker - Van Buren  
Membership: Cynde Briggs - Mahaska

### District 2

Benefits/Legislative: David Stromer - Kossuth  
Awards/Scholarship: Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock  
Publicity: Barry Terhark, Cerro Gordo  
Membership: Janine Schwarck - Mitchell

### District 4

Benefits/Legislative: Pat Warmbier - Harrison  
Awards/Scholarship: Denise Dugan - Woodbury  
Publicity: Heather Muenchrath - Shelby  
Membership: Cathleen "Skip" Borst - Carroll

### District 6

Bene./Legis.: Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine  
Awards/Scholarship: Angie Reynolds - Muscatine  
Publicity: Jessica Yuska, Scott  
Membership: Renee Schultz - Cedar

### District 8

Benefits/Legislative: Kelly Cain - Madison  
Awards/Scholarship: Dave Wynn - Monroe  
Publicity: Rhonda Cooper - Union  
Membership: Marla Morlan - Monroe



## Other Roles

### CAPWIZ Co-ordinator

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2010 Awards & Scholarship Committee



2010 Publicity Committee



2010 Membership Committee



2010 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

Rumors can be very dangerous some times. We've all experienced times when we have heard something about someone or an issue and we wondered if it was true or even half true. Most times it isn't. There are a number of rumors circulating right now about the next Farm Bill, the future of FSA offices, staffing levels, and what all of this will mean to us. I don't have all of the answers right now and really with us being on a continuing resolution perhaps no one does. It will just take time for all of this to sort out.

I look at it this way, we are very fortunate that many of our elected representatives know FSA and the important role it plays in agriculture and of our hard working employees. I am confident that they will stand up for us when the time comes. It won't be easy for them with the current "anti-government" attitude but we need to remind everyone who the "government" is. We also need to remind the general public of what we do. Our Administrator, Jonathan Coppess, expressed it very well at the FLP national meeting in December when he talked about FSA employees. His point was this, most of the public will label a government worker "lazy or ineffective" without thinking of who that might be or the job they perform. If you ask a group of farmers about government workers, they may grumble about a lack of work until you mention FSA employees. Most of our producers will say "yes those folks in the county office work hard and we get our money's worth from them". Having served at all three levels of government now, local state and national, I can tell you that most of the citizens who interact with government employees believe that the folks they work with are good hard working citizens. The unfortunate part is the opinion they have of other government workers.

I agree with those who say that this situation is created by those who are constantly saying that government is the problem. They create a level of distrust without stopping to find out what we actually do. We hear one person propose to cut one program but do not touch this program and then the next person will propose to cut the second but not the first. It takes time to sort out all of the rhetoric. Maybe this one statistic should be considered before everything is decided, we have the same number of government workers now that we did when President Reagan was in office.

My message to all of you in this is simple. I know how hard all of you work. I know that you put in more hours than you get paid for. I know that you care deeply about your job and your efforts to do it right. Rest assured, I will always do everything I can do to stand up for FSA and for you.

I am deeply grateful for everything you do, THANK YOU!





## A President's Perspective Cindy Mensen, IASCOE President

The IASCOE Board of Directors, in conjunction with the other employee associations of IASE and IACS, encourage you to attend our **2011 Joint Annual Convention!** It will be held in West Des Moines, Iowa, at the **West Des Moines Marriott** (just off Interstate 80 on the Jordan Creek Parkway) on **March 25-26, 2011**. Committee meetings will begin on Friday morning and the convention will continue through Saturday at noon. Expect to be informed and be sure to join us for “Entertainment Tonight”!

Every day life brings us moments of happiness and comedy as well as disappointments and tragedy – much like the masks on the symbol of Thespians. Your workdays may seem like that, too. There are days that lunch may escape you due to intense workload – and then days we have potlucks to celebrate a team member's employment anniversary.



If you have been going to the NASCOE website ([www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)) and viewing the Winter Newsletter and the NASCOE NOW publications (*which I highly recommend*), you are already staying abreast of the potential changes that could be coming our way. The 2012 Farm Bill is being written when grain prices are high and the budget may be described as perilous. Think of the difference in your office workload if DCP payments are eliminated!

NASCOE is organizing a National Legislative Conference in Washington DC on March 7 through March 9, 2011. Iowa is sending six of your peers to meet with all seven of our Senators and Representatives. At least five of our IOWA Congressmen are considered “Key Contacts” due to their roles on Agricultural or Appropriation Committees. IASCOE members, who are constituents from each Congressional District, will receive training from NASCOE leadership on Tuesday and then visit the Hill on Wednesday. We deliver Talking Points that will help tell Congress how efficiently FSA operates and also distribute your employee concerns.

Here is a plug for CAPWIZ and the NASCOE PAC—I invite you to learn more about two valuable tools that NASCOE is using to help send our message to Congress. With CAPWIZ, you can sign up to receive email alerts to your HOME e-mail address. These alerts allow you to view a letter composed by NASCOE leaders that can easily be forwarded to members of Congress. Participating in the PAC means voluntarily donating funds to support those who support us. We will talk more about both at the upcoming convention. Anyone who starts a new PAC contribution will be in a drawing for five \$100 bills that will given away at the National NASCOE Convention coming up this August in Corpus Christi, Texas!



So there is even more reason for you to take some time off work and register for the 2011 IASCOE/IACS/IASE Convention! Here is a sampling of what to expect at the March 25 -26 meeting —just like the Thespians, a mix of some serious with some fun: Committee meetings (Membership, Publicity, Awards/Scholarship, Benefits/Legislation); Hear a review of the National Legislative Conference from attendees; Address questions to a panel of Iowa State Office employees ready and willing to answer; Receive info about CAPWIZ and PAC; NASCOE leadership speakers – including some from our Midwest Area ; Joshua Katcher, an expert in federal benefits; Distinguished Service Awards are presented; Sheltered Reality – a drum corps that is amazing and invigorating; DJ Ray – IASCOE's favorite DJ plays until midnight; a tribute to our Flag; JM Marketing – a presentation over Saturday morning breakfast regarding retirement planning; IASCOE Scholarship Winners are announced and membership awards are presented....and more!

Pre-register for the convention and you may win free overnight accommodations! IASCOE Directors want you to come, learn, share and stay and have voted to give away two free rooms from those who pre-register. All of us together make a very valuable team. Keep it strong by participating!

Hello All,

I just wanted to talk today about the glass that is “half-full”, not “half-empty”. I got a few calls when the current administration proposed that they would put a freeze on all government raises for the next two years. There were people that were asking, “What is IASCOE / NASCOE doing about this”? The answer was that I know they are trying to stop the train, but it had major heads of steam. It looks good in the public eye when government employees are feeling the brunt of hard times as well as the private sector.



When people started to say that they were thinking about quitting as a member of IASCOE/ NASCOE, it made me think of a possible way that I could show them a small portion of what they have received over the years. So I went on the internet and looked up what the GS pay scale was over the past 15 years and how it has changed. What I found really made me think also. I chose the years of 1995 and 2010 and chose the predominate grades of 7, 9 and 12. As you can see in 1995 we were making a pretty good wage for that time and everyone seemed to be pretty happy. In 2010 we were making an even better wage, but as we all know things have started to change.

I know a lot of people have the attitude, “what have you done for me lately”, but I really think that you need to look at the differences between the two years and I have done that for you in the graphs below. The first graph has the 1995 pay scale for Grade 7, 9 and 12. The second graph has the same grades for the year 2010. The third graph shows the difference between the 1995 and 2010 pay scale.

1995										
Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
7	\$24,038	\$24,838	\$25,639	\$26,440	\$27,241	\$28,042	\$28,843	\$29,644	\$30,445	\$31,245
9	\$29,405	\$30,385	\$31,366	\$32,346	\$33,326	\$34,307	\$35,287	\$36,268	\$37,248	\$38,228
12	\$42,641	\$44,063	\$45,484	\$46,905	\$48,326	\$49,747	\$51,169	\$52,590	\$54,011	\$55,432

2010										
Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
7	\$38,790	\$40,084	\$41,377	\$42,671	\$43,964	\$45,258	\$46,551	\$47,844	\$49,138	\$50,431
9	\$47,448	\$49,029	\$50,611	\$52,192	\$53,773	\$55,354	\$56,935	\$58,516	\$60,097	\$61,678
12	\$68,809	\$71,102	\$73,396	\$75,689	\$77,983	\$80,276	\$82,570	\$84,863	\$87,157	\$89,450

Difference between 1995 & 2010 (and this is per year)										
Grade	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
7	\$14,752	\$15,246	\$15,738	\$16,231	\$16,723	\$17,216	\$17,708	\$18,200	\$18,693	\$19,186
9	\$18,043	\$18,644	\$19,245	\$19,846	\$20,447	\$21,047	\$21,648	\$22,248	\$22,849	\$23,450
12	\$26,168	\$27,039	\$27,912	\$28,784	\$29,657	\$30,529	\$31,401	\$32,273	\$33,146	\$34,018

I chose the grades 7, 9 and 12 because most of the PT’s in the state are a grade 7 and we have a few CPT’s at a grade 9. All of the CEDs are or have the potential to be a grade 12. I understand that the price of everything has changed over the same timeframe, but where would we be if IASCOE/NASCOE was not there to look out for us. This does not take into consideration that in the early 90’s all PT’s were not grade 7’s and IASCOE/NASCOE had a hand in that. There are many other benefits that we have received over the years that make working for the government and having IASCOE/NASCOE represent us one of the best deals you can find.

When some of the people told me that they were thinking about not being a member of IASCOE/NASCOE it also came to mind that we have not lost anything that we already had. I would much rather keep the same wage than take a cut in wages like so many people in the private sector of life have had to do over the last few years. I know you will tell me that the prices of everything are going up and the amount we pay for our health insurance is going up. To that I answer, I am glad I still have a job and if it takes a pay freeze for me to keep my job then I will find a way to make it work. I can’t imagine (and I hope I don’t have to) going to work tomorrow, being called into the office and being told that I no longer have a job. That is not happening because of the work that IASCOE/NASCOE representatives are doing to make choices that are the best for each and every one of the employees. The new “Key PT” positions being advertised was only available because of the work done by NASCOE. It may look like a small step but it is moving in the right direction.

Most of our offices are in small towns and try to tell me that we are not some of the better paid workers in the area. Lots of the PT’s are at a grade 7, step 10 and making \$50,000 per year and the dues are a very, very small part of that total. Things now are tough all over but I truly believe that everyone needs to continue as a member or join IASCOE/NASCOE because as I have said before “there is strength in numbers”. Try just a moment to think where we might be if there was no IASCOE/NASCOE. This organization works hard to maintain the benefits we have and continues to work towards the benefit of all employees.

Talk to you later,  
*Jeff Davis*  
 Jeff Davis, IASCOE Vice President



MWA Report  
Winter 2011

Happy New Year to the MWA! I know many states have been digging themselves out already this year. Illinois is certainly included in that endeavor. I think I scooped my drive more times in December than I did all last year, and it is snowing again today.....

On December 7-8, 2010, the NASCOE Exec board had their fall meeting with management. We met with Administrator Coppess, Associate Administrator Cooksie, and with the heads of DAM, ITSD, OBF, DAFP, DAFO, the Midas team and the Strategic Standing Committee. We brought forth concerns from the field and some ideas on how to improve some of our processes. The meetings went well and some good ideas were shared between NASCOE and Management.

Each New Year brings opportunities. One opportunity that has been offered in about half of the states is for a new Pilot Key PT position. It is a given that there is never going to be across the board increases for PTs to go from grade 7s to 8s. NASCOE has been working diligently for many years for new opportunities for PTs. We have had a task force in place, working on new ideas for expanded position descriptions in order for PTs to have room for some upward mobility. Keep in mind that this is a pilot opportunity, a trial, if you will. There was much discretion left to each state on how this position would be formulated and exactly the duties of the person(s) that is chosen. At the end of the 12 month trial period, Management will look at the positions and how they were created and used to determine if this is a viable option for a permanent position. We must look at this opportunity as having our foot in the door for future PT opportunities. For the states that didn't request the position this go around, if Management deems it a viable position to make permanent, we can hope that those states might decide to also offer the position.

Another upcoming opportunity for NASCOE will be in March to renew acquaintances and make new friendships with the new Congress. The next farm bill is probably more important than any that most of us have experienced in our careers, in consideration to the administration of government farm programs to America's farmers and ranchers. Nearly every day, so it seems, there is an article published about cutting this and cutting that, when it comes to government programs. Our farmers and ranchers feed not only America, but feed the world. NASCOE, as an association, cannot comment on creating or changing farm policy. We can only provide information on how we can administer the farm policy that is passed. We have the tools and manpower to administer the farm programs, but it is going to take a BIG voice to make certain that this is known in Congress. It is time to really pull together and make our voice BIG to protect our interests in the upcoming Farm Bill talks.

Your NASCOE board is working hard on your behalf to plan a successful Legislative Conference. Each member can make a difference in the Legislative process by being a NASCOE member in good standing, being a member of and using CAPWIZ and contributing to the PAC. If you need help signing up for CAPWIZ or the PAC, you can either contact your state leadership or let me know and I will get you some assistance. You can also personally contact your Congressman through their local office in your area. These are all ways that every member can make a difference.

I would like to applaud the MWA for their contributions to this year's Negotiation Process. Our Area submitted over 100 ideas/suggestions on how to more efficiently and effectively serve America's farmers and ranchers, improve our daily processes and suggest or improve on our employee benefits. These ideas will be reviewed at the January Pre-Negotiation meeting and taken to FSA Management at the Spring Negotiation meeting, which will probably be held sometime in April or May.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to serve as your MWA Executive. It is an honor to represent such a hard-working group of individuals.

Bundle up, stay warm and take your vitamins. Cheers to each of you for a prosperous and healthy new year!

Respectfully,  
Charlene Neukomm  
MWA Exec





Hello, my name is Dennis Ray, and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. At the NASCOE convention in Hot springs last August, I was fortunate enough to have been elected to serve as the Midwest Area Alternate Executive for the current year. Of course, it helped immensely that I was unopposed. To give you a little professional background, I currently serve as the CED in Perry County, Missouri. During my career with ASCS/FSA, I have worked as a Field Assistant, a temporary PT, a COT and have been a CED since June of 1991. Most of my career has been spent serving Missouri producers; however I did spend 2 years as CED of Union County, Illinois. I am fortunate to have worked with many outstanding folks during my tenure with the agency.

On a personal note, my wife Julie and I have been married for over 33 years and have 2 daughters and 3 grandchildren. We love traveling and vacationing by motorcycle and have ridden in 28 states so far. We search for the hidden treasures when we are on the bike and have found a couple of those in Iowa. It took us two different tries but we finally made it to the Canteen in Ottumwa last summer. We also made a point to stop by the American Gothic Center and house in Eldon as we were on our way to Des Moines to help support Julie's cousin in the Polk County Relay for Life. I am planning on attending the Iowa convention and would love to visit with you about other points of interest that you can recommend.

From a NASCOE perspective, I have been a member of the association from 1991 until the present. I have served multiple terms as a board member of the Missouri Association and served as President for two terms. I believe that we have to be proactive in promoting the concerns, welfare and abilities of the members of the association, and I have done so by participating in legislative trips to Washington DC. I have represented Missouri as a delegate to the National Convention and believe that active participation in the association is vital to our continued growth and strength. I also believe that our association can only sustain our strength and effectiveness by encouraging new employees to become members as well.

In addition to serving as MWA Alt Exec, I am also the area Negotiation Consultant. I would be remiss if I didn't express my gratitude to the membership of the Midwest Area for their outstanding participation in the recent request for negotiation ideas. The Midwest Area submitted over 100 items for consideration. I am currently in the process of responding to those who submitted an item to let them know the status of their suggestion.

I look forward to serving as the area Alt Exec; however I must warn you that I still have a lot to learn about this position. I appreciate Charlene's patience when I ask the "rookie questions" and her willingness to help me learn how to best serve the area. I hope that you will feel free to contact me if I can ever help in any way. My work email is [dennis.ray@mo.usda.gov](mailto:dennis.ray@mo.usda.gov); my personal email is [djray2239@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djray2239@sbcglobal.net) and in what can only be described as a sign of the times, you can find me on Facebook.

Dennis Ray



## Membership

Mary Lageschulte, State Chairperson

The membership drive has been successful again this year, at the present time we are at 89.8% membership. We are still gaining new members thru new hires in the county office and some of the COTS (County Office Trainees). It is so important that we are able to keep up our membership. As many employees start to consider retirement we need to have a plan for the new employees to join IASCOE and keep our voice strong. It will be up to the current IASCOE members to help educate new employees on the importance of our association and how crucial it is to become a member.

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce you to the membership committee.

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

This will be the last year for Rod Biensen in District 5 and I would like to thank Rod for his many years of service on the membership committee. If anyone would like to help with membership in this district please contact me or one of your directors. Take this opportunity to become involved, you will be glad that you did! I would also like to thank ALL the committee members for making our membership drive successful. We could not accomplish our goals without your help. That old saying "many hands make little work" is so true when it come to the membership drive.

Here are a few things that would be helpful for the membership committee when completing the transmittal forms. Be sure to list ALL employees in alphabetical order whether you are a member or not, everyone needs to be listed on the transmittal form. This is how we obtain an accurate count for our membership. We live in a world of technology and we are moving more to using an e-mail address for many things, IASCOE and NASCOE are no exception. Please include your home e-mail address on the transmittal form as well, TYPE this information so that it's easy to read.

The next membership drive will be in May of 2011. Be sure to get your dues paid early for our "Early Bird" drawing. Our winners for this past year are as follows;

Karen Widman - Buena Vista County  
Candace Fette - Clayton County  
Tracy Zimmerman - East Pottawattamie County  
Tom Abbas - Hamilton County  
Sue Beemer - Taylor County

Congratulations to our fellow members.

This will be my last year as your membership chairperson, I have truly enjoyed taking an active part in IASCOE. I would encourage those of you that have not been involved to do so. It is a rewarding experience to be part of this association and to better understand how important being an IASCOE member is.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at the IASCOE convention on March 25-26th at the Marriot in West Des Moines.



## IASCOE PUBLICITY

It's that time of year again when we need to submit entries for the National Publicity Contest.

In prior years there was an area contest, and then those winners went on to the National Contest. This year the area contest has been eliminated and the submissions have been sent to the area judges. The following entries have been sent in for judging.

Best Web-site – Brian Beach, Webmaster ([www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org))

Best Single Issue – December 2010; Cindy Pistek, Editor

Best Feature Story – Human Interest

Extreme Makeover Home Edition by JessicaYuska-Scott County PT  
December 2010 Issue (page 23 and 24)

Best Feature Story – Humorous

The Tradition of Cutting Down a Christmas Tree by Barry Terhark-Cerro Gordo  
County CED  
December 2010 Issue (page 30)

The winners of the National Publicity Contest are then invited to the NASCOE Convention in Corpus Christi, Texas to receive their award. Good luck to all of our entries.

I also want to take this time to thank everyone for their article submissions, be it informational or just for fun. The newsletter wouldn't be what it is without your contributions.

Cindy Pistek





## Pre-Negotiation Meeting Report January, 2011

Charlene Neukomm  
MWA Executive

On January 16, 2011, the NASCOE Executive Board, Area Consultants and Committee Chairs met in Sacramento, CA for the annual NASCOE Pre-Consultative/Negotiation Meeting. The main intent of the meeting was to discuss and review the 200 plus items that were submitted by membership.

Myron Stroup, NASCOE President, reviewed the Negotiation Process with the group, since there were many new participants at this meeting. The Consultants and National Committee Chairs then broke away into their own room in order to begin a review of the items in order to group similar items together, while the board discussed other NASCOE business.

The board reviewed a request that was submitted by a NASCOE member, asking NASCOE to send a selected group of PTs to meet with Management in WDC to talk about possibilities of upward mobility. Several years ago, NASCOE had formed a PT Reclassification Task Force that worked on creating some new position descriptions for new opportunities for PTs. The fruits of this labor were seen when FSA Management offered the Key PT pilot positions. The board acknowledges the fact that the Key PT positions had just been offered to states and that 27 states have submitted requests to pilot the position. The board determined the Key PT position needs to be given an opportunity to be used for the 12 month trial and see how the results of it are utilized. The board also determined to form a PT Work Group which will be charged with exploring new opportunities and new ideas for PTs.

A discussion was held with Mike Mayfield and Terry Stehr, the Legislative Co-Chairs, on the upcoming March Legislative Conference. The schedule has been changed to allow the states to be able to schedule visits all day on Wednesday. The legislative team will be providing states with three different position papers that will be used at the legislative conference, although the papers will remain fluid right up until the leg conference. Draft papers may be available before the conference for states to review. Information was provided that shows that John Deere is actively pursuing using their technology to help crop insurance take acreage reporting.

States need to get their room reservations made and their flights booked for the Leg Conference. States also need to get their appointments made with their Congressmen. When making the appointments, make sure you ask for a Congressional photo. If you do, you are more likely to get an actual Congressional person at your appointment. Each state that sends members to the Leg Conference will get a maximum \$900 reimbursement, if the state spends that much. If a state has a financial situation, then they need to let me know. If a state needs an advance of their NASCOE reimbursement, then that needs to be requested through the Area Exec.

With the soon to start Farm Bill debate, NASCOE will be utilizing CAPWIZ and states should expect a number of action alerts to be issued. States are encouraged to promote the use of CAPWIZ and inform members of its importance. Also, if anyone who is enrolled in CAPWIZ has changed their email address they need to update it in their CAPWIZ account.

Performance Plans were discussed. There have been situations where the reviewer has changed the rating of an employee without consulting the rater. In these situations, if the employee wishes to contest the change in rating, the employee can either file a grievance or file an EEO complaint, providing all necessary documentation. If the rating in question is for a CED, the COC cannot file the grievance on behalf of the CED. The CED would have to file it himself/herself.

(continued on next page)

Pre-Negotiation Meeting Report  
January, 2011  
(continued)

Last fall, NASCOE decided to pilot a “Membership Jump Team” opportunity. Three Jump Teams will be trialed this year. In order to request a Jump Team, a state either has to have experienced an extreme drop in membership or be maintaining a low membership percentage. Kevin Dale, SWA Exec, gave a report on the first Membership Jump Team activity. It was held in California, on Thursday and Friday, prior to this weekend’s meeting. California was chosen since their membership has dropped to about 60%. The team was able to visit 11 of the 34 offices in California. By visiting the offices in person, employees’ specific questions about NASCOE could be answered. The team felt that the visits went well and that although the final verdict is not back yet that state membership and participation will show a definite increase.

A possible 2013 Joint Convention between all FSA field employee associations has been in the talking stages for several months, having had many conference calls with representatives from all of the associations participating. It has been determined that even if a joint convention were to happen, the earliest possible time would be in 2014. So, for any state or states that have been preparing a bid for 2013, it will be a NASCOE-only Convention for 2013, according to the NASCOE Convention Policy.

JM Marketing has indicated they are planning to propose a new Disability Insurance. This insurance would provide benefits due to loss of work for such things as illness or maternity. Once approved, this coverage would be rolled out gradually. The plan could possibly begin to be available in as early as 60 days, if all goes according to schedule. Not all states will be available at once.

After the general NASCOE business was taken care of, both groups came together to review and discuss each of the over 200 Negotiation items. Over 100 of these items came from the Midwest Area. I would like to say Thank You to all of the members that submitted an item. I would also like to say Thank You to Dennis Ray. He is doing a great job for the MWA as the Negotiation Consultant.



# Emblems News

Spring is coming! It's time to spruce up your wardrobe. If you are like me you look into your closet each morning and think, 'What should I wear today?' or 'I have nothing to wear'. Wouldn't it be nice to look into your closet and see a new FSA polo hanging there just waiting for you to grab it and throw it on? Maybe every Friday could be a polo day, or every Tuesday, or better yet....maybe I should get five new polos. I'm all about simplifying my life. Why not start with the wardrobe.

The NASCOE Store ([www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com)) is your one-stop shop for emblem items. BEJ Advertising, the vendor for our emblems offers a wide variety of items with either the USDA-FSA or the NASCOE logo on them. Men's and women's clothing is available in a variety of styles, sizes, and colors.

Check out the NASCOE Store at [www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com) for special and featured items as well as both new and clearance items.

- Polo & dress shirts for office attire
  - Long & short sleeve denims for both men and women
  - Embroidered USDA-FSA t-shirts & sweatshirts
  - Fleece vests & jackets
  - Drinkwear and other USDA & FSA Emblems items
- Gift Coupons in \$10, \$25, \$50, and \$100 increments are available

All purchases made through the [nascoestore.com](http://nascoestore.com) are safe and secure. Items can be purchased with VISA, MasterCard, Discover, check, or money order

**Remember NASCOE receives a percentage of sales from the emblems website which is used towards our NASCOE Scholarship fund. So what are you waiting for? Make your purchase today!**

Come to the IASCOE State Convention being held March 25, & 26<sup>th</sup> at the West Des Moines Marriott to see a variety of products for sale.

See you at the Convention!

Chris Grieder  
Emblems Chair

Hello Everyone!

The NASCOE Store would like some input on the Emblem items.

- Do you acquire FSA clothing on your own or are you buying it through the NASCOE Store?
- Is there any item you would like to see offered through the NASCOE Store that is not currently offered?
- What is your favorite item offered through The NASCOE Store?
- How often do you visit The NASCOE Store?
- What would you like to see at the Emblems table at the State Convention?

I would like to order the convention packet by the 25th. If you could get back to me by the 20th with any items you would like to see at the table this year I would be happy to have it included in the packet.

Please reply to my home address: [chrisgrieder@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisgrieder@yahoo.com). Also type 'Emblems' for the Subject.

*Recently, we had to say good-bye to two District Directors in Iowa; Mike Craft and Jim Thompson. Mike and Jim have spent many years with the agency and agreed to share just a few memories with us before they entered the world of "retirement". Thank-you Jim and Mike for sharing your thoughts about what challenges you have faced, the friendships you have enjoyed and the benefits IASCOE/NASCOE has provided for you.*

I began my career with our agency (ASCS/CFSA/FSA etc) at the age of 15! I was hired as a T.O., but actually worked as a T.F. in Benton County as a member of the "bin crew". My employment at that time entailed mowing at the government bin sites, checking the grain, aeration tubes and fans as well as repairing and painting the 5-ring government bins in the county. I was able to continue my employment during high school and during the summers in college. In 1968 I remember going to Charles City to assist in cleaning up the bin site after a tornado went through the area. In 1985 I entered the COT program and thus started my full-time career with the agency. Upon completion of the COT program I took my CED position in Winneshiek County. I remember being the most hated father and husband at the time for uprooting my wife and 2 children, "forcing" them to move to Northeast Iowa. I am pleased to say they have since forgiven me.



The most rewarding part of the job is believing that we can make a difference for our producers and borrowers. I still believe this to be true today. We have faced many challenges over the years, i.e.: PIK, LDP's and Automation Conversion (just a few examples of course). The one challenge I remember most would be the drought in 1988. As a relatively new CED I approved the drilling of 52 new wells in the county. Today, this does not seem all that challenging but at that time I felt CHALLENGED.

There is no doubt that what I will miss most after I leave are the people I have worked with, the associations I have made and the friendships I have developed over these years. Some other things that come to mind are: SURE, WEB T&A and not being around for BCAP!!!!

I have always been a supporter of IASCOE and served on the Membership Committee earlier in my career. Many positive changes have come about because of the efforts of IASCOE/NASCOE. I believe membership warrants 100% participation by FSA employees. I have yet to hear of any employee declining any benefits brought about by the involvement, efforts and persistence of IASCOE/NASCOE.

My retirement plans are to focus on being a Grandpa and doing some traveling. Janet has quite a "bucket list" and if I don't get started now we may not get completely through it!!! If time allows, heaven knows my golf game could use some work!

If you haven't noticed this little message is full of acronyms and if you printed all of the agency's acronyms there would be 17 pages full! In closing I would like to add just one more: TFTM. It's not new, but definitely appropriate. THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!

Jim Thompson

As I look back over the years I think the most challenging time that the agency went through was the "PIK" program in 1982 and 1983. The decade of the 80's was a very tough time for both the agency employees and the producers we served. During this time the ASCS and FmHA were about the only place the producer could go to for loans and payments. Employees and those we served were under a lot of pressure, but we experienced rewards as well. Every once in awhile I would get a sincere thank you from a producer who told me that they would have lost their farm without the loans and payments we provided.

Nobody appreciates their job and the opportunities that came with it more than I do. I literally grew up with ASCS/FSA. My father was a township committeeman in the early 1960's and I helped him measure out set-aside acres on many farms in our township. (Note: I have been unable to convince Patti Murray that my service comp date should be 1960). My father was eventually hired as the CED in Black Hawk County in 1963. I think that we were the first father/son CED's in Iowa and we now recently have a mother/daughter CED. FSA has given me the opportunity to do some traveling, help train future CED's and shake the hands of five (5) Secretaries of Agriculture.

I have always been a member of IASCOE/NASCOE and was honored in the past to receive the Distinguished Service Award. I served on the IASCOE Board in the 1980's and my son was a beneficiary of an IASCOE Scholarship. During one of those particularly busy times of the 80's we were working many extra hours and were able to receive overtime pay. That was something that we had never had before and I will always credit NASCOE for obtaining that compensation for our hard work.

I am going to miss many things about FSA, especially the people that I have been able to work with over the years. I was always fortunate as a CED to have a great staff and county committees. I am going to miss those times when I have been able to give others the opportunity as a PT, CED or FLM. As a DD, I have been privileged to work with four SED's whom I admire and respect. The best part of being a DD is the help and advice that my fellow DD's have given me over the years.

I want to thank IASCOE for the opportunity to share a few things from the past 34 years. It seems like the days went slow, but the years went by fast. It has been a great run-it really has. I would like to finish up by saying to my friends in IASCOE-thank you all very, very much.

Mike Craft



The IASCOE directors have discussed and determined that an increase in dues is necessary to cover the required NASCOE dues for associate members. Please note that this increase is only for associate members. This will be discussed and voted on at the upcoming IASCOE convention. It was brought to the director's attention that the associate dues at the current rate results in a loss for IASCOE. This is due to the fact that for each associate member more money goes towards NASCOE dues than was collected in association dues. It will be discussed in more detail by the membership committee and brought to the floor in our general session at the upcoming convention. Make sure your ideas and thoughts are known, attend the IASCOE Convention March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in Des Moines.

## Oh, the Joys of Winter!!

My daughter and husband live on an east-west gravel road in Clinton County. These pictures show the progression of the snow blower coming down the road to dig them out. They were snowed in for 4 days. My son-in-law works for the State DOT and he was taking a snowmobile in and out to get to work. Submitted by Diane Burke



## MUSCATINE COUNTY FSA WELCOMES HENRY NOLTE



Hi, my name is Henry Nolte. I grew up on a smaller registered Holstein dairy/ grain farm near Dumont in North Central Iowa. After receiving my AS degree from Ellsworth Community College I transferred to Iowa State University. Go Cyclones. I graduated this past December with a BS majoring in Dairy Science. I enjoy the outdoors and on any given weekend during a hunting season that's probably what I will be doing. I also enjoy running and this past spring I completed my first marathon. I now reside near Wilton with my Brittany Spaniel Max who seems to keep me busy. I know I have a lot to learn and I am looking forward to meeting and working with everyone.

Henry started with Muscatine Farm Service Agency October 12<sup>th</sup> 2010 as our newest program technician. Good luck and welcome!



### A GIRL FRIEND WEEKEND IN THE CEDAR VALLEY By Rose Woerner, Black Hawk County

For a great bonding experience that is soothing to the nerves and gobs of fun, try a girlfriend weekend, here, in the Cedar Valley. While the Cedar Valley is an expansive area, it doesn't have that big-town feel, with overwhelming crowds and too much traffic. So set a date, pack your bags and head my way, because there is a lot to do.

If good food and boutique-type shopping is your cup of tea, look no further than Main Street in Cedar Falls. You can visit unique places like Vintage Iron, SWAK (Sealed with a Kiss) and Basket of Daisies. Eateries are plentiful here as well. There is great bar food at Toad's or The Pump Haus, Cajun food at Bourbon Street, Tapas at Soho Bar and Grill, or elegant dining at Montage. For dessert, try wine and chocolates at Indulgence or a gourmet cupcake from Scratch. Cedar Falls also has a fabulous river walk...a great place for a nice stroll, following a wonderful meal.

Waterloo has a casino if you're in a gambling mood or Crossroads Mall, if you're geared toward department-store shopping. Dining choices like Lone Star, The Olive Garden, and Red Lobster are familiar but dependable. If you like adventure, we have an awesome amusement/water park and fifty-three miles of bike trails. We have a museum district that includes two Victorian homes, a museum of science and history, a science imaginarium, and a fantastic military museum.

In addition to Waterloo and Cedar Falls, we are surrounded by small towns that host celebrations throughout the summer as well. There is always a party with food, music and fun. Some of the major events in this area are: 4<sup>th</sup> Street Cruise, My Waterloo Days, Sturgis Falls Celebration, and The Irish Festival. Come for the fun of it!

## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT DONATING LEAVE?

I had made the decision that becoming a single parent, of three children, meant I needed to be more proactive with my health. That morning I performed my first self-breast exam. Suddenly my body was filled with horror. I felt a lump on the right side. Surely this was not true. I was in self denial. My world again was upside down.

The cancer was confirmed and we started down the road of eliminating the uninvited guest in my body. Being a single income family, the first thing that ran through my mind was that I could not afford to have non-paid days at work. Then I remembered the wonderful program available to county and federal government employees. I immediately starting asking questions and began the process to submit my request. The paperwork was not taxing which was a relief. I could not have put one more thing on my list of things to do prior to start of treatment.

At the time of my request I was a County employee. The donors and hours started flooding in. Each time I was contacted the number of hours that had been donated was overwhelming. People throughout the agency were so giving especially when to some of the donors I was a perfect stranger and all they knew about my children and myself was what I had written in the description of my emergency.

The treatment plan was about to go from every 3 weeks to every week for sixteen weeks. Then an opportunity arose for my family to move closer to the hospital and my mother and siblings. I knew that it was a sign. The only thing that I worried about was what was going to happen to the donated leave that I had received. The reason for worry was due to the fact that with the move I would now become a Federal employee. I still had several treatments plus surgery. Thus far I was only missing the day I received my treatment but surgery was going to have me away from work for at least 2 weeks plus follow up appointments.

Once again the description of my emergency was brought to the forefront but this time to those whom were Federal employees. Again the response was overwhelming! More wonderful, caring, giving, loving individuals stepped up and donated their leave to my cause. I considered myself truly blest!

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010, I was able to write a memo to John Whitaker, SED, to notify him that I had concurred Breast Cancer head-on, with the goal of continuing forward in a positive direction. My emergency was now over and that I would no longer be in need of the Voluntary Leave Program. I wrote my memo with great admiration and appreciation to each and every employee, County and Federal in our great state of Iowa.

There are so many reasons that I am grateful for the Voluntary Leave program the list is endless. Knowing that I had this program to lean on was such a relief and reduced the stress in an already highly stressful situation. Knowing how it felt to be the recipient, I look forward to the day when I have the ability to be on the giving side of the program.

As you sit in the waiting room at the Cancer Center at the U of I Hospital, you visit with others battling the same fight as yourself. You discuss how your family is handling the situation, if you are able to work, how you are feeling, what your treatment plan is, and how your employer is reacting to the situation. Each time I was asked how my work situation was I would respond, "It's great!" Then I would take the time to explain the Voluntary Leave Program and how truly blest I was to be a recipient. I cannot count the number of times that people were astonished by the program and the response I received from the Iowa FSA employees.

When the opportunity arises to donate leave to someone's emergency, please, even if it is an hour, donate it will make all the difference in the world to the recipient and you will have the satisfaction of knowing you helped someone in their time of need.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to fight my battle without worry! This program was one of the many positive things that helped my body heal so that I may call myself a Survivor!

Submitted by Christa Eads, PT Cedar County





**East Central Iowa had "Soft" Rime Ice December 27, 2010. It was one of the most spectacular things I've seen. It was my compressed day (how lucky is that) so I could snap a few shots! Rime ice forms when the water droplets in fog freeze to the other surface of objects. The fog freezes to the windward (wind-facing) side of the tree branches, buildings, or any other solid objects. Soft rime looks feathery or spiky. It's similar to a hoar frost. The first picture is from the front of the tree which faced the wind. The second picture is from the back side of the tree where you can see how deep the formation was. By mid-morning after the sun came out and the wind picked up a little it was just as beautiful blowing off of the things it collected on.**

**Submitted by Devalyn Wilson, CED, Cedar County**



## **The Future is in Your Hands!**

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn

The next NASCOE Legislative conference will be held early in March. Iowa will be sending a team of 6 members to represent our state lead by the IASCOE president, Cindy Mensen. Position papers have been developed addressing Farm Bill issues and employee benefits items. The team will be distributing the Farm Bill position papers to our congressmen and senators serving on House and Senator Agriculture Committees and Ag Appropriations Committees while the benefits paper will be presented to all house and senate members.

Another paper about NASCOE and FSA will be given to new members of congress to educate them about who NASCOE is and emphasizing the importance of the farm bill. With so many new members in congress, we need to work to establish relationships with those who are supportive of NASCOE objectives.

Although, this Iowa team will do their best to represent NASCOE ideals while in Washington D.C., the rest of the membership cannot expect these few members to carry the load. We all must do our part to ensure the future of FSA and protect our benefits. We must help ourselves! Much is at stake with the dawning of the new farm bill and the current congressional focus to reduce costs and cut programs. Our pay and benefits are also under scrutiny as we have recently seen with the implementation of a 2 year pay freeze.

Become involved with IASCOE and learn what part you can play to strengthen our position! The state convention will be held March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> in West Des Moines which is a great opportunity to learn what you can do secure your future with this agency. You'll become familiar with the issues facing employees and learn how to become actively involved with the organization. You'll be educated on the benefit of participating in the PAC and using CAPWHIZ to contact your congressmen and senators and met other members throughout the state.

***Every member can make a difference if they become involved and take action***

## Who is Serving Our Country?

I am sure that each and every one of us has thought about those who are on the front steps of serving our country, along with the sacrifices that they all make. Some of us even genuinely take the time to thank those who serve when you meet them at a gathering or just in general public. This is considered our patriotic show of appreciation and the depth of its affects to those of whom it is being shown to be immeasurable.

However, have we ever thought of the domino effect of service that is going on behind the scenes? Have we taken the time to look at those who know our soldiers and thought to ourselves about how they are serving our country as well and taken the time to thank them for their service. I'm sure there are many of us that have not taken the time quite as often to think of this perspective of service. While soldiers leave to stand up for the cause, whatever it may be, they leave behind responsibilities, whether at home or on the job. Who fills these gaps and voids? The most typical answer that you might say is that for a married soldier the wife takes care of it all and for the unmarried soldier you might say that the parent's take on that role. However, the answer is not as straight forward as most might think! I'll let you ponder on that for a moment while I give you some insight as to my experience in this arena.

I am the proud mother of an Iowa National Guard soldier who went through training camp in the spring/summer of 2006. This was a high point in our lives to know that what my son set out to achieve he had acquired through hard work and dedication. I couldn't have been any more proud than at his graduation ceremony. At the onset of the announcement of his deployment I started attending the Family Readiness Group (FRG) meetings for our local Army National Guard unit. These are meetings where the families, friends, and community members supporting the soldiers meet, generally once a month during deployments and quarterly at other times, to share information and provide social and moral support for each other. There is an FRG Leader (Chairperson) that is appointed by the Commander of the unit that is to be just that, the leader of the meetings, providing any information that the Command sends down, along with all other general information that is filtered through available resources and delegating tasks to other volunteers to assist in keeping up the group's morale.

In the fall of 2008 I found myself being asked by the Estherville National Guard Command to become the FRG Leader after the previous leader left. Due to unfortunate conflicts for the prior FRG leader members were not being kept informed, meetings were not fruitful, and just general morale was at an all time low. Knowing this was what I was faced with and that turning it around would be a daunting task I still agreed to take on the position and was optimistic that we had a group of individuals that could overcome the past experience and become united again. My tour began by contacting each and every family of the soldiers in our unit and letting them know that there was a change in leadership and that I was open to any and all suggestions to help out our members. Recruiting a few at a time and getting them involved with just minor tasks our soldier's families began stepping up to the plate and becoming interested in the meetings again and volunteering for positions in the group. The philosophy was to give them what they needed to become interested again and let them direct where they wanted to go from there.

We now have monthly meetings and regular activities planned with an average of 20-25 in attendance. You might say that this seems low, however due to the wide spread nature of our soldiers home towns that are part of our unit, this is in reality a great turnout. In the last couple of years in this position I found out many things about our soldiers, their families, friends, employers, and even general acquaintances. I've witnessed the morale of our families increase with the support from each other and their friends, neighbors, and community through the meetings and found that more openness to help each other, whether it be through hauling kids here and there, or watching them while the parent goes shopping, and even lending a hand with lawn mowing, snow shoveling, or fixing things around the house. All those things that our soldier would be doing or helping with if they were here.

Therefore when we say that Thank You to the soldier, let's not forget that there are many others out there that are also serving our country through taking on that responsibility left behind by our soldiers when they leave and they need your show of support as well. When you look at the picture as a whole we all have, I'm sure in some way or another, filled that gap or void by helping out someone who's soldier was away and maybe we didn't even realize we were doing it.

Therefore to everyone out there who is, has, or will be serving our country I want to say it couldn't happen without your help and **THANK YOU!**

Karen LaCour



## Benefit News by Kelly Cain

Dee Lehn and I wanted to pass along some of the benefit information we recently received. In case any of you get the chance to travel to Florida or California you may find the following information useful. NASCOE has signed up for Shamu Club, Club Busch Gardens and Club Sesame Place. This offers special savings and vacation deals to:

SeaWorld San Diego	SeaWorld Orlando	SeaWorld San Antonio
Busch Gardens Williamsburg	Busch Gardens Tampa Bay	Sesame Place
Adventure Island	Water County USA	

Park admission discounts and offers for Club members are all available online – just a click away! The club gives you the most current offers quickly and efficiently.

Taking advantage of these special offers is easy. Simply visit any of the following links:

<http://www.shamuclub.com>

<http://www.clubbuschgardens.com>

<http://www.clubsesameplace.com>

From there, click “Go” under Tickets & Vacations. Here, you will have the option to print coupons or purchase tickets directly to each individual park. There are no special codes needed.

J. M Marketing has changed the Dental Plan for NASCOE members. They eliminated the enrollment restrictions and now have open enrollment throughout the year as long as you are a NASCOE member and commit to at least 12 months.

NASCOE members are now eligible for a Disability Income Protection Insurance Plan. Even though we have the opportunity to purchase medical insurance, it only covers healthcare costs from an injury or illness. What would happen if you couldn’t work for a period of time, had exhausted all your paid time off and now were without a paycheck? The Disability Income Protection Insurance Plan has several options available to help you through this time.

Check out these two new plans and all the other coverage offered by J.M. Marketing at <http://www.nascoe.org>. Take the benefits option on the left and then select J.M. Marketing under the Membership has its benefits area or you can go directly to <http://www.jmmarketing.biz> or call 1-800-330-6223.

Take the time to check out your benefits on the NASCOE website. Just choose the benefits option on the left when you are on the home page. It is a great way to see all the extra things that are available to you because you are a member.

If you have any specific benefit questions, just send me an email and I will see what I can find out.

## AWARDS

For 2011 we have more than 30 IASCOE members who have reached a 'sick leave' milestone by accumulating sick leave hours in the amount 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, or 3,000.

An IASCOE member can received the award one time in each category. Of those that will be receiving a certificate this year, 10 of them will be earning their first certificate for 1,000 hours (Amazing!!). The remaining are in the 1,500 to 2,500 hour categories (Even more Amazing!!).

These individuals will be recognized and presented a certificate at the Iowa Convention which is being held March 25-26, 2011 in Des Moines.

Also being presented at the Convention will be the Distinguished Service Awards (DSA's). These awards stay under wraps until then and it's always exciting to see who was nominated. I hope you will be able to join us at this year's Convention to applaud all our award winners!

A special THANK YOU to the Award/Scholarship Committee for all their help this past year! Larry Lago, Jeanine Diekhuis, Connie Straw, Denise Dugan, Connie Safely, Phyllis Reinke, Dave Wynn, and Carol Long.

Devalyn Wilson

County Executive Director  
Cedar County Farm Service Agency



Daniel Curry, COT, had a little problem finding his car recently while training in Monroe County.

In January we started a brand New Year. Everyone makes “resolutions” and someone graciously sent me this “handbook”. It seems like these are things we could all resolve to do in 2011, enjoy the journey!

#### HANDBOOK 2011

##### Health:

1. Drink plenty of water.
2. Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a beggar.
3. Eat more foods that grow on trees and plants and eat less food that is manufactured in plants..
4. Live with the 3 E's -- Energy, Enthusiasm and Empathy
5. Make time to pray.
6. Play more games
7. Read more books than you did in 2010 .
8. Sit in silence for at least 10 minutes each day
9. Sleep for 7 hours.
10. Take a 10-30 minute walk daily. And while you walk, smile..

##### Personality:

11. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
12. Don't have negative thoughts or things you cannot control.. Instead invest your energy in the positive present moment.
13. Don't over do. Keep your limits.
14. Don't take yourself so seriously. No one else does.
15. Don't waste your precious energy on gossip.
16. Dream more while you are awake
17. Envy is a waste of time. You already have all you need..
18. Forget issues of the past. Don't remind your partner with His/her mistakes of the past. That will ruin your present happiness.
19. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone. Don't hate others.
20. Make peace with your past so it won't spoil the present.
21. No one is in charge of your happiness except you.
22. Realize that life is a school and you are here to learn. Problems are simply part of the curriculum that appear and fade away like algebra class but the lessons you learn will last a lifetime.
23. Smile and laugh more.
24. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree....

##### Society:

25. Call your family often.
26. Each day give something good to others.
27. Forgive everyone for everything..
28. Spend time w/ people over the age of 70 & under the age of 6.
29. Try to make at least three people smile each day.
30. What other people think of you is none of your business.
31. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick. Your friends will. Stay in touch.

##### Life:

32. Do the right thing!
33. Get rid of anything that isn't useful, beautiful or joyful.
34. GOD heals everything.
35. However good or bad a situation is, it will change..
36. No matter how you feel, get up, dress up and show up.
37. The best is yet to come..
38. When you awake alive in the morning, thank GOD for it.
39. Your Inner most is always happy. So, be happy.

##### Last but not the least:

40. Share this with everyone you care about, I just did.

Submitted by Cindy Pistek





**We INVITE You to the 2011 Joint  
IASCOE – IACS - IASE CONVENTION  
March 25-26, 2011**

**Located at the West Des Moines Marriott  
1250 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266**

**“Information by Day ..... Entertainment by Night”**

**Convention activities convene at 10:00am on Friday and conclude on Saturday morning.  
IASCOE – IACS - IASE Committee meetings begin Friday morning  
Bring your questions and hear from speakers:**

**We have invited FSA leadership from Washington D.C.**

**Myron Stroup, NASCOE President**

**Dennis Ray, NASCOE, Midwest Area Alt Exec**

**John Whitaker, Iowa State Executive Director**

**John Judge, Chairman, Iowa State FSA Committee**

**Panel of State Office Specialists**

**EJ Brown & Associates, Josh Katcher, Estate Planning Specialists,**

**Retirement training presented by J M Marketing**

**Awards: Iowa Distinguished Service, Membership, Sick Leave**

**Friday night Hospitality begins @ 5:00pm**

**Celebrate with “Soon To Be Retirees”**

**Sheltered Reality performs from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm**

**Dance to DJ RAY from 9-12.**

*Things to do list ---*

**Make room reservations prior to MARCH 10, 2011**

**by calling 1-800-MARRIOTT, request “IASCOE group” to get a great \$69 (plus tax) rate**

**Pre-Register for the convention by March 21, 2011**

**(see separate form for this) and your name will be put into a drawing for  
one of two free overnight guest rooms from IASCOE!**



**IASCOE/IACS/IASE  
PRE-REGISTRATION FORM  
MARCH 25 – 26, 2011**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING \_\_\_\_\_

Pre-registration: \$30.00 EACH \_\_\_\_\_

Extra Guest (Hospitality & Breakfast) \$20.00 EACH \_\_\_\_\_

Registration at Door: \$35.00 EACH \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Registration includes: Meeting Room rental, Hospitality, DJ for dance and breakfast.

\*\*Hospitality will include a taco bar.

**Please check one of the Following:**

<b>FIRST CONFERENCE ATTENDED (circle one)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
IASCOE Member	_____	_____
IASE Member	_____	_____
IACS Member	_____	_____
IASCOE Associate Member	_____	_____
Out of State Member	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

Mail completed form and payment to:

Judy Dameron  
718 Mill St.  
Wapello, IA 52653

**All pre-registration forms should be received by March 21, 2011  
Two individuals who pre-register will be eligible for a one night stay at the IASCOE  
Convention. All Directors and Committee members are exempt.**

**PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO IASCOE**



## IT'S A CELEBRATION!



Join in the fun on Friday night at the IASCOE Convention. In these first months of 2011 we have to say good-bye to three of our State Office employees. The social gathering on Friday night of the convention is the perfect time to bid farewell to Mike Craft, Jim Thompson and Jim Book. As always there will be plenty of food, beverage and entertainment! This is a great time to relax and take time out to enjoy our FSA family, hope to see you all there.



### RETIREMENTS

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

Dale Behrends - Guthrie County CED  
Sharon Crane - Cass County PT  
Cindy Ohl - Crawford County PT  
Barb Roberts - Adams County PT  
Judy Hanken - Jackson County PT  
Jim Thompson - DD  
Michael Craft - DD

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



## National Association of FSA County Office Employees

**President**  
Myron Stroup  
11238 W 2200 Rd  
Fontana KS 66026  
(913) 294-3751 – Office  
(913) 285-3398 – Cell

**Vice President**  
John Lohr  
PO Box 59  
Norvelt, PA 15674  
(724) 853-5555 – Office  
(724) 771-3682 – Cell

**Secretary**  
Annette Hyman  
746 Perry Rd  
Strykersville NY 14145  
(716) 652-1400 – Office  
(716) 998-7294 – Cell

**Treasurer**  
Shelly Odenkirk  
PO Box 114  
Wooster OH 44691  
(330) 262-1911 - Office  
(330) 464-1475 – Cell

### Government Computer Usage

**NASCOE Members** repeatedly ask for a list of DO's and DON'Ts on FSA computers and email usage. Your NASCOE leadership agrees with this need, however, it is impossible to identify every potential situation that could result in an employee receiving a reprimand, suspension, or even someone losing their job from misuse of government resources.

This document has been reviewed and approved by DAFO on October 22, 2010.

**As for the DON'Ts, here's what we do know.** Government computers, internet, email and other resources can never be used to solicit monies on behalf of NASCOE or our State Affiliates. These items can definitely never be used for political purposes, including lobbying Congress for support or repeal of any legislation, program, or proposal, or frankly, anything.

**What can we DO?** The membership can be kept informed through the electronic newsletter "NASCOE Now". Information on benefits, awards and scholarship deadlines can also be offered. It is permissible to write, submit and read negotiation/consultation items. There is no problem in relating concerns and issues and how they relate to FSA. And, you may offer questions, suggestions and solutions to your NASCOE leadership.

**When in doubt...** Good Judgment and Common Sense never cost anyone their job. If you question an email's subject matter, don't send it! If you still care about earning thousands of income dollars, don't send it! While you cannot control emails received, you can control what is passed on or saved. When in doubt, throw it out!

You have heard that occasional personal use of government resources is permissible. This is a privilege not a right or entitlement. The quickest way for everyone to lose this benefit is for a few to abuse it. Limit your personal use during breaks or lunch times, or before or after work.

**Your help is needed!** NASCOE and State Affiliates are developing a database of home email addresses. Any item, issue or announcement that is controversial, questionable or lengthy can be sent directly to you at home. This is the preferred method when corresponding with each other as well.

Hopefully this message gives you a better idea of what you CAN and CANNOT do!

Sincerely,

Your NASCOE Executive Board

# Pre-Registration Form

## Indiana-Kentucky-Ohio Joint State Convention

**WHEN** – April 1<sup>st</sup> (Fri) & 2<sup>nd</sup> (Sat) 2011

**WHERE** – **BELTERRA CASINO & RESORT**  
 777 Belterra Drive, Florence, In 47020  
 1-888-BELTERRA OR 1-888-235-8377

**ROOMS** – \$74.00 per night plus tax. Good Tues thru Fri, contact the hotel for reservations  
**by March 16, 2011 for the group rate. (Saturday the rate is \$170.00)**

**FRIDAY:** Golf tournament, 8:00am. A joint session of the States will convene at 1:30 pm. Registration/Hospitality, Evening activities include state competition of “Minute To Win It” games, a DJ, and Dancing. For those attending the Friday joint session, 4 hrs of administrative leave has been REQUESTED, travel not authorized, update on leave approval to follow.

**SATURDAY:** State Individual Meetings 8:30 am – 10:30 am. Followed by a joint session of states featuring the following speakers: SEA Executive, MWA Executive, possibly a WDC speaker, and JM Marketing. A Q&A session will follow as time permits.

Register as  
 “NASCOE Joint  
 Convention”  
 Code: CO6223

**For Pre-Registration, please complete and return BY March 25th to:**

**Patti Karn**  
 536 Crane Pond Rd  
 Philpot, KY 42366  
 (KASCOE)

**Dennis Stryker**  
 5738 N. State Route 721  
 Bradford, OH 45308  
 (OASCOE)

**Amy Barber**  
 2103 E Main St  
 Petersburg, IN 47567  
 (IASCOE)

Association Presidents are: OH- Mark VanHoose  
 KY- Dana McKinney  
 IN – Darla Norris



JOIN US 4 SLOTS OF  
**FUN!!!!**

Number of people attending \_\_\_\_\_  
 State Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
  
 City/St/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**OASCOE MEMBERS: IF THIS IS YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> TIME ATTENDING AN OHIO CONV. CHECK HERE FOR A CHANCE TO GET ½ YOUR ROOM PAID**

-----

Guest Names \_\_\_\_\_  
 (all amounts, per person) Number / Total

Registration Fee	\$30.00 x _____	= _____
<small>(You will receive a \$20.00 coupon good throughout the resort except for gaming)</small>		
Golf (coupon can be used, cart inc.)	\$60.00 x _____	= _____
Late fee after March 25 <sup>th</sup>	\$5.00 x _____	= _____

**JM Marketing – FREE LUNCHEON** (On Saturday, following joint session, for those who stay to hear a benefits presentation)

Number Attending , Guests Welcome ----- # \_\_\_\_\_



PLEASE BRING **SILENT AUCTION** ITEMS. THE PROCEEDS GO TO STATES SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS!!

PLEASE BRING **DOOR PRIZES** TO BE WON BY THOSE REGISTERED.



## Adjustments – Accomplishments – Retirements

Sports have always been a large part of our family’s entertainment, football being one. We attend local high school and college events, but we had never been to a professional event. In early spring, my husband got an opportunity to purchase tickets for the Chicago Bears/Minnesota Vikings game to be played in the Metrodome in Minneapolis the Monday night before Christmas. We decided that this would be a great gift for our teenage twin boys.

Reservations made, tickets purchased, all was well—or was it? Brett Farve, quarterback for the Vikings had an injured shoulder from two weeks earlier. He had started 297 consecutive games. Would he play in the Lions/Vikings game? I read that he said, “I’ll play unless the sky falls.” Well, it did, after 20+” of snow in Minneapolis, the Metrodome roof collapsed a week and a half before our game, and Farve’s record-breaking starts had come to an end.

After much debate on where the Bears/Vikings game would be played, a new venue would be chosen, TCF Bank Stadium at the University of Minnesota. This decision would bring a whole array of new problems: could the stadium be made “game-ready” in a week, players complained about the frozen field, how would they put 64,000 fans in a 53,000 capacity stadium? For us, it brought new issues also. We had to adjust to the game being played outside and our hotel was now 2 miles from the stadium instead of 6 blocks. Would our twin boys be excited about the game with these new changes? This being an early Christmas gift, we still hadn’t told them anything about going, although their father and I were closely watching the week’s decisions unfold.



Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, snow pants and winter hats purchased, we ‘early-gifted’ our boys. “Be careful opening these gifts,” we tell them, “there is something special inside the hats.” Expecting perhaps a ski trip when they see the winter gear, they were speechless when they saw tickets to the Bears/Vikings game. Well, secrecy didn’t last long – Facebook and texting soon took over, and the word was out, they had gotten “the best Christmas present ever!”



actions were rewarded, Section 210, row 4.

Monday, we walked around downtown Minneapolis and saw our original venue, the Metrodome, then decided how we would make our trip to TCF Bank Stadium. Seating was going to be on a first-come, first-serve basis due to the smaller stadium. Snow was now in the forecast, 5 or so additional inches. Having nothing else on our agenda, around noon we decided to walk to the stadium. We were prepared, snow pants, long-johns, and blankets, we were going to have to stand in line if we wanted any chance at getting a good seat. We ate lunch at a campus coffee-house and got to the stadium around 2:00. Gates were to open for upper-level seating at 5:30. We had done some on-line stadium scouting and knew Section 210 would put us on the 50 yard line. At 5:00 the gates open, and our early preparations and

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Snow had been falling since early morning and crews were out clearing the field. It was definitely going to be a Snow-Bowl. This was the Vikings final home game of the season and in celebration of their 50 years as a team, they were honoring their 50 greatest players. Brett Favre would start the game, but leave the game due to injury. As of now, it appears he has again retired and we were there to see his final start, final play, and final game. Devin Hester for the Bears set a new record for number of punt/kick returns for touchdowns at 14. The Bears won the game and Division Championship. Although we traveled to Minnesota, as Chicago Bears fans we felt we had just been to the best game ever.



Early preparations, adjustments, accomplishments, and retirements, the game brought it all. Truth be told, it could be said “just another day at the office.” Often we make our preparations months in advance, only to find out that adjustments have to be made in a week. Some of us are retiring, others are recording new accomplishments. For us, we’re hoping for a Chicago Bears’ Super Bowl victory!

Submitted by: Penny Hayes  
Scott County PT

