

# IASCOE

The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees

July 2013



## 2013/2014 IASCOE OFFICERS

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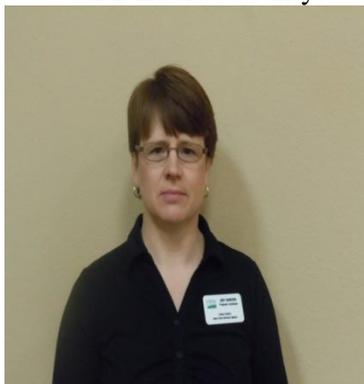
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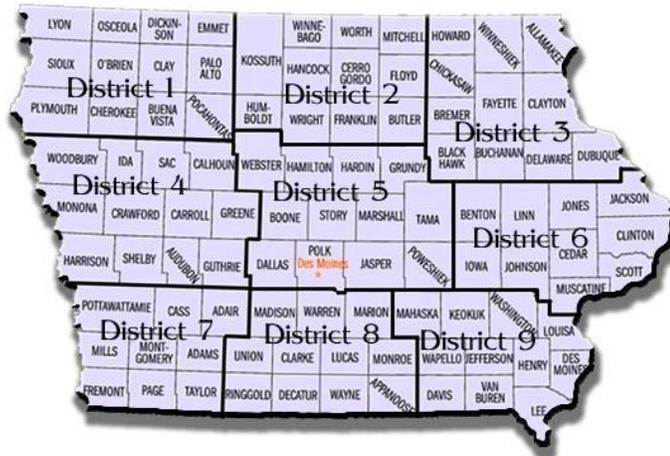


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## 2013-2014

# IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

DISTRICT NUMBER	PROGRAM ASSISTANT AND COUNTY	COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND COUNTY
1 Director Alternate	Karen LaCour, Dickinson Nancy Heideman, Clay	Jeff Davis, Plymouth Dustin Miller, Cherokee
2 Director Alternate	Cindy Pistek, Hancock Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock	Tammy Pruin, Wright Barry TerHark, Cerro Gordo
3 Director Alternate	Curt Goetsch, Howard Karen McNeil, Winneshiek	Joseph Huber, Clayton Kevin Keegan, Black Hawk (DD)
4 Director Alternate	Michelle Bruck, Shelby Cathleen Borst, Carroll	Steve Luke, Shelby Pat Warmbier, Harrison
5 Director Alternate	Kitty Benda, Marshall Karla Novotny, Tama	Curt Houk, Poweshiek Thomas Abbas, Hamilton
6 Director Alternate	Joni Birkhofer, Muscatine Renee Schultz, Cedar	Kris Koth, Jones Randy Madsen, Muscatine/Scott
7 Director Alternate	Jennifer Comer, Page Monica Robinson, Cass	Lynette Gruchow, E/W Pottawattamie
8 Director Alternate	Keith Wheeler, Madison Ronda Harrison, Lucas	Daniel Curry, Ringgold David Lundquist, Lucas
9 Director Alternate	Judy Dameron, Louisa Deanna Rood, Mahaska	Dee Ann Lehn, Keokuk Gretchen McLain, Jefferson



## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2013-2014**

**LEGISLATIVE CHAIR – Steve Luke**

**BENEFITS CHAIR – Dee Lehn**

District	Member	County
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
2	David Stromer	Hancock
3	Jesse Wegner	Fayette
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 – Karen LaCour**

**SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – Daniel Curry**

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Jeanine Diekhuis	Hancock
3	Connie Straw	Chickasaw
4	Denise Dugan	Woodbury
5	Kathleen Baker	Marshall
6	Amy Castillo	Johnson
7	Monica Robinson	Cass
8	Daniel Curry	Ringgold
9	Carol Long	Mahaska

**PUBLICITY CHAIR – Kris Koth**

1	Paul Berte	Pocahontas
2	Barry Terhark	Cerro Gordo
3	Rose Woerner	Black Hawk
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Karla Novotny	Tama
6	Allison Vavroch	Benton
7	Mike Praska	Adams/Union
8		
9	Gretchen McLain	Jefferson

**MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Karen LaCour**

1	Lisa Forburger	Palo Alto
2	Rosalie Carlson	Worth
3	Sheri Rodman	Clayton
4	Cathleen “Skip” Borst	Carroll
5	Tom Abbas	Hamilton
6	Randy Madsen	Muscatine
7	Susan Lange	Cass
8	Marla Morlan	Monroe
9	Deanna Rood	Mahaska

**PROGRAM CHAIR – Keith Wheeler, Madison**

**EMBLEMS CHAIR – Kitty Benda, Marshall**



2013 IASCOE Directors

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## A MESSAGE FROM JOHN

At some point in time, I would like to write a very uplifting message about the current state of our Agency. We all know that right now is not that time. Our numbers continue to contract, workload is not any less, and the tools we work with every day are not functioning properly. The word frustrating comes to mind but I am really not sure that it adequately describes the situation. I am an optimist; you generally have to be if you are a farmer because of weather, markets, and all of the other influences in farming. I am also an optimist when I look at the future of the Farm Service Agency because I know what our leadership believes in. When I hear Secretary Vilsack say “we are a secure nation in large part because we are a food secure nation”, I know that he is talking about all parts of the system of agriculture which makes us food secure. This includes every part of USDA/FSA.

Agriculture is a woven fabric that is just like any other woven fabric. If you pull out one thread, you threaten the integrity of the entire garment. Our Agency is the one thread that truly holds food security together, but when times are good, we are often overlooked. Yes, crop insurance is another important thread but it will never serve as a complete safety net because of the inherent variability in price protection it has from year to year.

We all too often hear that citizens do not trust the government but we all know that everyone we work with trusts the integrity of the Farm Service Agency. This is why we are asked for information about crop damage due to weather, use of our GIS data by other government entities, crop insurance agents who depend on our 578s, and even Google maps use our data. The MIDAS system is not working as it should right now - but it will. When it does, the requests by many entities for the type of data we can produce will be in high demand because this is the first system of its kind AND it is controlled by the Farm Service Agency!

When I was first elected as a County Supervisor, I soon learned that the best way to handle information is to make it as open as possible to the people you represent. Give everyone the facts and they will understand your decision. They still may not like the decision but they do understand most of the time, and that builds trust. When I started with FSA, I was told the rules of what I could and could not say, and some of that was hard to understand. I now understand why we do not talk openly about crop damage. I have come to the understanding that the trust in this Agency is so deep, that a statement by the head of it can move the markets. I realize that times are tough for our Agency but the one thing we must never lose is the trust that everyone has in us and the important work we do.

John Whitaker, SED



## CURT'S CORNER

Everything these days seems to be like a roller coaster ride. We had some really high times and then we had some really low times and it all changes in the blink of an eye. I do believe it is safe to say that the drought of 2012 has officially come to an end. Last we spoke we were welcoming the rain and now our cup has overflowed which has put all of agriculture in Iowa behind schedule. In turn when our producers are behind that puts all of our offices behind. Some deadlines have been extended and others might not be. We just have to keep taking things one deadline at a time and we will get done what work we can. In times like these it is important for people to make sure that they are taking care of themselves as best as they can physically and mentally.

There is a lot of unknown out there in the field at this time. I do not want to concede to the fact that the unknown is our new normal but things sure seem to be stacking up that way. As we wait for the new Farm Bill we wonder just where our place is. Will we play a big role or a little part in the safety net for the farmers of today? No one really knows the answer to that until a Farm Bill is actually passed. Until that time you can get involved by reading everything possible to keep yourself educated as to current events and where we might end up in the future with the new Farm Bill. One thing to remember is that what you read could be totally different from the final outcome of the bill itself. Everyone wants their own seat at the table we call the farm bill. I am sure you have seen or heard some of the rhetoric that is out there on the farm bill and the agencies with the most at stake. What you need to remember is that as long as there is farm policy there needs to be somebody to administer it.

I am very pleased to announce that the hard work that some of our fellow Iowa IASCOE members have devoted is going to be recognized at the upcoming NASCOE National Convention in Asheville, North Carolina August 11-18, 2013. There are five areas within publicity in which awards are given and Iowa has winners in three of the five areas. Congratulations to the winners in the Publicity Contest from Iowa. They are:

- Best Overall Newsletter: Brenda Albright, Editor/2 Issues, Iowa  
Lynette Gruchow, Editor/2 Issues, Iowa  
Anna Boecker, Copy Editor/4 Issues, Iowa
- Best Single Issue: March 2012 Issue, Brenda Albright, Editor, Iowa  
Anna Boecker, Copy Editor, Iowa
- Best Website: [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) Brian Beach, Webmaster, Iowa

If you ever have any questions about what the agency or association is doing to represent you please feel free to contact either myself or a director. One thing to remember is that IASCOE/NASCOE is looking out for all FSA employees no matter where you are from. If you want to know something, just ask, there is no such thing as a dumb question.

There is no time like the present to get involved and with the dwindling number of employees every person counts. Get your co-worker or someone from your neighboring county involved if they are not already. We all have to be involved to make our future brighter.

See you all later.

Curt M. Houk  
IASCOE President

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**2013 National Convention  
Asheville, NC  
August 11-18, 2013  
Crown Plaza Tennis and Golf Resort  
One Resort Dr  
Asheville, NC 28806  
1-888-233-9527**

**IMPORTANT!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**2013 NASCOE Convention Registration**

DON'T Delay-send in your registration today. Help NoCASCOE by registering early. Register by June 15th and save \$5!

**2013 NASCOE Convention Rooms**

Please DO NOT cancel any hotel room reservations at the Crowns Plaza Resort. Please contact Annette Hyman if you need to cancel rooms or if you are in need of rooms. There is currently a waiting list to reserve rooms at the Crowne. The overflow hotel is the Four Points by Sheraton.

**OVERFLOW HOTEL INFORMATION:**

**FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON,  
22 WOODFIN ST., ASHEVILLE, NC  
828-253-1851**

**Double Rooms cost \$109 PLUS 11% TAX PER NIGHT**



ACCORDING TO CURT

Wow! The first few months being your IASCOE Vice-President have come and gone in a blur. We have fallen on hard times in FSA; things don't seem to be getting better. If it's not the budget, it's the software issues that have plagued our offices. Now is not the time to walk away from your support group you have in IASCOE. I understand very well, the struggles we all face here in the state of Iowa; I can only imagine what things would be like without IASCOE/NASCOE in our corner.

With that being said we have a very strong membership, this is what makes IASCOE one of the best state chapters that NASCOE has. It's because of our members (you) that when IASCOE voices a concern, NASCOE is listening. This is one of the many things I have found out first hand in the past few months. Iowa matters, you all play important roles in shaping what is to come of our future.

IASCOE's goal for 2013-2014 membership is 100%, not only is this to protect our benefits but now more than ever to protect our jobs. As we continue to see hiring freezes and budget shortfalls, I can tell you that Mr. Houk and I pledge to work hard for all members of IASCOE. To do our part in protecting all of our jobs and benefits, it won't be easy but we both knew that before agreeing to serve as IASCOE Officers. Some things only get changed when the masses stand behind a cause they believe in. If you're looking to get involved and don't know how, contact me. Believe me, we can and will use your help.

Finally, I want to remind you, you are always welcome to voice a concern, comment, idea or question to your IASCOE directors, President or Vice-President. We can only gauge what the feeling is in Iowa on topics, based on what you tell us. We share these things often with the SED and the NASCOE leadership. The organization is only as good as its members and we all have something to contribute. I look forward to hearing from you!!

Curtis Goettsch

[curt.goettsch@gmail.com](mailto:curt.goettsch@gmail.com)

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# Midwest Area Rally Report

Submitted by Curtis Goettsch

The Midwest Area Rally was held Friday, April 19, 2013, in Wisconsin Dells, WI. IASCOE was represented well as we had seven Iowa FSA employees in attendance. Curt Houk and Curtis Goettsch attended as the voting delegation for IASCOE and Judy Dameron attended as the alternate delegate. We also brought along a few others along with us. The cargo van Mr. Houk rented took all seven of us as well as our one bag per person limit. On this trip to the Dells was C.E.D. Director District 1, Jeff Davis; P.T. Director District 6, Joni Birkhofer; C.E.D. Director District 9, Dee Ann Lehn; IASCOE associate member Kevin Keegan; IASCOE Officers Curt Houk, Curtis Goettsch and Judy Dameron.

With this group all in the same van it was sure to be a fun trip. We only got lost a few times on the way up, mostly because our driver, Mr. Houk was getting directions from at least 3, maybe 4 back seat drivers. We did make it there ok, with minimal close calls. I'd like to thank the state of Wisconsin and all of the Midwest Area for their part in making this a great Area Rally.

One of the more interesting things that were organized for this Midwest Area Rally was the VTC Panel Discussion with FSA Administrator, Juan Garcia and his staff. Anyone could ask any question they liked and they did their best to answer them.

**Below you will find the transcript of this Q&A, now some of these questions have in fact been resolved but I have included all of them.**

**Q:** RMA, they require producers to report forage by November 15 and typically crops are reported by July 15. In Wood-Portage Co, over 2565 farms currently have forage. He compared how many forage policies will need to be reported and he has only 6 that have actual forage policies that would require such a report. We must take all these crop reports in the fall and in the spring and take this many crop reports with the limited staff on hand. This policy to take these reports based on the number of actual insured policies makes no sense. Many crop reports will not be accurate when reported on by July 15. There should not be a late-filed fee for producers who do not have crop insurance.

**A: Craig Trimm:** There was an initiative to streamline the process to have producers report crops so that all agencies can utilize the crop reports. The fall crop reports are necessary for the insurance to attach for fall crops. FSA had to concede to the fall date to keep the summer crop reporting date. This change will present a challenge to the COF's. More producers will come to the COF's to report their crops and this data will be shared with RMA. Because this also affects NAP policies, it has different ramifications for different states. They will look at policy for future program requirements.

**Juan stated that they will review the current policy.**

**Q:** Il: producers have enrolled in CRP on parts of fields and then seeded down the entire field because it was easier to do at the time. In 2014, when a producer comes in to report his CRP, he will charged a late filed fee on the parts of the field that were seeded down and not in CRP. This policy will cause problems in the future.

**A:** Juan: They will look at this problem.

**Q:** What are we looking at for potential furlough days?

**A: Juan:** The Ag Sec had a congressional hearing and some of his remarks were quoted in some articles. The Sec was speaking in general about numbers of furloughs for FSA and RD. They have been working on scenarios to reduce the number of days that may be necessary. He understands that employees want to know what they are faced with. He is trying to buy a little time when looking into all the possible funding sources that could yield some extra funds that could possibly reduce the number of furloughs. He wants to be able to give good information when he makes his announcement. They are working on trying to fund from any source at this point. The 2.5% and an addition .2% with sequestration came to over \$90 million of savings that needed to be found. They cut NAIP, hiring freezes, discretionary spending and all other ways. Now they have to look at S&E for cuts. There are over 11,000 employees and they are

working on how to get the savings. They know that employees want to know and they will get the information out as soon as possible. Even though RD stated that they would not furlough, they may have to but they are also looking for other ways to save money.

**Q:** Activity Reporting System-we have been using it for 3-4 years and no data has filtered down to the field office level for staffing. What is ARS going to be used for and when will the data come back to the states and COF's?

**A:** They have been analyzing data and they should be able to get the cost information out to the states very soon, and they are looking at the data for workload, but do not have any numbers associated with ARS at this time. It is close to the point where data can be researched.

**Q:** Why do we need to break down activities within a program? Why do we need all these different categories when it is being done differently in each state? It would be much simpler to report by program.

**A:** They have looked at the categories and the level of detail that is needed. They feel that there are not that many different categories. They asked that we wait until they can really analyze the data and make decisions based on that data. There was a team that had been assembled prior to release that was comprised of COF's employees and they came up with the categories.

**Q:** Along with ARS reporting, there are categories of RMA and other agencies. Is there anything being used from this data for reimbursement? At this time, there is no real breakdown of which agencies the work is done for.

**A:** they were not aware that this came under specific agencies, and they do need to identify the agency work for reimbursement purposes. At this point, the only reimbursement for RSO spot checks is mileage. They are looking for possible codes to be used that could pinpoint specific work done. They need good data to get money from the other agencies for work done by FSA.

**Q:** When will the alternate CRP rental rates be released? There are concerns about the process of switching.

**A:** Trimm: They have completed their analysis and are going back to states for some clarifications. They should get rates out in the field in a couple of weeks. The software for 848's is in the works and they are looking at ways to make this process better.

**Q:** Furloughs, how are furloughs going to be handled? If you don't actually close an office, the public is not aware that FSA employees are being furloughed. Wouldn't it be better if the office was closed to let the public know?

**A: Juan:** Their plans have been to maintain service for our customers. Our goal is to be there for the producer. They wanted to provide flexibility for employees on when to take the furlough days. It will depend on how many days that may be needed. They are considering shutting down all offices on certain days. He knows that the COF employees want the public to know how this will impact them. They will provide guidance for the SED's and looking at possibly closing for specific days. He has been around for a long time and feels that we should provide good service. We need to control spending by some degree, but it is difficult to save money this late in the fiscal year.

**Q: Il:** The re-enrollment letters stated that they could sign up for a continuous signup and there is no such signup at this time.

**A: Trimm:** One reason for not announcing continuous signup is the lack of GIS tools that are needed. There will be a continuous signup but because the software is not ready, the signup has been delayed. There is not the automated capability to provide the signup.

**Juan:** our agency has been going through major remodeling of programs and software; it has caused difficulties when working on programs.

**Q:** When is MIDAS going live?

**A: Juan:** we are going live in 3 different stages. There has been a lot of data that has to be transferred back and forth and this has caused some delays. They will have some users to do testing, then will add to the number of testing and then open it up for those who are trained on the software. He hopes that by the middle of next week, they want to get it out.

**Q: IN:** Will there be VERA's or VISP's offered this year?

**A: Juan:** they are working on the 2014 budget and will be meeting with congressional staffers regarding such. They are asking for additional funding for 2014, the majority of additional funding will be for some IT projects that have not been able to enact, and for some of the shortfall in staffing due to the hiring freeze. It will be very difficult to get any such funding. As they go through this process and do not get the additional funding, VERA and VISP could be possible. It will depend on how much money is budgeted for 2014.

**Bruce:** There will be some time before the budget is figured out, but everything will be considered.

**Q:** When will the MILC software be opened?

**A: Trimm:** This was closed due to sequestration, along with some of the other programs. This may be delayed due to budget, but hopefully this will be opened up soon. Washington requested more specific information to be sent on crop reporting. Jake reported that this information was sent to Patricia in Washington last month.

**Q:** If a producer wants to allow his email to be used for Gov Delivery, he must sign another form; this is a waste of time. If they give us their email, they should not have to sign a separate form to allow use for this. Why could a statement not be incorporated in the form for permission to use email as such.

**A: Juan:** at this time there are over 500,000 producers signed up for Gov Delivery. If we use an email address without his agreement to use his email and miss something, it is a method of trying to protect employees and the agency. The way Gov Delivery is working, once an email is loaded, Washington transfers the information to the State offices and that is transferred to the COF. It takes a long process to change contracts and forms to incorporate that type of language, so it was easier to issue a separate form for the time being.

**Q:** Combination of Administrative functions. There was comment made on the pilot project in the SWA and he wanted clarification on the project.

**A: Juan:** At this time, they are looking at all admin functions and what is being duplicated and how it could be done smarter. They are trying to make sure that the service provided is the best that can be done. They want to ensure that people who are experts are helping. It makes sense to have someone who does a function all the time to handle a situation rather than someone who handles it rarely. They also want the Secretary to know that the agency is looking at ways to be more efficient. This will affect the STO's for administrative services. He used retirement as an example on how employees want to talk to someone with expertise in this area. The project is to get a good idea of what is out there and how it could be improved.

**Q:** CRP cost share changes, we will be doing crop reports and other things, and why does this have to be instituted at such a busy time.

**A: Juan:** MIDAS has been worked on for a long time and the timeline was set up but when the project got under way, things have not been able to be rolled out when planned. The GIS part really complicated the entire system and delayed the project. He understands that the timing is not ideal but the original plans were to implement when ready despite that it was as busy in the COF's.

**Trimm:** They were trying to migrate CRP processes and that got delayed.

**Q:** FSFL: could the additional security requirements be brought back up to \$100,000?

**A:** Washington is trying to get the regulation published to allow that change.

**Q:** Budget and staffing, some states are more frugal than others and it is not fair to states that have been diligent when compared to other states when doing across the board cuts. Many states have done right-sizing, is there any thought to looking at right-sizing states.

**Juan:** Across the board cuts-there was no choice in the last big cut, action had to be taken right away. There is a lot of discussion about doing such a cut in the future. He thanked everyone for their hard work and will get information out as available.

### **John Berge attended the Midwest Area Rally.**

#### **At the time of the rally, he was DAFO administrator.**

#### **Below you will find his comments and answers to our questions.**

**John Berge, DAFO:** They agree with the concept that no one should be punished when they have been frugal. When a state shows up spending a lot of money, they traditionally get back what they spend. Mr. Berge looked at the object classes and how the money was spent...they will not be allotting money based on past expenditures for 2014. This is a very important point. There was concern that the states would ask for more money than they currently get, but this actually did not happen.

The allotment process should be better. The way that ceilings have been done is not good. States have been shuffling staffing and trying to make it work, but the national level has not done a workload assessment this since 2003. The workload has been completely different. The ARS data has to be used in conjunction with workload, future farm bill and all other factors. There is no choice on how this needs to be done. The management council has to examine all points in the process. The only way to survive is to take care of things that can be changed when exposed.

Part of the difficulty is the struggle with budget and the other part is the uncertainty about the farm bill. Now we need to add on the uncertainty about who we are and we have not gotten through the growing pains of who we are. **Congress does not know the need because there are very few legislators are from rural areas and the public does not understand what FSA does. They do not recognize the impact we have on rural America, through programs and loans.**

The staffs in Washington and DAFO, the Administrators and others understand what is happening in the field. "Our intelligence is no match for their insanity" is a good analogy of what is happening in Washington right now.

Annual leave, there is a large amount of annual leave on the books and a lot of sick leave. He recognizes that this indicates that the employees are probably tired because they are working. **He encourages everyone to take their time off and take care of themselves.** There will be a time when the budgets will level off and we will need everyone to be ready then.

**Performance plans,** a comment was made that there is no way to get anything more than fully successful in these items. He feels that a person needs to be **evaluated on their actual performance, not some median guidelines.**



## **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR RETIREES!**

### **Following are the retirements April through June**

Taylor, Kevin D.	Ida County	04/03/2013
Bohle, Marsha S.	Sioux County	04/20/2013
Beemer, Susan J.	Taylor County	04/30/2013
Christensen, Patricia	Cedar County	05/18/2011
Hammen, Coelet	Pocahontas County	05/31/2013
Mausen, Vikki	Plymouth	06/29/2013
Steger, Cheryl	Lucas	06/29/2013
Volesky, Paula	STO	06/29/2013



# 2013 FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIR

## Submitted by Steve Abbas



Are you itching to see a draft horse pull, an apple peeling contest, a poultry show, top notch singers, a rodeo, a hypnotist, duct tape designs challenge, and many other entertaining events? Come to the Franklin County Fair in Hampton.

The 2013 Franklin County Fair will be held July 17-21. This is the 154<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fair in Hampton, home of 2013 Miss Iowa USA, Richelle Orr. Years ago this was a local county fair which featured mostly county 4-H projects and livestock shows. Probably about 35-40 years ago, the fair board made a decision to make this fair one of the best in Iowa and they have succeeded. It is now billed as one of the best county fairs in the state. The fair is free gate and free parking. The fair still has your usual 4-H exhibits and livestock but there is so much more.

Each year the fair features top entertainment at the grandstand shows. Grandstand events do have an attendance charge through a POP pass (pay one price). If someone wanted to attend every evening event, it would be extremely cheap. If you are attending only one event, you pay the same POP price. Grandstand events for this year include: Wednesday, Barnes PRCA rodeo; Thursday, Jerrod Niemann and the duo Love and Theft; Friday, rock icon Eddie Money; Saturday, country singers Marty Stuart and Joe Diffie; Sunday, figure 8 and cruiser car race.

The fair also has some FSA connections to it. One of our retired producers, Jim Jorgensen, came up with the idea of having a historical look at agriculture. Jim's brother is Marlon who is on the COC in Benton County. This idea originated "Grandpa's farm". Grandpa's farm is an actual working showcase of historical farm machinery. There are steam engines, old tractors, combines, threshers, log cutters, etc. Each year there are live demonstrations which in the past have included oat threshing, draft horse plowing, and other old-time ag events. The Sunday feature is a draft horse pull which draws draft horse teams from all over the Midwest.

The fair also features the Franklin County Historical Society. Joel Esslinger, former CED in Ida county and Franklin County native, has been an instrumental part of the historical society. The historical building on the fairgrounds is loaded with historical artifacts that is (by itself) worth a visit to the fair.

A small town was started within the fairgrounds. This is named Pleasant Hill. The fair board purchased some old buildings and moved them to create this small town. There is a church, jail, barber shop, mercantile shop, wood shop, railroad depot, bank, printing shop, and blacksmith shop. The fair days and evenings are filled with activity in this area. Volunteers will be working in the wood shop and blacksmith shop. A unique feature is the ice cream shoppe. Volunteers use old tractors and machinery to make ice cream which is then sold in the shoppe. In past years, bank robberies and gunfights have taken place. The "gang" has consisted of retired PA Linda Krukow and her family.

Some fair attendees will stay for most of the week and camp out at some of the local parks. Beeds Lake state park is just north of the fairgrounds about 2 miles. A biking trail has recently been constructed to connect Beeds Lake to Hampton and the fairgrounds. Mallory park is a beautiful county conservation park located about 5 miles south of the fairgrounds.

Whether you stay for the entire fair or just make a day of it, this is a local county fair that will be enjoyed by all ages. Their website is: [www.franklincountyfair.com](http://www.franklincountyfair.com).

## JOIN, SERVE AND SHARE Submitted by Barry TerHark



How were you informed about IASCOE? How was it described to you? We were all faced with the time in our lives that we made a choice about joining IASCOE.

The sales pitch I heard was the convention and how many people you could meet. I was also informed of the great benefits. At the time it was a discount at Sea World (which I have never gone to). Today the popular benefit is the cell phone discounts. I have heard some employees say they were told to join because IASCOE is the reason that “Program Technician’s are 7s” in regard to the pay scale. Others were told “that is what we do at this office – you join”.

As I’ve aged in the agency I’ve come to realize what IASCOE means. IASCOE does provide great benefits for our employees, ensures that we receive the same treatment as our Federal Employees, discusses program situations with our leadership, and ensures we have workload in the future to support our agency.

IASCOE is part of a bigger picture, NASCOE. NASCOE is the National Association of Farm Agency County Office Employees. It represents us, the county level employees. It represents the interests of ALL county office employees of the FSA, regardless of membership. It was originally chartered to render better service to American agriculture by having a national medium for the exchange of ideas and information, and to facilitate closer cooperation in working toward the solution of mutual problems.

The objectives are 1) to assist in every way possible to assure the successful operation of the FSA and the attainment of the agency’s objectives, 2) to cooperate with common interest groups and organizations to conserve and improve our natural resources, 3) to secure equitable salaries, working conditions, and retirement provisions for ALL county employees, and 4) to provide professionalism of our workers (found at the link ‘about NASCOE’) at [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org).

Joining IASCOE and being involved does make a difference. When employees’ voices unite, and we chant the same song, we can make a difference in our agency. NASCOE provides a battle cry to members of Congress and to leadership at Washington to ensure that the rights of the County Office Employee are met so we can provide outstanding customer service to the public that we serve – our agricultural communities.

IASCOE has nine different districts. Each district has a PT director and a CED director with an alternate for each. Awards, benefits, emblems, legislative, membership, programs, publicity and scholarship are committees within IASCOE. Each district has a representative for the benefits/legislative, awards/scholarship, publicity, and membership committee. Add in a person as the CAPWIZ coordinator, Convention registrar, and the IASCOE web manager, and we find it takes a large number of volunteers to support this organization.

Over the past several years we have watched as many of older employees have retired. These employees have provided service and volunteered for these committee positions for years. These employees sacrificed time and resources ensuring that the County Office Employee would have a voice and be represented. By becoming involved in IASCOE they have learned what IASCOE does for them.

Take some time and go to the IASCOE and NASCOE website. If you don’t know already find out what district you are in. Some may not even know it isn’t based on your District Director districts anymore. Find out who your director is.

Visit with that person and see if there are any places that you could serve. Maybe a committee has someone volunteering just because no one else wants to. We need volunteers to serve in these positions.

I first challenge you, if you have not already, to JOIN IASCOE. The cost is small and the benefit is great. The second thing I challenge you to do is volunteer your time to a committee or become a director or alternate director. Find your place to SERVE in IASCOE. You will meet some great people, understand the organization and the agency better, and do a great service for not only the producer that you serve, but also the employee that you work with. Finally, I challenge you to talk about IASCOE with a friend that works within the agency. See if they have joined IASCOE. See if they have volunteered time for IASCOE. SHARE what you know about IASCOE with others.

Remember to JOIN, SERVE, and SHARE IASCOE with your fellow employees. Our voice united is strong and together we can accomplish much.

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## **SUMMER ~ GOOD TIMES, GOOD FRIENDS & GOOD FOOD!!**

**Submitted by Karla Novotny**

We spent the weekend camping with a bunch of friends and I'd like to share a Dutch Oven recipe. (We eat very well at the camp ground!)

### Chicken and Potato Delight

8-10 boneless, skinless chicken breasts	1 cup sour cream
1/2 lb bacon	3 cups grated cheddar cheese
2 medium onions, diced	1 1/2 tsp seasoning salt
1 1/2 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced	1 1/2 tsp poultry seasoning
12-14 medium potatoes, peeled & sliced	1/2 tsp garlic salt
1 - 10 1/2 oz can cream of chicken soup	salt and pepper to taste
1 - 10 1/2 oz can cream of mushroom soup	

Heat a 12" deep Dutch oven using 18-20 briquettes bottom until hot. Cut bacon into 1 inch slices. Add to hot oven and fry until brown. Cut chicken breasts into bite size pieces. Add chicken, onions, mushrooms, and 1/2 tsp of seasoning salt to the bacon. Stir, then cover and cook until onions are translucent and chicken is tender. Add potatoes. Stir in soups, sour cream, and the remaining seasonings. Salt and pepper to taste. Cover and cook for 45-60 minutes using 8-10 coals on bottom, and 14-16 coals top heat. Stir every 10-15 minutes. When done, cover top with cheese and replace lid. Let stand until cheese is melted.

Variation: Stir in 1 lb frozen peas or broccoli florets prior to topping with cheese.

Serves: 8 - 10

This is VERY good and really easy to make!! Hope you like it!

*Tomorrow is the most important thing in life.  
Comes into us at midnight very clean.  
It's perfect when it arrives  
And it puts itself in our hands.  
It hopes we've learned something from yesterday.*

*John Wayne (1907 – 1979)*

# COUNTY OFFICE SPOTLIGHT

## MAHASKA COUNTY

### OSKALOOSA, IOWA



#### Funny Office Story

Our attached staff photo captures a funny story for our office, as well as how we have fun team building. This picture was taken at our Halloween celebration. Pictured from left to right are: Diane Nicholson, Carol Long, Deb Rurup, Wendi Muir Denham and Deanna Rood. The funny story behind this picture is the fact that the nurse (Diane) is vaccinating Little Bo Beep's (Carol's) lamb! We thought this picture would be a great advertisement for FSA's wool loan program! This is a fun memory for us 7 months later, and we still laugh about it every once in a while. Our personalities blend together well in the office as we all have witty senses of humor!

#### What makes the Mahaska County FSA Office unique?

Mahaska County knows how to both work hard and play hard! We try to make our office a fun and positive place to work regardless of the cards we are dealt. We enjoy doing potlucks with NRCS to celebrate the end of heavy workload times or program sign-ups. We also have fun celebrating various calendar events. Over the past year, we have had a fall tailgate cook-out/jersey day, Halloween party with team building games and prizes, Thanksgiving and Christmas potlucks, and a Valentine's Day waffle brunch and box decorating contest. We are looking forward to celebrating the end of General CRP Sign-up 45 with a "Cost-Share" party. The CED is still working out the details for what the "cost-share" will be!

## Total Years of Service: Over 49 Combined Years of Service

CED: Wendi Muir Denham, 5 years of service

Program Technicians:

Carol Long, 27.5 years of service

Fun Fact: Carol enjoys riding her Harley with her husband and camping. She also loves being a Grandma of two adorable boys!

Deanna Rood, 7.5 years of service

Fun Fact: Deanna enjoys turkey hunting with her husband and crocheting for various charities.

Deb Rurup, 5 years of service

Fun Fact: Deb enjoys soccer and has been refereeing for community rec and high school soccer for about 12 years.

Diane Nicholson, 4.5 years of service

Fun Fact: Diane enjoys following her daughter's high school sports, as well as the many adventures of her dogs and cats! She and her husband also raise Boer goats for show.

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### FRESH CORN SALAD

8 EARS FRESH CORN  
1 TOMATO, CHOPPED  
1 ZUCCHINI, CHOPPED  
1 CUCUMBER, PEELED AND CHOPPED

1 RED ONION, CHOPPED  
1 RED BELL PEPPER, CHOPPED  
½ CUP ITALIAN SALAD DRESSING

**Husk the corn and slice the kernels from the cob.**

**In a large bowl, mix together the corn, tomato, zucchini, cucumber, onion and red bell pepper.**

**Pour dressing over vegetables and toss to coat. Refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour**





## **JOE FARMER**

**By: Allison Vavroch**

I was going back and forth with ideas trying to come up with something for my first article when for stories sake, we'll call this gentleman Joe Farmer, came in to the office and made my day. I left work with a smile that afternoon because he was such a kind soul. Joe possessed a true love for farming and desire to care for and conserve the land leaving it better for the next person that has the opportunity to farm it.

Joe arrived early to his appointment to certify his one farm. He came in with a smile on his face and I was lucky enough to be the one to go to the counter for his sign-up and certification. We got in a lengthy conversation when I asked him if he had an email address he wanted to give us so he could receive our county newsletter and other information. He explained how he was not familiar with how to use a computer but informed me his wife had an email that had a bit of a "girly" ring to it so he didn't normally share for fear people may think it was his. He ended up going out to his truck to have his wife write it down so she could pass information on to him to read. Joe was right about the email address as he didn't quite fit the "countrygal" persona.

Farming has always been an important part of my life and as our conversation carried on, I quickly learned that he was the perfect representation of the rich history in farming. He has nurtured and cared for his land for years upon years and even though he loses some corn and soybean acres each year, he explained to me that he always has oats somewhere to help keep the soil intact because that's what he thinks is good for the land and "it's just the right thing to do." He has no kids that are interested in farming that land when his farming years are over but said his hope was that the next person to do so would have the same respect for the soil that he has had. Roots run deep in agriculture and I love coming across someone who takes so much pride in the land.

A lot can be learned and appreciated from crossing paths with people like that and hopefully you all come across a Joe Farmer to brighten your day as he did for me during this busy certification period.

**JULIA'S POEM**

**By Julia Berry**

**Granddaughter of Patsy Bence Madison County PT**

**Many lives were lost.**

**On that fateful day.**

**Our world was changed.**

**In so many ways.**

**Some families lost those they loved.**

**I was born that day of sadness.**

**While others were grieving,**

**For my family it was a day of gladness.**

**9-11 is forever in my heart.**

**On that day I'm both happy and sad.**

**For our nation I cry.**

**But for myself I am glad.**



Top: Julia on right with her Writing Teacher Stacey Peterson from Van Meter  
Bottom: Julia's Poem took first place out of all 6<sup>th</sup> Graders in the Dallas County Poetry Contest.



## SUMMER FESTIVALS

<b>Date</b>	<b>Festivals</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>Events</b>
July-27	Alexander Days	Alexander, IA	
August 2-3	Hardacre Film Festival	Tipton, IA	
August 2-3	Hoover Hometown Days	West Branch, IA	
August 2-4	Dows Corn Days	Dows, IA	
August-3	Sweet Corn Daze	Rockwell City, IA	
August 6-8	Civil War Reenactment	Mason City, IA	
August-8	Hot August Night	Jefferson, IA	Car, Truck, Motorcycle & Tractor Show
August 8-11	99th Meskwaki Indian Powwow	Meskwaki, IA	
August 9-11	Iowa-Minnesota Pirates Festival	Clear Lake, IA	
August 9-11	Hampton Summerfest	Hampton, IA	This includes a tractor ride sponsored by KLMJ radio.
August 9 & 10	The Kicken' and Chicken Fun Weekend	Rockwell, IA	
August-17	Keystone Turner BBQ Roundup	Keystone, IA	
August-24	Sheffield Sourdough days	Sheffield, IA	
September-6	Fairfield's 1st Friday Art Walk	Fairfield, IA	Honoring Art of Harvest
September 6-8	Treasures of the Mystical Past	Fairfield, IA	
September-8	Hometown Harvest Farm Crawl	Fairfield, IA	Visiting Food producing farms in SE Iowa
September 13-15	End of Summer Motorcycle Rally	Keosauqua, IA	
September-14	Concert for a Cure	Atkins, IA	Concert at Bloomsbury Farm Proceeds to benefit American Cancer Society.
September-14	Historic Bonaparte Pottery Tour	Bonaparte, IA	
September-14	Fairfield's Finest 5K	Fairfield, IA	
September-14	Popcorn Days	Hamburg, IA	
September 14-15	Bentonsport Craft & Flea Market	Bentonsport, IA	
September-15	Dell Blair Memorial Chili Cook-Off	Lake City, IA	
September 20-21	Kalona Fall Festival	Kalona, IA	
September 20-22	River Valley Horse Show Series	Farmington, IA	
September 20-22	Applejack Festival	Nebraska City, NE	Ranked as one of the Top 10 Fall Festivals in 2006
September-21	Kiwanis Kid's Day Parade	Fairfield, IA	
September-21	Trojan Dash - 2 Mi Obstacle Course	Fairfield, IA	
September-28	Applefest - 25th Anniversary	Woodbine, IA	Carshow, Tractor Pull & lots of fun activities
October-4	Fairfield's 1st Friday Art Walk	Fairfield, IA	
October 5-6	Pumpkinfest & Pumpkin Weigh-Off	Anamosa, IA	Chili Cook off, Pumpkin Contest and More
October 5-6	Collector's Paradise Flea Market	What Cheer, IA	

October 12-13	Deal's Orchard fall Festival	Jefferson, IA	Lots of fun family activities
October 12-13	Scenic Drive Festival	Van Buren Co	All the Villages in County have special events
October-26	Halloween Rendezvous	Bentonsport, IA	
October 26-27	Spooky Halloween Weekend	Farmington, IA	

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## **CAR CLEANING TIPS**

To clean upholstery in your car, use soapy water and a mild brush and vacuum up the water with a Wet-Vac.

Use Q-tips to clean the air vents and nooks in a car. You can also use makeup brushes and toothpicks to clean the small hard to reach areas.

Clean your dashboard and vinyl in the car with furniture polish and a soft cloth. Buy lint-free mechanics rags to use to dust with.

Use pet stain cleaner to remove nasty odors from your car's carpeting.

Spray room fragrance in your car after you clean it to make it smell nice.

Got a scratch on your car. Cover it with a matching crayon. Find a crayon the same color as your car and rub the crayon over the scratched place. Buff off any wax residue with a soft cloth. This will even work on keyed scratches.

Pour a bottle of club soda on your windshield to cut grease and grime. Squeegee it off.

If your wiper blades are dull, you can sharpen both sides with an emery board.

In the winter time, spray your car's door gaskets with PAM to keep them from freezing shut.

Spray PAM on your car's grill and hood before going on a trip to keep bugs and stuff from sticking to your car. You can wash it off with shampoo and some warm water.

Use furniture polish to shine your car if you don't have any wax. It won't hurt the outside of your car.

To clean hubcaps use baking soda and a wet brush. Hose off with water.

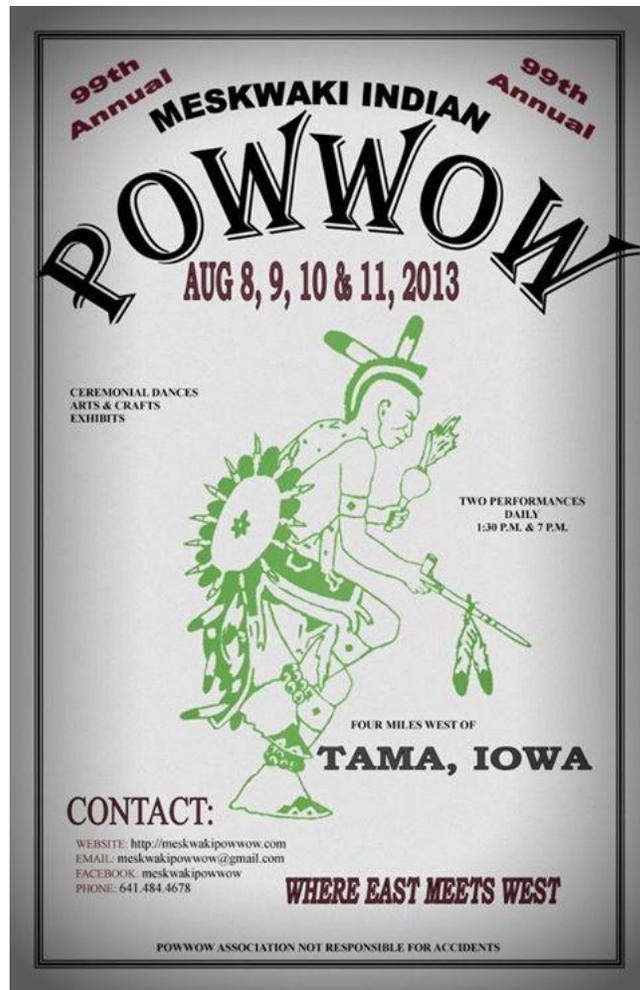
To remove bumper stickers use a hot hair dryer to reactivate the adhesive, then just pull the sticker off.

To clean the bumper a piece of balled up aluminum foil. Pour some soft drink on the bumper and rub it clean with the foil.

Refresh your old air freshener in your car by dropping some of your favorite essential oil on it. Just a few drops.

Use a Wet-One or a Baby-Wipe disposable cloth to clean the dashboard.

Use a Brillo pad to clean wheels of road grime and hose off with water.



**Connie Straw has previously attended the Powwow in Tama. These are her thoughts:**

All I can say is WOW! One thing that first excited my granddaughters was that they have hands on participation of games the tribe children played and a large tent with their history and various exhibits about their migration to where they are now located. The presentation of the colors at the start of the program is overwhelming as it is done with their tribe's anthem and explanation of their dedication to serving our country. The tribe is very proud of their service to the country and focus on honoring all war veterans present at the Powwow. The explanation of the dances and the music is moving when mixed with knowing the history of the group. The native costumes are beautiful of course from afar, but when you are right next to them and can see the fine details of the pieces and parts, it makes you want to ask lots and lots of questions and learn more and more about their heritage. It makes a person aware of their constant effort to keep their heritage alive, their pride in this heritage, and our need to respect that and learn more about "what makes them tick". This is something everyone should do at least once in their life, if the program doesn't lure you in, then the handcrafted jewelry or the Indian tacos or fry bread will! All in all, a great day spent learning more about one of our groups that makes up our diverse culture in Iowa....

For more information: <http://meskwakipowwow.com/>

## **GUESS THE CAPTION**



**SEND YOUR BEST GUESS  
OR YOUR SECOND BEST GUESS**

**TO: [k\\_koth@hotmail.com](mailto:k_koth@hotmail.com)**

**A PANEL OF MOSTLY UNBIASED JUDGES  
WILL SELECT THE WINNING ENTRY**

**THE WINNING ENTRY  
WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE  
OCTOBER ISSUE**

**1<sup>ST</sup> PRIZE: SEAT BEHIND  
THE ZEBRA (kidding)**