



JUNE 2009 IASCOE NEWSLETTER



A President's Perspective By Cindy Mensen

Hello fellow Iowans and greetings from NE Iowa and your newest IASCOE President. It will be an honor to serve you as we work through the changes of the upcoming year. Let us make communication a high priority! Your officers and team of directors will strive to keep you informed and please make sure to let us know if you have any concerns for IASCOE/NASCOE. We are also looking forward to greeting our new SED and State Committee and to develop a good working relationship with them as well.

I am happy to report that your IASCOE leaders have been busy working for you. Seven employees traveled to Washington DC in March for a Legislative Conference. All Iowa Congressional Districts were represented and members of Congress were receptive to our visits. You can read about the USDA modernization and benefits issues that were presented to each member by going to the Legislative portion of the NASCOE website (www.nascoe.org). *Good News:* we are making serious progress towards sick leave credit for FERS retirees!

Soon you will receive your membership packets from the Membership Committee volunteers. As has been announced before, NASCOE raised their dues effective for the 2009-2010 year. At our Iowa Convention held last month, convention attendees voted to increase the Iowa dues as follows:

Grade 6 & below	\$70.00 -- (only 3.4 cents per hour)
Grade 7-Grade 9	\$90.00 -- (only 4.3 cents per hour)
Grade 10 & above	\$140.00 -- (only 6.7 cents per hour)

2009 is the 50th Anniversary of NASCOE! Please continue your membership and encourage others to join – for only a few cents per hour, you reap many benefits. Combined with fellow employees across the nation, we work to secure an optimal work environment and continued benefits for all employees.

I give thanks and admiration to Steve Kennedy, our past IASCOE President, for his dedicated service to IASCOE. He was a great leader and did a fantastic job planning our convention/MWA Rally! Like the leaders before me, I am proud to be your IASCOE President. Thank you for putting your trust in me. I plan to earn that trust by listening, learning and representing all Iowa FSA employees to the best of my ability. Contact me anytime on my cell phone (563) 920-8979 or my home email address: mensenc@iowatelecom.net.

Now it is time to put the finishing touches on our youngest son's graduation party plans. Enjoy your spring and make sure to plan time for summer fun. Think about going to Tennessee in August for the National Convention!

Cindy T Mensen



BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

JEFF DAVIS - 2009 IASCOE VICE PRESIDENT

HELLO ALL,

Most of you know me and for those who don't, my name is Jeff Davis. I have been an IASCOE/NASCOE member since 1987. I have been a director off and on since 1990.

I am the CED in Plymouth County and have been here since 1987. I am married with four sons, three are married and one is getting married in October. I have three grandchildren (all granddaughters) and they are a blast to be around. It is a changing of the guard around our household with three daughter-in-laws, plus, one to be added in October. These additions, coupled with my three granddaughters and my wife feels less out outnumbered than she did in earlier times, when the boys were growing up.

Outside of the office I am very involved with a number of different things. I am involved with the Booster Club at the local school and follow most of the sports in the school. I am involved in Little League and have been since my boys were in it and the last one played over 10 years ago. I am a hardcore Iowa Hawkeye fan and have been accused of bleeding Black & Gold. Since the boys graduated and I don't have hundreds of sporting events to attend I have tried to take up golf. Golf has humbled me and sometimes just frustrates me like you can't believe (but I really like to get out and relax). Friends and family are very precious and very important to me. That is why I feel the way I do about my family at FSA and IASCOE/NASCOE.

I feel honored to be your Vice-President and will do all that can be done for each and every one of our members. I have seen over the years what IASCOE/NASCOE has done. I only go back 20+ years, but a lot has changed in that short amount of time. Look back at the wages and some of the benefits that we would not have if it wasn't for IASCOE/NASCOE.

Let me put it this way, IASCOE/NASCOE means a lot to me and my goal is to make sure that everyone of you is proud to be a member of this great organization. It might be a sad thing to think about where we might be if IASCOE/NASCOE was not formed 50 years ago.

If you ever have a question please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Thanks again for your support

Jeff Davis

MIDWEST AREA REPORT

June 2009

Things are starting to slow down for me as far as NASCOE activities after a very busy March and April. Five state conventions, the MWA Rally, full legislative conference, and the negotiation session during a seven week period kept me moving. Although it was very time consuming I felt all the conventions, the Area Rally, the legislative conference and negotiation session were very successful and worthwhile.

The Negotiation session was held April 19-23. The NASCOE Executive board, negotiation consultants, and Bill Putnam, National Programs Committee Chair met with members from HRD, DAFO, DAFP, IT, BMPS, and several other departments. We discussed items and concerns raised by the members. We were able to come to some type of resolution on most of the items submitted. Performance plans, the county office reviews, adequate and proper training, and the budget were discussed at length.

NASCOE will continue to focus on these issues and others that NASCOE members feel are important. As issues arise, members are encouraged to submit them to their Area Executive, negotiation consultant, or area programs chair throughout the year. This will allow NASCOE to research the problem and pursue a timely response if needed.

One of the papers we used during the legislative conference addressed FSA's role in the National Animal ID System. Currently, the Secretary has scheduled listening sessions throughout the country in order to get public opinion on animal ID. NASCOE was working to get some producers who support FSA's involvement in the NAIS to attend some of these sessions. If the Secretary schedules more listening sessions in the Midwest we will need to find a good representative to attend one of these sessions.

Doug Caruso was named FSA Administrator and took over the position in early May. During his tenure as SED for WI he developed a great relationship with the field office employees and employee associations. There will be many challenges ahead with ACRE and SURE implementation and the 2009 and 2010 budget shortfalls. I am sure Mr. Caruso will do his best to work with all levels of the agency so FSA can meet these challenges and continue to deliver programs to the American farmer.

NASCOE is celebrating its 50th anniversary in Gatlinburg, TN this August. This should be a great event and I encourage everyone to attend. NASCOE has been working to promote the welfare of its members and American agriculture for 50 years and that is something of which we should all be very proud.

Have a safe and fun summer and I encourage you to take some time for yourself, family, and friends.

Take Care

Jonathan B. Williams
MWA Executive Committeeperson



Membership has its Benefits

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn

Mid West Area Benefits Chairperson

(Some information has been adapted from Membership letter)

Membership has its benefits. We have heard that statement numerous times over the years and it still holds true as far as NASCOE/IASCOE membership is concerned.

It's an exciting time for IASCOE and NASCOE as it appears we are getting closer to credit for FERS sick leave. The House of Representatives approved legislation on April 1 that would give employees covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) credit for unused sick leave when calculating their retirement benefits. The Federal Retirement Reform Act of 2009 (H.R. 1804), introduced by House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Edolphus Towns

(D-NY), was approved by a voice vote.

Cell phone discounts, benefits offered through J M Marketing, Theme Park and Travel discounts are already available as NASCOE has worked to secure these benefits and continues to look for other benefit opportunities. Check out www.nascoe.org for more information. Kelly Cain, the State Benefit Chairperson or I (serving as Mid West Area Benefits Chairperson) are also available and willing to assist you with any questions concerning members' benefits.

Each office should be receiving a letter addressing this year's membership drive. Rising costs and increased expenses has made it necessary for NASCOE to increase annual dues by \$15.00/member. IASCOE had no choice but to follow suit as approximately 15 years have passed since we have raised dues but costs have continually risen over this time period.

Payroll deduction is still an option for IASCOE dues. Because of the change in dues, everyone who chooses payroll deduction will need to complete a new FSA-0444. Payroll deductions and check amounts are:

CO-6 & below:	\$2.70 per pay period - \$70.00 per year
CO-7 – 9:	\$3.47 per pay period - \$90.00 per year
CO-10 & above:	\$5.39 per pay period - \$140.00 per year

This is a very small amount considering the rewards! For just a few cents a day, each of us can do our part to preserve our current benefits and to pursue new benefit options!

Now, more than ever, IASCOE/NASCOE needs everyone's support. Something as simple as cost of living allowance (COLA) has to be requested for County Office employees after Congress has approved COLA's for other government employees as this is not an automatic benefit for CO employees. IASCOE/NASCOE makes sure that **ALL** county office employees receive the same benefits. As budget issues and IT issues continue to plague our agency, a strong membership is essential so we as employees can present a united front when addressing such issues with Congress and the Administration.

Iowa's membership is near 90% but we can do better. Let's strive for 100% membership in our state and lead the way for the rest of the nation.

CAP WIZ Iowa Data as of May 30, 2009

Hello IASCOE,

I thought I would give you a brief break down on how Iowa matches up with the National numbers for CAP Wiz. I have the national numbers of subscribers and Iowa's number of subscribers. Also I thought it would be interesting to see how we did on the last FERS sick leave alert that was posted to the CAP WIZ system. If you have questions regarding CAP WIZ or have changed your email address and would like me to update it, please contact me.

Tammy Eibey

NATIONAL Subscribers: 3270

IOWA Subscribers: 223

FERS Sick leave messages sent nationally: 867 (26.5% of subscribers sent alert)

FERS Sick leave messages sent from Iowa: 74 (33.18% of Iowa subscribers sent alert)

Alert was sent to House members only:

Rep. Leonard Boswell (DEM-IA-3) [7

Rep. Bruce Braley (DEM-IA-1) 13

Rep. Steve King (REP-IA-5) 23

Rep. Tom Latham (REP-IA-4) 23

Rep. David Loebsack (DEM-IA-2) 8



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Scholarship winners:

Troy Mensen Kaitlyn Wagner
Jamie DeBoer Jared Epley

Distinguished Service Awards (DSAs):

Elaine Frank for Community Service
Mary Kay Newman for Service to FSA/Agriculture



Susan Jacobson, PT Union County, with her award for Best Human Interest article “My Mother’s Journey



Larry Niles receives an award for 3500 hours of Sick Leave; the first time a 3500 award has been presented in the state.



Steve Abbas, Midwest Area winner for his Best Feature Humorous Story “Harvest Chronicles”

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

The following awards were presented at the IASCOE convention April 4th.
Congratulations, Everyone!

<u>Consecutive 100% Counties</u>		<u>Honorary Lifetime Members</u>
5 years:	Mills	Judy Vos (Woodbury)
	Shelby	Jeanine Christensen (Cass)
10 years	Madison	Mary Ann Seigenthaler (Allamakee)
20 years	Allamakee	Linda Johnston (Jasper)
	Buena Vista	Phyllis Stockwell (Wright)
	Delaware	Mary Crall (Monroe)
	Des Moines	Kathy White (Iowa)
	Franklin	Jack Stephens (Decatur)
	Mahaska	Alan Hilleman (Marshall)
	Muscatine	Nelda Wolthuis (Clay)
	Sioux	Don Carpenter (Fayette)
25 years	Plymouth	Judy Floss (Jasper)
	Wright	Jean Oswood (Poweshiek)
30 years	Page	Teresa Noe (Benton)
50 years	Dickinson	
	Polk	



FEATURED DIRECTOR CINDY PISTEK – PUBLICITY

Greetings from Iowa's new Publicity Chairman, Cindy Pistek. I have some pretty big shoes to fill; Tammy Eibey has done a wonderful job over the past years. Tammy's efforts have won IASCOE several awards and with your help we should be able to continue receiving those honors.

As Publicity Director, I work closely with the webmaster to ensure information is timely updated. In addition, I am responsible for convention pictures and newsletter articles. I assign articles to the

Publicity Committee, as well as Directors. In coming newsletters, we will have a focus article that explains the duties of each Director. I am also adding three new columns:

Saying Goodbye – Retirement news

Simple Solutions – Household/lawn care advice

Vacation Iowa – Great ideas for weekend trips

Big thanks to our volunteers, Brian Beach, Webmaster, the Publicity Committee, to those who submit articles and to you, our members. Without the membership there wouldn't be any "news"

Cindy Pistek
Publicity Chairman



Jessica Yuska and her husband have a new dark haired little girl, Lauren Elizabeth, born April 27 at 7 lbs 4 oz & 19in long. Congratulations, Jessica, from the entire IASCOE family



IASCOE DIRECTORS – 2009



Back row: Devalyn Wilson, Mary Lageshulte, Judy Dameron, Tammy Pruin, Glenda Von Arb, Patsy Bence, Kelly Cain, Judy Lundgren, Chris Irvin

Front row: Jeff Davis, Cindy Pistek, Chris Greider, Cindy Mensen, Steve Kennedy, Dee Lehn, Tammy Eibey



COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2009-2010
CO-LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Tammy Eibey and Dee Ann Lehn
BENEFITS CHAIR – Kelly Cain

<u>District</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>County</u>
1	Rosie Kahl	Lyon
2	David Stromer	Kossuth
3	Karen McNeil	Winneshiek
4	Pat Warmbier	Harrison
5	Teresa Simonton	Poweshiek
6	Joni Birkhofer	Muscatine
7	Chris Irvin	Page
8	Kelly Cain	Madison
9	John Bartenhagen	Louisa

AWARDS CHAIR – Devalyn Wilson

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Tammy Pruin

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Jeanine Diekhuis	Hancock
3	Connie Straw	Chickasaw
4	Denise Dugan	Woodbury
5	Twyla Brede	Dallas
6	Angie Reynolds	Muscatine
7	Phyllis Reineke	Taylor
8	David Wynn	Monroe
9	Carol Long	Mahaska

PUBLICITY CHAIR – Cindy Pistek

1	Nancy Heideman	Clay
2	Lisa Forburger	Kossuth
3	Rose Woerner	Black Hawk
4	Candy Hoyle	Greene
5	Kitty Benda	Marshall
6	Betty Williams	Muscatine
7	Carole Dawson	Taylor
8	Rhonda Cooper	Union
9	Anna Hornbaker	Van Buren

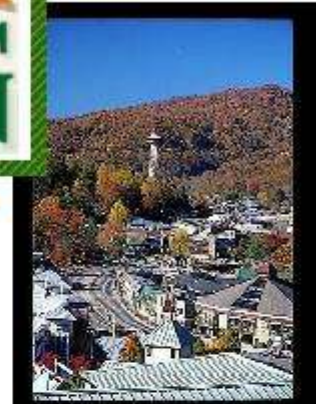
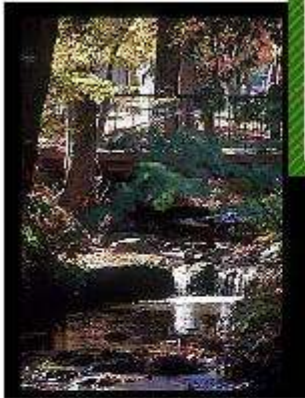
CO-MEMBERSHIP CHAIR Glenda VonArb – Mary Lageschulte

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

PROGRAM CHAIR – Jessica Yuska

EMBLEMS CHAIR – Chris Grieder

2009 NASCOE CONVENTION



August 12th - 16th



Visit our website
www.tascoe.com

www.gatlinburg-tennessee.com

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- * Over 100 Restaurants * Waterfalls * Bird Watching * History *
- * Shopping * Shows * Beautiful Drives *

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www.parkvista.com

This year the IASCOE convention was a special one-it was our turn to host the Midwest Area Rally and the IASCOE Board of Directors decided to host both conventions at the same time. This made for a very exciting two days.

On Friday April 3rd the IASCOE convention began with committee meetings at 10:30 am. The awards and scholarships, membership and publicity committees all met and discussed their respective business. The membership was later given a report of each committee meeting. In the afternoon the Benefits and Legislation meeting was held. We heard from J & M Marketing the firm that handles our life insurance policies, dental and cancer policies and long-term care policies; to name a few. We also had a nice welcome from Joshua Katcher. Joshua works for E J Brown & Associates, a firm that can assist you with financial planning for retirement. Joshua will meet with you free of charge, if you wish to have some assistance in these types of things. Aaron Moore and Devalyn Wilson were two of the individuals who went to Washington DC for our legislative conference. Check out Aaron's article on their meetings with Congressional leaders; this is just a sample of what IASCOE does for each of FSA's employees.

Our IASCOE president, Steve Kennedy, welcomed us all and Dennis Olson (Acting SED) gave us a quick overview of what the next year might bring in terms of budget etc. Our final presentation for the day was from the Iowa Attorney General's Office. Sue Kerr gave us some very good information and some ways that we can avoid identity theft. Identity theft occurs much more frequently than we think; being aware can help us avoid a financial loss and also avoid the stress that goes along with stolen identity.

In the evening we enjoyed spending time with old friends and meeting new ones. This year we tried something new; we had a supper of pizza and subs at 6:00 pm. During our mealtime Rod Beinsen, CED from Story County, provided us with piano music. Wow, that man can play a "mean" piano! Between the food and the snacks everyone was full and ready to enjoy the evening entertainment.

Finally, we enjoyed the entertainment of a LIVE BAND! It's been a long time since I've danced to a live band and the 8-Track Band was exceptional. Ten to fourteen individuals played songs from several generations. We danced to "These Boots Were Made for Walkin" and a full rendition of the Beach Boys. Each set of tunes brought new costumes and lots of energy. Some of us even got on stage to "sing along". I don't think we stopped dancing until they were done playing, even if our feet did hurt!

On Saturday morning IASCOE had their Awards presentations and the introduction of our new officers. Check out the articles from Cindy Mensen (President) and Jeff Davis (Vice-President).

The Midwest Area Rally began at 10:00 am on Saturday. The meeting opened with the Presentation of Colors, the Star Spangled Banner, the Pledge of Allegiance and a Military Mom Presentation from Deb Esselman-Baird (Wisconsin). Midwest Area Executive Jon Williams gave the welcome (check out his Midwest Area Report). We heard from Robert Stevenson (DAFO) and Brad Kaman (Commodity Programs) from Washington DC about budget and some tentative information about ACRE.

The afternoon brought Mid-West Area committee meetings and reports. Our National Vice-President, Myron Stroup talked about NASCOE's work on our behalf and the meeting concluded.

The pending weather change sent many of us home so we could "beat the storm". All in all the convention was a success and if you haven't attended one yet, think about coming next year. The information you receive and the great time you will have sharing some "down-time" with fellow employees will keep you coming back for more!



CONVENTION PHOTOS





The IASCOE delegation visiting with Senator Harkin's staff. The Iowa delegation included: Steve Kennedy, Tammy Eibey, Devalyn Wilson, Jeff Davis, Trice Smith Cindy Mensen, and Aaron Moore.

National Legislative Conference 2009

Submitted by Aaron Moore, Webster County, CED

March 16, 2009 - The eve of departure and sleeping soundly I awoke to such a clatter. It was merely 11:30 p.m. and my cell phone was ringing. I could barely understand the caller and did not recognize the voice. The only true words I understood were "NO FLIGHT" The group of 7 was scheduled to leave at 5:30 A.M., verifying the airport website the flight was indeed canceled.

March 17, 2009 - Arriving on time to the airport I learned that some of the troop was boarding a plane to Atlanta. While standing at the ticket counter I met Trice and we discovered the next flight was 4 hours later. The Eastern Iowa Airport is not necessarily the most exciting place to be at 5:30 A.M. or to spend 4 hours, although I did enjoy the time visiting with Trice.

After safely arriving to Washington D.C. and finding the hotel we met with the rest of the Iowa group. It was amazing to see a couple hundred NASCOE members from across the U.S. in a meeting discussing current issues. Each state was going to address the same issues with Congress representatives the next day.

March 18, 2009 - Today was the big day...we were going to "the hill" Our goal was to make a NASCOE presence and discuss the current issues of USDA reorganization and FERS sick leave compensation. Overall, I was very impressed because the Iowa group scheduled appointments with all of the Senators or Representatives. Many of the individuals met with

us directly otherwise a member of their staff took time to meet with us. I was amazed at the effort the representatives took to meet and discuss our issues. Many of them had questions and listened to our concerns. Even though this was my first time on a Legislative conference it was evident that some of our concerns as IASCOE members were also on the radar of our decision makers.

March 19, 2009 - It was time to return back to Iowa. Returning home was no different than going to Washington D.C. There were delays and some of us even fly arrived back in Iowa the next day.

Shortly after our return to Iowa H.R. 1804 (the FERS Sick Leave Bill) was passed by the House of Representatives. The bill passed would give FERS employees full credit of sick leave balances at retirement just like CSRS employees. I believe the Bill was passed by our efforts during the Legislative Conference. The bill still needs to be passed by the Senate and the President before it would become law.

As the FERS sick leave issue continues I encourage you to sign up and utilize CAPWIZ. CAPWIZ is very simple to use! You will receive an email when there is a current issues to address. You simply log into CAPWIZ enter your contact information and can submit a letter or email to your designated Congress officials. You may also modify the existing letter if you desire. The entire process takes less than a few minutes but could have a huge impact on your career with FSA. Please use your personal email address and computer when using CAPWIZ. If you do not have a computer many times your local library offers internet access. The more concerns a Congress official hears from their constituents the more likely they are to address the issue.

Thank you IASCOE for the opportunity to represent you in Washington D.C. at the Legislative Conference.



VACATION IOWA



HOLLYWOOD COMES TO DENISON

Every year in the month of June, the west central Iowa town of Denison honors the life work of hometown celebrity Donna Reed. Best known for her roles in movies *It's a Wonderful Life* and *From Here to Eternity*, and the televised *The Donna Reed Show*, this Hollywood film star's career spanned 3 decades in the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Donna Reed left her home near Denison at age 16 for educational opportunities in Los Angeles. Her successful acting career came from hard work, ambition, vision and values. Behind the cameras, she was the un-credited producer and director of *The Donna Reed Show*, studying and mastering both lighting and cinematography – roles rarely handled by women of that time. It was her value of knowledge, experience, and education that inspired the creation of the Donna Reed Foundation, an organization dedicated to keeping the dreams of students in the performing arts alive.

After Donna Reed passed away in 1986, the Donna Reed Festival of Performing Arts was created in 1987 as a small film tribute and has grown into a full-fledged festival of student workshops led by industry professionals. Workshops include theater performance, children's musical theater, methods of theater arts coaching, and private coaching. Devoted and talented students are eligible to win thousands of dollars in scholarships and merit awards. Various events are scheduled throughout the week to provide students the opportunity to showcase their talents to the public, and scheduled family activities involve the public in the festivities. The Donna Reed Festival is a great way for aspiring performers, musicians, film writers and instructors of all ages to explore entertainment careers without leaving the comforts of Iowa. Log on to DonnaReed.org to learn more.

Submitted by Crawford County FSA Employees

HOBO CONVENTION

What are you doing on August 6th through the 9th? Do you need a unique, inexpensive trip? How about Hobo Days in Britt, Iowa? Yes, this is all about the Hobo. A Hobo traveled from place to place catching a ride on the rails doing odd jobs along the way. There really are true "Hobos" and they come to Britt every year for a weekend stay (many stay for a couple weeks).

The Hobos come to Britt and put up their tents in what has come to be known as the "Hobo Jungle". This is a nice grass area with a shelter house sitting right next to the railroad tracks that come into town. On Thursday night they light the bonfire and community members and visitors bring their lawn chairs to enjoy the singing, dancing and stories of the Hobos. Every evening the bonfire burns welcoming anyone who wishes to enjoy the free entertainment.

Throughout the whole weekend you can visit with the Hobos on main-street as they spend time with the people. On Saturday we have a large parade and a free Mulligan Stew feed in the park. The stew is full of vegetables, tomatoes and barley. It is cooked in large vats outside and stirred with large metal paddles. After the parade people bring their pots or plastic buckets and we fill up their containers so they can feed whoever might be with them. In the afternoon the crowd crowns the new Hobo King and Queen after hearing each Hobo speak. On Saturday night you can go to the Hobo Jungle where the new King and Queen (and the other Hobos) will once again entertain you with their songs and stories. Bring your lawn chair! Sunday you can see a great car-show on main-street. During the weekend you can enjoy a carnival, great food, a flea-market and check out the Hobo Museum. Camping sites are available (with hook-up) are located at the Fair Grounds in Britt and at Crystal Lake (only 6 miles north of Britt). Take a trip to North-central Iowa for some small-town hospitality and fun.

Hobo Signs

 Kissed and Laid	 Aid Worker	 Woman	 Housewife looks for clothes	 Sit Down Feed	 Food for work
 Place for working	 Talk religion get food	 Bread	 Good for a husband	 Gentleman	 Wealthy
 I 8 I ate	 Alright Ok	 Eats fresh	 Get Help here	 Work Available	 Tell a friend your story here
 Pick Horse team	 hooking line	 Sleep in here	 Can sleep in barn	 Good place to get money here	 I love it the place
 Help if sick	 Shack	 Telephone	 Poco Man	 Bed prepared soon	 Dishonest Man
 Man with a gun	 Dog	 Bad Dog	 Officer	 Police Officer LIVES HERE	 Judge
 Nothing doing here	 Doubtful	 Owner Home	 Owner Out	 No for here	 Welcome here

SAYING GOOD-BYE



The Worth County Staff honored Dennis Castle with a Retirement Open House on Friday, May 1, 2009. We based the "theme" of our party around Dennis's wardrobe: "Over 37 years things are bound to change, but Dennis' khakis remained the same". We also put together a mock FSA handbook for him to be able to refer to as a guide for his retirement. This handbook included little traits of Dennis such as: all plants must be watered with an old Diet Dr. Pepper pop bottle; all correspondence must be typed on an electric typewriter; khaki pants must continue to be worn with a blue or green shirt; etc.



Gary Van Gelder, Farm Loan Officer in Union County, retires after 26+ years of service. Gary started his government career working for NRCS as a part-time employee before becoming a loan officer with FMHA. Gary is leaving to help his son with the family farming operation.



Barb Louw, Scott County PT, who retired on April 30th, shared a remembrance of her FSA career as she bid us adieu.

"I was hired Fayette County first. I was hired there as a part time employee from 1984 to 1987. Then, I was hired in Scott County in 1988 and I worked until 1989. In 1993, I was hired in Scott full time."

Barb went on to say, that her first day in Fayette was 'overwhelming'. "That was before we had computers and in Fayette, there were all these hills and strips. I remember we had a big rolodex and those hard cards that we put everyone's information on. My first job was measurement service," Barb added. "I remember giving producer's their maps and they'd turn it and turn it until they located their farm. It usually took awhile though; before they believed me that I was giving them their map."

Barb was a CRP PT, but her favorite programs were Recon's and SCIMS. "CRP is hard," she said. "And it takes so long to learn. I didn't know anything about it at first. It seems like only one person in the office can do it. It was like that when I started here and now that I'm leaving, it will be like that here again."

Barb intends to fill her days this summer, camping and boating in Prairie Du Chen. She will also invest more time in her favorite hobbies, sewing and growing flowers.

Good luck, Barb!



Farm Safety Day

Nearly 200 first graders from the Kossuth County area attended the fifth Annual Farm Safety Day on April 30 at the Kossuth County Fairgrounds in Algona.

The rain changed our plans a little but didn't slow us down a bit!

Three area FFA Chapters did an excellent job teaching 185 first graders at ten farm safety stations. Ten minutes at each station was the perfect amount of time to master each subject before heading on to the next station!

Algona FFA taught sun safety, ATV safety, animal safety and first aid. West Bend/Mallard FFA was in charge of lawn mower safety, PTO safety and chemical safety. North Sentral Kossuth FFA Chapter had tractor rollover safety, manure safety and grain safety.

Farm Safety Day was hosted by the Kossuth FFA Farm Safety Chapter of FS4JK and Progressive Agriculture Foundation.

The event took a little less than two hours to learn all of the subjects, leaving time for cookies and juice before boarding the bus to get back to school. Thanks to FSA to make this important event possible for our kids each year!

Submitted by Michele Bell



All Other Training as Assigned

By Lisa Forburger

Life is what you make of it, is what my mom always told me and that is what I did in Winneshiek County in March. I spent four weeks there, training in the COT Program and enjoyed every minute of it.

After hours are always very interesting for a COT and that is where mom's saying really came to play. I tried to stay busy and it was not too hard to do in Decorah because they have beautiful walking trails. Even though some of those days were mighty cold, I still managed to get out and walk.

During my stay, Dan Mills, OIG, also was there auditing the ECP Program. One evening, Julie Vulk, CED, informed us that we were going on a "field trip" and instructed us to put away the laptops and notebooks, we were going with her. And that is what we did, and what a wonderful learning experience we had.

Our first stop was at the Winneshiek Wildberry Winery located in a renovated milking parlor on the edge of Winneshiek County. Julie was very familiar with the owner and the flavors but Dan and I were all ears. The owner tried to teach us how to drink wine gave us a tour and showed us the vats where the wine was aging and also the bottling and labeling area.



Off we went on the winding, hilly roads, and our next stop was at Foresight Farms Dairy Farm and we met up with one of the owners, Dave Wise and his son, Jared. Milking was just beginning for the evening. We were taken to the parlor and watched the milking process and were amazed at the size of

the operation, 750 cows are milked 3 times a day and each cow will hopefully produce around 8 gallons a day. The milk is piped to a tanker that is owned by the operation and trucked to a Des Moines. My dad did have cows when I was growing up on a farm, but only a few for us to have milk and cream.

We walked through the other barns and watched the feeding process which we found very interesting. The barns are partially open and the cows do not leave their pens except to milk. We also learned that a cow makes milk lying down. They want the cows to eat and rest to make that milk.

By the time we finished our tour it was almost dark and we were treated to a delicious meal prepared by Greg and Julie at their home. It was a perfect end to a fun day. I think that Dan had almost as much fun as I did!!!!



SIoux COUNTY SURVEY – JUST FOR FUN

(Taken by employees and anyone who happened to stop in.)

1. What do you think of hot dogs?

Anonymous #1:	Good if you put enough toppings on it.
Deb	I love them especially grilled or foot longs with grilled onions at the Tulip Festival
Glenda	Grilled natural casing hot dogs with grilled onions rock my world
Patty	Great – just as long as ketchup & mustard are handy
Anonymous #2	Not much
Kathy	Grilled with fixings are great!
Lisa	Bob's at Le Mars are the best!!!
Sandi	They're only good when you eat them outdoors and don't think about what they are made from!
Judy	Great cooked over an open fire
The Buckeye	Not much
Alan	Hot Dogs – Good!

2. Can you do pushups?

Anonymous #1:	Yes, but don't make me prove it.
Deb	Yes, but don't ask me how many
Glenda	Any time I want.
Patty	Yes – if nobody is looking.
Anonymous #2	No
Kathy	Yes, if I wanted to.
Lisa	No
Sandi	Yes but only 4 or 5
Judy	Yes
The Buckeye	Like the ice cream?
Alan	How many would you like to see?

3. Do you own a gun?

Anonymous #1:	Yes, through marriage
Deb	Nope but my husband does
Glenda	Yes & I know how to use it.
Patty	Yes – make my day!
Anonymous #2	Not personally
Kathy	Yes. Cookie gun, rifle, BB gun
Lisa	No
Sandi	Yes – pellet gun
Judy	Not me personally
The Buckeye	Squirt gun
Alan	Several

4. Last thing that made you laugh?

Anonymous #1:	My daughter was telling me about a girl who fell at track.
Deb	Watching Glenda Von Arb sign her name as Glenda Blom
Glenda	E-mail from a friend
Patty	This survey.
Anonymous #2	Co-workers
Kathy	Lisa's comments
Lisa	Ketchup bottle being squirted on a hamburger and it "farted" while we were trying to get quiet for prayer.
Sandi	Break time at FSA
Judy	My grandkids
The Buckeye	Question 2
Alan	Break time conversations.

5. Favorite drink in the morning?

Anonymous #1:	O.J. – good and cold
Deb	½ cappuccino ½ coffee
Glenda	Frappuccino
Patty	Grape juice
Anonymous #2	Coffee
Kathy	Tea
Lisa	Apple juice
Sandi	Coffee
Judy	Coffee
The Buckeye	Cran-apple juice
Alan	Coffee

6. Worst injury(ies) you had as a child?

Anonymous #1:	Broken hip at 1 yr old
Deb	Concussion in 8 th grade when I fell off my bike
Glenda	Running into a barbed wire fence while riding bike. (don't let your brothers teach you.)
Patty	Slice head open on a wall edge; sliced arm open on broken window
Anonymous #2	Sprained ankle
Kathy	Stitches – many times
Lisa	Fell off bike and pedal gouged my knee –have a Scar that looks like the number 11
Sandi	Cut my leg going under a barbed wire fence.
Judy	Can't remember
The Buckeye	Head trauma
Alan	Broken arm, broken hand

7. Three places you'd like to go?

Anonymous #1:	Home, Hawaii, Hawaii
Deb	Okoboji; Damascus, Syria; Jacksonville, Florida
Glenda	Australia, Jackson, WY, Heaven
Patty	Hawaii (again), Chanhassen, home
Anonymous #2	Montana, the "River", across the creek
Kathy	Home, fabric store, motorcycling
Lisa	Alaska, Alaska, Alaska

Sandi	Hawaii, Europe, Australia
Judy	Mexico, Hawaii, Switzerland
The Buckeye	Caribbean, Austria, Siberia
Alan	Europe, Hawaii, Alaska

8. What's in your pocket right now?

Anonymous #1:	I don't have a pocket
Deb	Nothing
Glenda	Pen
Patty	Kleenex & coins
Anonymous #2	Kleenex
Kathy	Lint
Lisa	Lint
Sandi	Nothing – no pocket in these pants
Judy	Cell phone
The Buckeye	Lint
Alan	Wouldn't you like to know?

9. Three thoughts at this exact moment?

Anonymous #1:	Planting trees, Landscape, Graduation
Deb	I'm feeling dumb right now, When is it time to go home? Is it too windy to walk tonight?
Glenda	Will these guys fill out the survey? Do they think I'm nuts? These guys are pretty good sports about the survey.
Patty	Why am I doing this? Who cares? Who is reading this?
Anonymous #2	I'm a poor speller. I want to go home. I don't like this blue pen
Kathy	Why am I doing this? Who is going to read this? What are "they" going to do with these answers?
Lisa	Why am I doing this survey? How will I get all this work done? What's for dinner?
Sandi	Too much on my schedule this week. Wondering if my dog is barking & bothering the neighbor Will my daughter's baby arrive safely?
Judy	So much work to do, So little time, Better get to work
The Buckeye	Drawing a blank. Shelby is a great baker. It is a good day
Alan	I'm drawing a blank.

10. Current worry?

Anonymous #1:	Getting everything ready for graduation & having enough food.
Deb	How to lose 5 pounds
Glenda	Nothing big
Patty	What's for supper?
Anonymous #2	No Rain
Kathy	No worries, just happy.
Lisa	Am I going to have a job yet?
Sandi	Getting a full time job.
Judy	Wayne
The Buckeye	Next batch of cookies
Alan	My kids' futures

RECIPES FOR SPRING

Spring fruits and vegetables are in abundance this time of year. Rhubarb and asparagus are two of my favorites.

Submitted by Cindy Pistek

Grilled Asparagus Medley

1 pound fresh asparagus
1 each sweet red, yellow and green pepper, julienned
1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms
1 medium tomato, chopped
1 medium onion, sliced
1 can (2-1/4 oz) sliced ripe olives (drained)
2 minced garlic cloves
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tsp minced parsley
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp lemon-pepper seasoning
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dillweed

In a disposable foil pan, combine the vegetables, olives and garlic; drizzle with oil and toss to coat. Sprinkle with parsley, salt, pepper, lemon-pepper and dill; toss to coat. Grill, covered, over indirect medium heat for 20-25 minutes or until vegetables are crop-tender, stirring occasionally.

Diabetic Exchange - 1 vegetable, 1 fat

One $\frac{3}{4}$ cup equals 78 calories.

Rhubarb- Nothing is better than ruby red rhubarb served warm over vanilla ice cream!

Rhubarb Jam - Charlene Hoffman - PT Union Co

3 C rhubarb, cut into small pieces 2 1/2 C sugar
1/2 C water 1(3oz) box dry jello - use peach, raspberry or strawberry

Cook rhubarb, sugar, and water until done. Remove from heat. Stir in dry jello. Put in small jars and refrigerate.

Rubarb Muffins - Barb Roberts - PT Adams Co

2/3 C oleo	1 1/2 C brown sugar
1 egg	1 C buttermilk
2 1/2 C flour	1 tsp soda
1 1/2 C diced rhubarb	1 tsp vanilla
1/2 to 3/4 C nuts, chopped	cinnamon sugar

Cream oleo and sugar together, add egg and beat well. Mix the dry ingredients together and add alternately with the buttermilk, beating until smooth after each addition. Add the rhubarb, vanilla and nuts. Pour in greased or paper cup lined muffin tins. Sprinkle the top with cinnamon sugar. Bake @ 350 for 15 to 30 minutes (depending on the size of the muffin)

Asparagus Salad - Charlene Hoffman - PT Union Co

3 T vegetable broth
3 T white wine vinegar
1 pound thin asparagus, trimmed and peeled
3 T chopped chives
3 T Parmesan cheese

Bring broth and vinegar to a rolling boil in large skillet. Place asparagus in boiling broth mixture, and cook 5-6 min. or until tender-crisp. While asparagus cooks, fill a large bowl half full with ice, then add enough cold water to come up to top of ice. When asparagus spears are cooked, remove and immediately submerge in ice bath to cool completely. Drain and remove ice then sprinkle with chives and cheese. Add pepper to taste. Chill and serve.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

In an effort to curb spending, here are some "hints" that are economical and work well.

** These days my house is full of those pesky flies that seem to come out of the wood work as they wake up to spring. Saturate a sponge with oil of lavender and place it in a shallow dish or pan. Put one in each room and pesky flies will disappear.

**This is a window cleaner I tried last spring and it was great! Mix 1 half cup of ammonia with 1 half cup of white vinegar and 2 tablespoons of cornstarch in a bucket of warm water. Automobile grease responds well to butter, followed by regular wash and rinse.

