

July 2017



IASCOE NEWSLETTER

2017/2018 IASCOE OFFICERS

President

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Secretary

Wendi Denham
CED Mahaska County

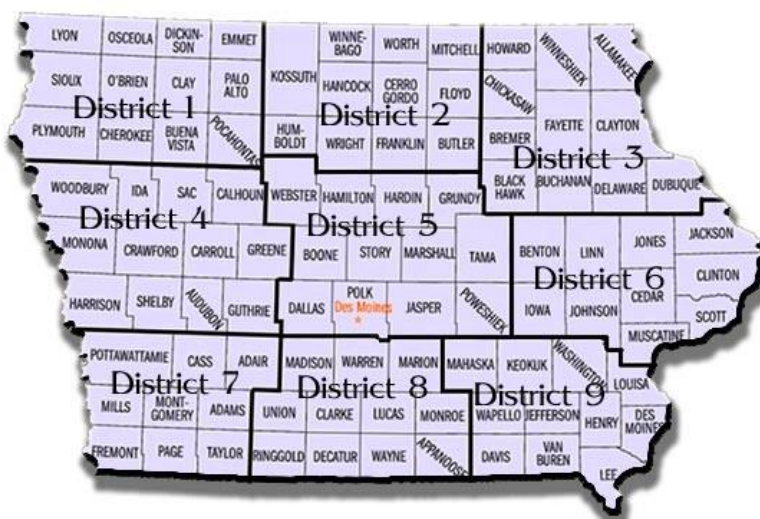


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2017 - 2018

IASCOE DIRECTORS & ALTERNATE DIRECTORS

District Number	Program Assistant/ County	County Executive Director/ County
1	Director Karen LaCour, Dickinson Alternate Samantha Erie, Buena Vista	Jeff Davis, Plymouth Larry Lago, Dickinson
2	Director Cindy Pistek, Hancock Alternate Danielle Sidles, Kossuth	Angie Christian, Kossuth Gary Yoch, Humboldt
3	Director Candace Fette, Clayton Alternate Karla Langreck, Fayette	Jesse Wegner, Fayette Andrea Carroll, Winneshiek
4	Director Cathleen "Skip" Simons, Carroll Alternate Donita Kenkel, Shelby	Steve Luke, Shelby Pat Warmbier, Harrison
5	Director Karla Novotny, Tama Alternate Kitty Benda, Marshall	Katie Kramer, Jasper
6	Director Angie Reynolds, Muscatine Alternate Jessica Yuska, Scott	Matt Berg, Johnson Jennifer Ness, Iowa
7	Director Jennifer Comer, Page Alternate Nancy Gress, E Pottawattamie	Cindy Bebout, Fremont/Mills Chris Irvin, Page
8	Director Ronda Harrison, Lucas Alternate Stephanie Hanson, Monroe/Appanoose	Kathy Henely, Wayne Jayne Ruble, Warren
9	Director Judy Dameron, Louisa Alternate Diane Nicholson, Mahaska	Wendi Denham, Mahaska Elizabeth Benjamin, Davis



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

BENEFITS & LEGISLATIVE CHAIR

STEVE LUKE & JESSIE WEGNER, Co-Chairs

<i>District</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>County</i>
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
2	David Stromer	Hancock
3	Ron Pethoud	Chickasaw
4	Pat Warmbier	Harrison
5	Teresa Simonton	Poweshiek
6	Renee Schultz	Cedar
7	Chris Irvin	Page
8	Kelly Cain	Madison
9	Vacant	

AWARDS CHAIR – KAREN LaCOUR

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR – CINDY BEBOUT/KATHY HENELY

1	Larry Lago	Dickinson
2	Tammy Pruin	Wright
3	Candace Fette	Clayton
4	Donita Kenkel	Shelby
5	Kathy Baker	Marshall
6	Vacant	
7	Lynette Gruchow	East/West Pottawattamie
8	Stephanie Hanson	Monroe-Appanoose
9	Lanie Benjamin	Davis

PUBLICITY CHAIR – Tammy Eibey

1	Paul Berte	Pocahontas
2	Megan Ruby-Friedow	Kossuth
3	Luke Hawkins	Black Hawk
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Karla Novotny	Tama
6	Allison Vavroch	Benton
7	Jamie Newbury	Cass
8	Jayne Ruble	Warren
9	Deb Rurup	Mahaska

COMMITTEE MEMBERS cont'd

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – JONI BIRKHOFFER

1	Lisa Forburger	Palo Alto
2	Rosalie Carlson	Worth
3	Shawna Helle	Clayton
4	Cathleen "Skip" Simons	Carroll
5	Katie Kramer	Jasper
6	Joni Birkhofer	Cedar
7	Susan Lange	Cass
8	Marla Morlan	Monroe-Appanoose
9	Deanna Rood	Marion

EMBLEMS CHAIR – Kitty Benda, Marshall and Kathy Baker, Marshall

PROGRAMS CHAIR –Angie Christian, Kossuth

NAFEC CHAIR – Mary Roberts, Calhoun

CONVENTION REGISTRATION - Devalyn Wilson, Cedar

IASCOE WEB MANAGER – Brian Beach, Sac

CONVENTION DOOR PRIZES/SILENT AUCTION – Candace Fette, Clayton
Katie Kramer, Jasper





A Message from our Acting State Executive Director Robert Wegand

Hello Iowa FSA and welcome to summer! I hope that everyone has an opportunity to get away from the office and to enjoy some of the summertime festivities in Iowa this year. What a six months it has been in FSA – a new President was elected and along with that is a new administration and along with that is new leadership at the USDA and FSA and along with that are some changes including work on a new farm bill.

Change is all around us and even though it may make us feel uncomfortable at times, change is inevitable and generally for the good. I was once told if you are not changing, you are probably being left behind. Change is our only constant. One of the changes is FSA's acting Administrator is Iowa's own Chris Beyerhelm, another change is Iowa's acting SED is Bob Wegand (me) – although both temporarily.

I was born on a family farm in very northern Butler County, just south of the town of Greene. We raised the typical corn, soybeans, had cows and fed out cattle; we also had an agribusiness (fuels/oil) on the side. My first memory of the USDA was ASCS when I was quite young and riding on an Old Super M Farmall tractor and asking my dad what those acres were that did not look like corn, soybeans, or hay and his response was “Kennedy Acres”, a predecessor to our programs of today.

No, I have not been with FSA since the Kennedy days but I have been around for a while, I started in the COT program in 1981 and began as a CED in Fayette County for a few years before becoming the CED in Grundy County. I was a CED for nearly 25 years, a DD for nearly 9 years, and the AO before becoming the Acting SED. So yes indeed, I have seen a lot of change in FSA and yes, change is good even though it causes fear and apprehension in many of us. We have been through change before, we will go through it again and we will survive and come out of it ready for the next change life throws our way.

I have mentioned before and I think it warrants repeating – it is not a bad time to work for Iowa FSA. Last year in Iowa we had an unprecedented number of hiring's to fill vacated spots, this by no means made us whole everywhere but in many places it has helped insulate us a little from the current hiring freeze.

In the reorganization plan for USDA/FSA/NRCS/RMA Secretary Perdue has reiterated that he does not foresee RIF's (reduction in force). If there is a budget reduction for Fiscal Year 2018 (which is a different issue the reorganization) and we fully expect one, I do not expect RIF's for Iowa FSA as we are on pace with retirements to more than meet through attrition any reductions rumors that are flying around.

This next one is something many might not like to hear, especially when certain offices are severely short staffed and you are in the middle of the busiest counter traffic time of the year with crop reporting. All of these negative factors could have come at a much worse time; we are not in the middle of a disaster program, we are not trying to administer a new farm program (things are set and running quite smoothly); we are not having a general CRP signup at this time. People, it may not be great for your particular situation and for you I truly feel your pain, but it could be much worse for Iowa FSA as a whole.

Last and not least is that discussions are underway for a New Farm Bill – our current Ag Economy is not strong which makes it less likely that Congress will pull too much funding from agriculture and when a new farm bill needs to be implemented FSA will be called upon to administer it. That is job security for all of us.

Iowa FSA employees have repeatedly proven to be top-notch great employees; the work ethic and proven record of accomplishment are the best in government. The service you provide to your local farmers and communities is unsurpassed. Be proud of yourself and of your fellow employes, take a moment to reflect on all the good that you do, all that you provide to those around you and those that depend on your hard work. Enjoy; you have done a good job; you have a good job; and I truly believe you will continue to have a job with FSA as long as you want in the near future.

Sincerely,

Bob.



IASCOE President
Jennifer Comer

Greetings!

I am not going to lie – I was very late in getting my article in for this newsletter! Maybe it was my way of trying to think of something to inspire us as we are in the thick of one of our busiest times in the office. I am a 10 year ‘veteran’ of FSA and even I can remember “down time”, something that is few and far between now days. But alas, we have jobs and busy times makes the days go fast. So here is my shot at inspiration....

As I was driving to work this morning I was going through the rest of the week and weekend and what all we have on our schedules. It reminded me how close we are to the 4th of July. The 4th of July, *Independence Day*, a day we celebrate the freedoms, conveniences, and the benefits our country has to offer. Show of hands, how many of you have wished *one time* in the last couple of months that you could do something different every day because this job is just too stressful? You are not alone. However, what keeps you here? Most likely, the freedoms and benefits keep us coming back every day. That, and our awesome producers and co-workers! The last few months SharePoint has been inundated with retirement announcements. Many of these retirees have YEARS of experience and knowledge under their belts, experience and knowledge that will take a long time to replace. As this experience and knowledge leaves our agency, has anyone stopped to ask these folks “*why they stayed so long*”? I would bet most would say they appreciated the **freedom** of the work schedule, the **convenience** of working close to home, and the **benefits** this agency offers its employees. Do you know who works hard to protect the freedoms, conveniences, and benefits of FSA? NASCOE!

As we enter some uncertain times, with budget proposals and farm bill preparations please do not forget how important your membership in NASCOE is. We work hard each day to get you the most current information and calm your concerns. Remember, the news media usually knows about our programs well before we do, the same is true for information pertaining to us as employees. It may seem like there is a delay in getting information out to our members. Rest assured, the delay is not to hide anything but to validate and double check the information we are sending out. For the most current information delivered right to your inbox, visit the NASCOE website (www.nascoe.org), click FOLLOW (on the right and side) and enter your personal email. This will link you with the most current NASCOE news. I have mentioned this before and will remind you again, please do not hesitate to give me a call or email me any concerns you may have, I may not have an on the spot answer for you but will do my very best to get you the answer or to the right person.

In closing, as you enjoy your 4th of July and the rest of your summer activities please remember, the work will be there when you get back. Take some time to be thankful for the **freedom** to take a vacation, the **convenience** of teamwork, and the **benefit** of a holiday to celebrate. Best of luck to all the 4-Hers, FFA members, and anyone else exhibiting at County Fairs and State Fairs, remember to share your highlights on SharePoint, it’s fun to follow the success of our FSA families.

Jennifer Comer
IASCOE President





IASCOE Vice-President
Jesse Wegner

Greetings from the Northeast reaches of the state! This year's IASCOE Convention was a great opportunity to meet up with colleges, hear from NASCOE leadership, receive benefit training and exchange lighthearted stories from the front lines. It continues to amaze me at how many retirees stop by our annual convention each year just to say "Hi"! It serves as a testament at how deep our IASCOE roots go. At this year's convention, I was honored to be nominated to serve on the IASCOE board and I look forward in hearing from all membership in the year to come.

To share a little about myself, I hale from District 3, where I am the County Executive Director in Fayette County for going on eight years. There never seems to be a dull moment up here but that is ok considering the great group of employees and producers I am blessed to serve.

My wife Jessica, two daughters Ava (5.5 years old) and Ella (almost 2 years old) also like to keep me on my toes, but I would not have it any other way. When Jessica is not scheduling all our family events and keeping us on the straight and narrow, she is a Community Health Nurse for the local hospital. We live in the heart of all the action in West Union but also have a farm close to the town of Fayette. Outside of FSA, life is busy with all the activities that young children take an interest in and if there is free time, I try to take advantage of the great NE Iowa outdoors.

Like many of you, I have been an IASCOE member since my first day as an FSA employee and I believe whole-heartedly in the cause that this organization represents. I urge you to stay active in IASCOE activities and/or volunteer for something new. Whether you are a brand new employee, have a long career ahead of you, and are in need of an organization to voice your concerns about upward mobility, technology, or policy issues that apply to your day-to-day job duties. Or you are an employee who has already dedicated a career and now wants to move on to that next stage in life and needs an organization to voice your concerns about the benefits that you've earned. Or maybe you fall somewhere in the middle. No matter what stage in your career you might be, NASCOE is there for you!

Contact your district representatives, anyone on the IASCOE board, or me to find a way you can contribute to the cause. I look forward to talking to all of you.

-Jesse

IASCOE Vice-President





IASCOE Treasurer
Judy Dameron

Hello from Southeast Iowa! At this year's convention, I elected again to serve as your Treasurer. It is that time of year again. MEMBERSHIP drive. I hope that by now, all county offices have received their Membership Transmittals. Please get those filled out and returned to your district committee person as soon as possible so they can get them returned to Joni and myself. The sooner they are returned, the easier it makes my job to reconcile the dues withholding reports I receive from NFC.

I want to encourage members to visit with nonmembers to spread the word about what NASCOE is and what it has accomplished over the years. We are including a list of these accomplishments in the newsletter.

The 2017 National Convention is going to be held in St Charles, Missouri on August 2-5. So, if you caught the convention bug last year, this is an opportunity to attend another convention close to home. IASCOE will be sending two delegates and an alternate and I am sure many others from Iowa will be attending also.

If you ever have any questions, concerns or comments please reach out to any of your officers or board members. We are here for you.

Have a great summer!!

Judy L Dameron
IASCOE Treasurer



IASCOE Secretary
Wendi Denham

My name is Wendi Denham, CED in Mahaska County. I was elected to represent IASCOE District 9 as a Director, and I serve as the Secretary on the board. While this is my first year serving on the board, I really enjoyed helping with the 2016 NASCOE Convention by stepping up into the Decorations Committee Chair role. That duty entailed a lot of hard work, but the friendships and memories I gained from the experience made it well worth my time and effort!

Outside of work and IASCOE, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. My husband and I recently welcomed our first child, a baby boy, Ewan, in December of 2016. He is our pride and joy, and we love sharing in the small wonders of his world—walks, playing with toys, and watching cartoons! I also love to travel and have had the opportunity to visit several countries around the world. My favorite destination, though, is Scotland. I have cousins who live there as my father immigrated to the U.S. from Scotland when he was a child. As a nod to my heritage, I am part of a Scottish Highland Dance group. We perform at various events around the Des Moines area, and to answer a couple of questions that I frequently get pertaining to that—yes, we wear kilts, and yes, we dance to bagpipe music!

I am excited to be part of this very important and hardworking group! I enjoyed working with the IASCOE Board and other volunteers for the NASCOE Convention and wanted to continue building life lasting friendships. I also wanted to be a voice for District 9, bringing concerns and ideas of the district to a vital organization where they will be heard and thoughtfully considered. I am proud to be serving and look forward to all the future friendships and memories yet to be made!

Wendi A. Muir Denham

2017 IASCOE Scholarship Recipients

For 2017, three \$400 IASCOE Scholarships were awarded. Grace Rodman received a “Traditional” Scholarship. Tiffany Cassmann and Jake Grandgeorge each received “Continuing Education” Scholarships.

Grace Rodman is the daughter of Bill and Sheri Rodman (Clayton County Program Technician) of Elkader, Iowa. Grace is a senior at Central Community School in Elkader. Grace has been active in cross-country, track, softball, band, basketball manager, 4-H, fall plays and spring musicals. She served on the Student Council; has served as class Secretary and has been the class Vice President for the last three years. Grace received the Upper Iowa Conference Honorable Mention and the E. Wayne Cooley “You Can” Award while in softball her junior year. Grace’s plans for the future are to attend Luther College in Decorah and major in History. Her goal is to work in museums and possibly become a Curator.



Tiffany Cassmann is the daughter of Dennis and Merlette Cassmann (Butler County Program Technician) of Bristow, IA. Tiffany, a junior at Luther College in Decorah, is majoring in biology and minoring in Spanish. Tiffany plans to pursue a career in research in microbiology or biochemistry. This summer she plans to do research for the microbiology department at the University of Iowa. At Luther, she is actively involved in pep band, Wind and Percussion Ensemble, Animal Allies, and volunteers at the Decorah Community Free Clinic.

Jake Grandgeorge is the son of Bob and Camilla Grandgeorge (Hamilton County Program Technician) of Woolstock, Iowa. Jake is currently attending Iowa Central Community College and is on the golf team. Jake will be transferring to Iowa State this fall to major in Agriculture Studies. Growing up, Jake was active in 4-H and FFA. Jake was also on the Eagle Grove Eagles basketball, baseball, and golf team. He excelled in golf winning 14 golf meets, two tournaments, and shot a 74 to win the regional tournament his senior year.



IASCOE scholarships are only be awarded one time in each scholarship category.

The Scholarship committee would like to thank all scholarship applicants.



IASCOE Convention 2017

Jennifer Comer welcomed everyone to the convention at 10:15am. Jennifer introduced the following special guests:

- Wes Daniels – NASCOE President (CED from South Carolina)
- Dennis Ray – NASCOE Vice-President (CED from Missouri)
- Chris Hare – MWA Executive (CED from Indiana)
- Curt Houk – NASCOE Treasurer (CED from Iowa)
- Teresa Holmquist – MWA Publicity (PT from Minnesota)
- Mary Roberts – MWA NAFEC (CED from Iowa)
- Bob Braden – Iowa NAFEC representative

Bob Wegand, Acting Iowa SED, addressed the convention. Bob welcomed us all and reminded us of the association's importance. The comradery of the employees is good for us all. Since we are unable to have face-to-face meetings like we had in the past, this is our opportunity to enjoy sharing our experiences at work with fellow employees. We are all concerned about how the new administration might affect our jobs and the ability to serve our producers. Bob said that Congressman Grassley once told him; Congress mandates these programs, but we must have the money to administer them. Congressman Grassley also said that he wanted to hear from the producers in regards to farm program issues, NAFEC is our producer representative who communicates with our Congressional leaders.

Legislative and Benefits Committee Meeting

Steve Luke reported that some cell phone providers still provide discounts to members of IASCOE. The government employee discount on cell phones does not continue after retirement. Getting the cell phone discount has been a difficult process at times; NASCOE/IASCOE has been working to get it easier to get the benefit.

Working Advantage is the way that members can get discounts on concert tickets; purchase gift cards, amusement park admissions etc. You must be a member of NASCOE/IASCOE in order to use the benefit. Members need a passcode to access Working Advantage.

Wes Daniels – NASCOE President's Legislative Update

Now, we are all concerned about how this proposed 21% budget cut might affect our jobs and us. We are concerned if there will be cuts in staff, where will these budget cuts be? Wes reminded us that in 2015 Obama's proposed budget cut \$60 million out of staff and expenses. The final budget actually gave us an increase in funding. This difference between a proposed budget and the final budget is just a reminder that we are only in the beginning stages of budget decisions. Hunter Moorehead, our legislative consultant, believes Congress understands that we have a job to do-administer the programs of the Farm Bill.

During the confirmation hearings of the proposed Secretary of Agriculture, we heard that he does not agree with the entire proposed budget. This tells us that there will be discussion during the budget process.

An Executive Order gives the Under-Secretary the ability to reduce duplicate services. We do not know what duplicate services would be targeted.

Chris Hare – MWA Executive's report on NASCOE activities

Chris started with FSA as a PT, took COT training and is now the CED for 3 physical counties in a shared management position in Indiana. As MWA Executive, Chris serves 2000 county office members. Chris pointed out to us that Wes Daniels and Dennis Ray spend 120 hours/week working for the membership. The time commitment to the membership is phenomenal and has provided us with many benefits.

Currently, we have 8 task forces working for the membership. We have 40-50 members on these task forces working for you in an unpaid status. Task forces are working on PT Reclassification, shared management (Chris Hare, chairperson) and ACRSI (Curt Houk, chairperson).

One of Chris' goals was to get the MWA fired up and step up to a challenge, as expected we met and exceeded!

- Negotiation Items – 32 are going to Management and over 50% are from the MWA
- Scholarships applications in the MWA have increased from 11 in 2016 to 35 in 2017

- Chris asked Tina Young to take over as the MWA Emblems Chair, she took on the job
- In the MWA, of 593 county offices only 34 have no NASCOE representation. In Iowa, only one county has no members
- We are working to keep the membership data current
- A spreadsheet of Congressional leaders has been created with a list of contacts for each on
- Iowa has a great web site and Teresa Holmquist has taken the challenge of getting a MWA Web site in place. She is going to add 8 tabs to the site so that MWA states can purchase a page on the site for their state articles and information. If a state does not wish to purchase space, their tab will just have basic information such as officers etc. The states will each choose how they wish to participate. The overall cost of the project will be divided equally among the states wishing to have a full page on the site.

Chris reminded us to be very careful what you “like” or post on social media. Definitely, do not be posting during office hours. We do not want anyone to be violating the Hatch Act, we are government employees and subject to the Hatch Act restrictions.

Remember to record your daily activities on WebTA daily and accurately. This record of work may affect our personnel numbers.

Mary Roberts – MWA NAFEC

Seven years ago was Mary’s first IASCOE Convention and she has since taken the challenge; it is Mary’s third year as the MWA NAFEC (National Association of Farmer Elected Committee) representative. NAFEC was created in 1965 to ensure COC stability for the farmers and for the employees. The COC system has control of you being where you are today in the office. A GS employee can be sent wherever and whenever management chooses, that is not the case with a COC employee. NAFEC’s focus is the COC system and program delivery. NAFEC can go to bat for the CO employees and farmers in ways we cannot. They can fight for the value of us being in the county office to serve the producer. NAFEC has a legislative consultant in DC that keeps a focus on what is happening that could affect our mission to serve the farmers.

The MWA has around 308 members (both COC and associates). Mary’s challenge to us, become a member and promote membership to your COC members. Associate dues are \$20 per year and COC dues (regular members) are \$40 per year. Anyone can be an associate member, including farmers. Members of NAFEC do have some benefits offered to them such as insurance; JM Marketing offers the benefits for NAFEC.

Bob Braden – IOWA NAFEC Director

Bob is a passionate man when it comes to FSA and the County Office Committee system. He reminded us that working at FSA is not just a “job” it is a career. Bob describes Craig Turner, the NAFEC president, as the NAFEC Energizer bunny. We are very fortunate to have such a dynamic individual at the helm. Bob gave us a new acronym, GRATITUDE. Naturally, he had an amusing line for each letter, but his message was to use GRATITUDE to make your day. We work with great people and it makes for a great day!

Angie Christian – IASCOE Programs Chair

How many frustrations do we have in our job every day? Software issues, missing reports that would be helpful, MIDAS issues-the list goes on and on. We all have the ability to send our ideas to make this better for us and to improve our service to the producers. It is “Program Submissions”! Whenever you come up with an idea, take a minute and submit it through the NASCOE web site. The process is simple; state the problem and what you believe might be a solution. You can do this quickly, do it at work when your idea is fresh in your mind. If you have an idea and you don’t want to submit it, she offered to assist you or would even submit it for you. Angie offered a challenge; 100 submissions from the MWA. We already have over 50 from the MWA, so we are half way there. NASCOE sends these items to management for discussion. If DC does not know something needs fixing they certainly can’t fix it!

Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc.

Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc. is registered with the Federal Government as a Verified Vendor on the US Registry, and licensed in all 50 states. Their goal is to help you insure your retirement by helping you to guarantee lifetime income. Federal employees have three buckets for retirement income; Federal Employment Retirement System (FERS), Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Social Security (SS). Each of us should have our own bucket of money to take into retirement and Dillard's can help you put it all together for financial security at retirement. During our FSA career, there are 4 stages of building our retirement income:

- Age 18-40 is the growth and building stage
- Age 40-50 is when we are building our nest egg
- Age 50-60 is when we are preparing for retirement
- Age 60-80 are our retirement years

Some of the topics discussed were Accidental Death policies, annuities (single and survivor), FEGLI (gets very costly as your age increases), life insurance (Term, Universal and Whole Life), TSP options and the FERS Supplement (if you retire between the ages of 56-62).

Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc. is able to help you at each stage of your retirement planning. Visit their web-site www.dillardfinancialsolutionsinc.com to educate yourself about your Federal Retirement Benefits. Request an analysis to assist you in "insuring your retirement".

Distinguished Service Award

Mary Roberts presented the Distinguished Service Award for service to FSA to Steve Abbas. Mary submitted the nomination in recognition for all of Steve's contributions to FSA, especially his involvement with COT training. Congratulations Steve on receiving not only the Iowa DSA, but the MWA DSA for Service to FSA as well!

SED Recognition

Mr. John Whitaker, former SED, has been a great supporter of IASCOE. He was more than happy to let the directors meet at the STO for their meetings. He allowed us to keep members informed about IASCOE/NASCOE happenings with short messages on share-point. One of his most important show of support was in organizing it so that COC members from Iowa and neighboring states could attend COC training at the NASCOE Convention in Cedar Rapids last summer. How awesome it was for the IASCOE delegation to look at all of the COC members at our general session; what a tribute to our joint efforts to serve the producers throughout the country. Jennifer Comer was truly pleased to present John with a plaque thanking him for his generous support for IASCOE/NASCOE.

IASCOE General: Q & A's

1. Is IASCOE going to organize any type of fund to go toward the fire victims in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas? I was wondering if the fires affected any of our FSA employees – if any of them lost crops, buildings, livestock, or their homes.

Question was not addressed

Admin:

1. How far out would the STO suggest employees contact the State Office for retirement planning (notifying of retirement date)?
You may contact Tammy at any time to inquire about retirement. You should contact the STO at least 3 months prior to your anticipated retirement date. Then you can select your options and sign the forms.

2. What can employees expect to provide the STO? Is there a STO checklist or employee checklist?
 - a. Retirement information on SharePoint appears to have some information outdated. For instance, posted retirement videos are now archived. One of the other links says, "The page you requested could not be found".

The share-point page will be moving to another page; when you ask the STO about retirement, they will send you the forms. At the end of April or first part of May there will be some retirement benefits training available. They are looking at multiple trainings since so many people may be interested. There was a question asked about employees who are divorced. OPM will take divorce decrees at any time; it is advisable to send it to OPM as soon as you have a copy.

3. What are some positive and negative retirement observations?
Nothing was noted other than -positive is not going to work and negative is your paycheck is not the same!
4. We receive a file with the folders we are to create each year for Admin. Half if not more of those folders remain empty year after year, is it cost effective to create those folders each year?
 - a. What can be done to reduce the waste for this?
32-AS has the information in regards to file requirements. A suggestion was made that if you do not need certain files, just move those folders forward to the next FY so that you are not creating a new file each year.
5. Are there any plans by the national office to make WebTA easier to use? More specifically, organizing the Programs/Activities similar to the old WebTA system.
Yes, they understand that this is a concern. The priority right now is to work through the general problems the WebTA system is experiencing.
6. Will the updated workload numbers be looked at and possibly be used for directed re-assignments?
Keep in mind that the numbers that the task force has been working on is a "staffing guide", not workload. If the staffing guide says one office is over and another is under it does not mean that each office is not working at their maximum level. Input from the CED/DD/STO will come into play on the reality of staffing.
 - a. Is there an estimated time for the new workload study to be released to the state?
At this time, we do not know our staffing numbers and we have a freeze on hiring. The staffing guide will not be released until we have our staffing numbers and we have something more concrete to work with.
7. Will there be additional district/statewide face-to-face trainings this year?
Yes, Kevin indicated we would be having training on Payment Limitation. Budget issues will determine if it is face-to-face or via skype meeting.
8. Has the National Office come up with any guidance on how they are going to implement Phased Retirement?
There will be no Phased Retirement.
 - a. If Phased Retirement is not going to be implemented, would there ever be a permanent part-time position approved for those employees wishing to gradually ease into retirement?
Re-employed annuitants are a possibility. This would help new people with the transition into their jobs. Indiana has one of these on board and Iowa will look into it. Attendees asked the question of Directed/Voluntary re-assignments. The STO responded that a directed/voluntary re-assignment couldn't be done unless there is a workload analysis completed. Iowa has that completed, IF we get to that point.

9. Bridges questions:

- a. Receipt for Services thru Bridges is here to stay. We are all aware of that. Unfortunately, it is time consuming now that everything must be entered and especially during peak workload. Has there been any consideration to doing some type of a bulk entry. For example, certified 10 producers all doing certification, all asked and chose to forego a receipt for service. Could we upload a bulk certification entry for all 10 producers at the same time? Also, if we had 10 that did want a receipt, is there some type of way we could load certification once and include that on all 10 that came in and did it?

The question of “bulk entries”; at this time, no. Jon Awtry reminded us that BTO would be required. BTO will be the hub for information in agriculture; it is one more reason for FSA to remain viable. We do have BTO district trainers.

- b. In addition, for fact sheets or other information emailed to producers thru Bridges, those need to be attached using “Chatter Feed” within the Customer Interaction. At some point in time, will we be required to use Bridges to email all forms (eligibility, contracts, etc.) instead of using our regular email? **An example of utilizing BTO for getting information out would be to send FSFL packets, appendixes etc. to producers.**

10. Where is the guidance on how to do mass mailings from the county office? **These questions were not addressed**

- a. When and what can we send?
- b. How do we print producer labels?
- c. Are there postcards for the laser printers (this question was asked several years ago and we are still waiting for an answer)?

11. How are new employees trained in using WebTA? Is there a guide for new employees to follow to know to enter their times in & out each day, request leave prior to using, request credit/comp prior to earning, minute to minute accounting (for example: arriving at 8:07 and leaving at 4:30 is not minute to minute), absences must be rounded in 15 minute increments but work time is not rounded? **Question was not addressed**

12. Can you give us the most current budget information you have from the National Office and any Hiring Freeze information?

Remember that the President’s budget is ONLY a proposal. Congress makes the decisions in regards to the final budget. We are a long way from knowing anything concrete in regards to budget.

Conservation: **See the separate sheet on the answers to conservation**

1. How do we get the CRP cost share form 848 to be as simple to read, understand and complete as the cost share forms are for the new OCCSP program?
 - a. Are there any details on revising the CSS software and/or forms
2. Will the CRP Component Codes Form be updated with new/different C/S rates this year?
 - a. If so, when will it be released to the county office?
3. Can TERRA be tweaked to add additional years’ of past imagery?
4. Has there been any more discussion on October 1 starts dates and if the producer is going to have to have the crop off or we can defer the start date to Nov/Dec 1?
5. There is great disparity between what Iowa and Missouri pay for Mid-contract management, which is a flat \$11/acre. If we were looking to reduce our budget, would Iowa consider paying a similar flat rate fee for MCM for future contracts?
 - a. Also, mowing is considered an approved mid-contract management practice in Missouri. This option could also be a cost-savings measure and preferable option for many producers.
6. What are the chances of acquiring any additional acres for SAFE or HELI?

Answers to the Conservation Questions:

7. How do we get the CRP cost share 848 form to be as simple to read, understand and complete as the cost share forms are for the new OCCSP program? **We have said for a while now, that a change is coming and it is. What we can't say for sure is how long it will be. The taskforce has completed their work, forms and how they wish the software to operate is done. As soon as there is funding to build the software it will be contracted. Until then we have CSS.**
 - a. Are there any details on revising the CSS software and/or forms? **Above**
8. Is the CRP Component Codes Form going to be updated with new/different C/S rates this year? **There could be some changes, full across the board updates of all CCF, no there are no plans to do this.**
 - a. If so, when will it be released to the county office? **Frist or Second week on April.**
9. Can TERRA be tweaked to add additional years' of past imagery? **Yes, Control Panel, under the required tab, remove the current imagery and use the add button to add new imagery.**
10. Has there been any more discussion on October 1 starts dates and if the producer is going to have to have the crop off or we can defer the start date to Nov/Dec 1?

No, there is only one approved start date for SU50 Option 1 contracts and that is 10/01/2017.

11. There is great disparity between what Iowa and Missouri pay for Mid-contract management, which is a flat \$11/acre. If we are looking to reduce our budget, would Iowa consider paying a similar flat rate fee for MCM for future contracts? **Cost share should represent 50% of the cost to perform the activity, per 2-CRP Part 15 and Farm Bill 7CFR part 1410.41. By setting a rate that does not reflect the cost needed to perform the activity, FSA would be implementing an Arbitrary Hold-down, this is against policy in 2-CRP paragraph 494D and 7 CFR part 1410.**
 - a. Also, mowing is considered an approved mid-contract management practice in Missouri.
At this time it is not an approved practice for any state according to Notice CRP-805 paragraph 2D, issued May 26, 2016.
12. What are the chances of acquiring any additional acres for SAFE or HELI?
Iowa's Acting SED requested an additional 50,000 of SAFE GG on February 14, 2017.
On March 10, 2017 DAFP responded with this email message:
Currently there are approximately 93,000 acres remaining in the CRP SAFE national reserve. However, 12 States, including Iowa, are already showing offers loaded into COLS that exceed their current CRP SAFE allocations by a collective 160,000 acres.

Of even greater concern than managing CRP SAFE acres within Continuous CRP acreage allocations, is maintaining total CRP enrollment below the 24 million acre cap mandated by Congress.

So at this time CEPD is holding all requests for additional CRP SAFE acreage. In the interim more requests for additional CRP SAFE as well as other Continuous CRP acres are sure to come in to CEPD but we should have a better handle overall on how many acres remain available under the 24 million acre CRP enrollment cap to facilitate a more complete response to State requests for additional acres.

13. Due to the exorbitant amount of time that FSA employees are expending to complete these documents (848B) has there been anything that has changed the requirement to manually complete these documents?
At this time, we are not aware of any change to the requirement to manually complete the entries on these documents (form FSA-848 B).
14. We were told not to use the generated Letter in CSS during training. It is formatted with all the information of the Cost share FSA 848 form. Has policy changed now or the letter changed so that we do not have to create and fill out our own letters each time?

The “approval letter” that is found in CSS does not provide a “practice expiration date”. That is the reason for not using the CSS generated letter, however if the CO can add the practice expiration date to the letter adding a label with the expiration date listed. In that case, there is no need to send a separate letter. If CO feels it’s just as easy to print their own letter they can continue to do so.

MIDAS:

1. Regarding form AD-2047, Question 4B – Does the customer want to receive e-mails via GovDelivery:
 - a. Where do we flag this answer in MIDAS? The form references 1-CM which in turn only shows SCIMS screenshots.

Flag the producer to receive mail from FSA, add their e-mail and check GovDelivery

GovDelivery:

1. How do customers enroll in GovDelivery? Iowa Notice Info-4 has a link for subscribing – does the customer use this link to subscribe or do they give us their email and we subscribe for them? Would we need to know their interests?
See MIDAS question above. The producer who does not want to receive notification via GovDelivery must “unsubscribe” at the bottom of a GovDelivery they have received. Just taking the email out of business partner doesn’t eliminate GovDelivery to the producer.

ARCPLC:

1. The NASS yields were posted in Memo 17-03, what are your thoughts in comparison to what could be the 2016 ARC-CO yields? Other than a county that may have had a disaster, do you anticipate counties finding the same similarities with 2014/15 NASS vs ARC-CO yields?
Kevin guessed that the 2016 payment would be less than the 2015 payment because it was calculated using the increase in the benchmark because of increased yields.
2. Will the IRS process with AGI’s would ever go away!
We will have to continue as directed with the time-consuming process.

Compliance:

1. Compliance Memo 14-02 is a good snapshot of the HELC/WC violation process, however it has become outdated due to the changes in the program. Is this a memo the Compliance Department can update and provide a conference call refresher training to address the changes? An ideal time for the training might be in the August timeframe since status reviews should be getting wrapped up and any FSA-569’s could be starting to come over to FSA for the good faith process to begin.
We talked to the DD’s about when to do training. It was discussed that we would prefer to wait until August with training being of the conference call type. A reminder noted that the “year” on the FSA-569 is to be completed by NRCS, not FSA

2. On the CARS report of Farms with Deleted Fields in CARS due to Deleted Field Number in Farm Records, how often is this report updated?

The National Office has indicated this report is “real time”. Please review CP-736 thoroughly. Adrianna Foxen noted that DD minutes has good information. CRP late-files for cropping history, if can see it on NAP imagery.

IDLE-FALLOW, purposely un-cultivated or planted.

Terraces – certify as grass, left standing.

Convention Photos!







2018 IASCOE Convention News!
Iowa will be hosting the 2018
Midwest Area Rally

WHEN: IASCOE- March 22, 2018

MWA Rally- March 23-24, 2018

WHERE: Downtown Marriott, Des Moines, IA

- Reservations can be made online www.marriott.com/DSMIA or call (800)-228-9290
- Use Event Name: Iowa State County Office Employees Midwest Area Rally

Activities Planned:

Thursday- Scavenger Hunt

Friday – Farm Rock Band

Like them on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Farm-Rock-146832448724310>

Keep an eye out for more information
as details are finalized!



I Scream, You Scream, Who LOVES Schwan's Ice Cream????

Iowa is hosting the 2018 Midwest Area Rally in conjunction with our State Convention. Instead of selling raffle tickets, we have decided to try a different fundraising campaign; here is an easy way to contribute. Invite friends, family and others who are committed to our cause to join the fundraising team. The bigger the IASCOE earns cash back.

- Earn 20% back on purchases of delicious foods
- Earn 40% on eGift Cards (limit 1 per customer, per campaign)

Orders can be made online, through our fundraising page or by phone using the group's campaign ID # (listed below)

SHARE THE LINK BELOW

Iowa Association of County Office Employee

ID: 33520

Link: <https://www.schwans-cares.com/c/33520>

Starts: July 17th, 2017

Ends: August 31st, 2017



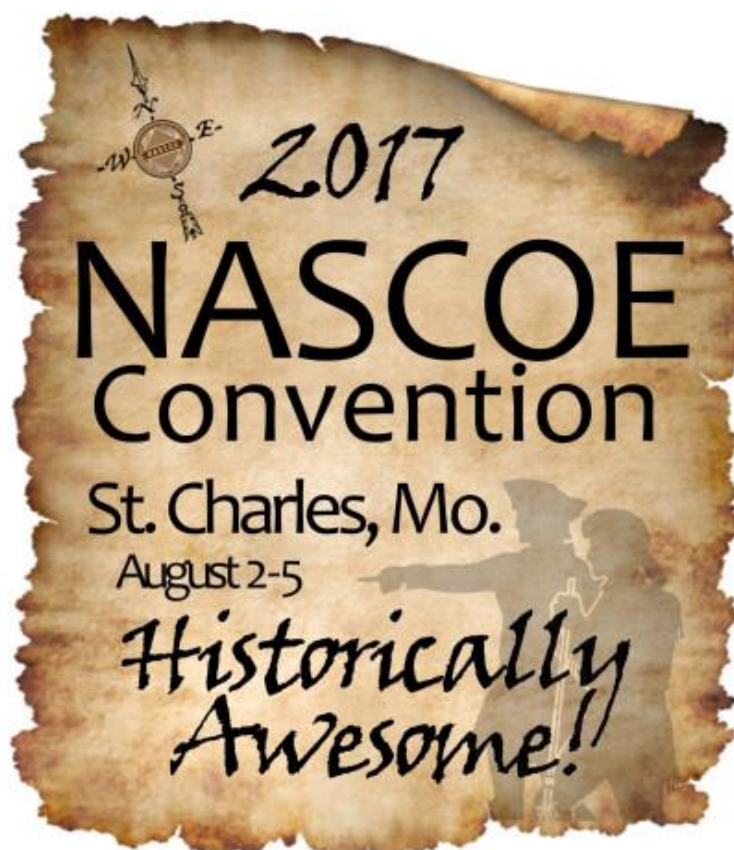


The 2017 NASCOE Convention will be held in St. Charles, Missouri!

Online registration will be available beginning in January. Use the following link to access convention updates including hotel reservation and registration information.

<http://mascoe.org/2017NASCOEConvention.htm>

UPDATE! DFAP has approved 8 hours of ADMIN leave for attending the National Office and Dillard Presentation



Convention Schedule

Tuesday, August 1

Noon - 8:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open

Wednesday, August 2

7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Registration Desk Open

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	NASCOE Executive Meeting	
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Tours & Activities (Running concurrently)	
	Option 1 Anheuser Busch and Gateway Arch Tour	\$40/adult \$25/child
	Option 2 Monsanto Research Center and Purina Farms Tour	\$40/adult \$25/child
	Option 3 Augusta Wine Trail Montelle • Blumenhof • Noboleis	\$65/adult
	Option 4 Golf Outing at Bogey Hills Country Club	\$90/person
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Youth Activity - Onsite (movies, games, swimming)	Included with registration

Thursday, August 3

6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	Compliments of NASCOE
7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Registration Desk Open	
8:00 a.m.	NASCOE Convention Convenes (Detailed agenda pending)	Included with registration
8:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Youth Activity - St. Louis Zoo	\$25/child (lunch included)
6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Youth Activity - Painting Party (onsite, snacks included)	Included with registration
6:00 p.m.	Dinner, Scholarship Auction, and Entertainment	Included with registration

Friday, August 4

8:00 a.m.	NASCOE Convention Continues (Detailed agenda pending)	Included with registration
8:15 a.m.	Youth Activities - City Museum (AM) & Butterfly House (PM)	\$25 (lunch included)
Noon	RASCOE Luncheon	\$30/person
5:00 p.m.	Pub Crawl in Historic Downtown St. Charles	\$10/person
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.	Youth Activity - Onsite (movies, games, swimming)	Included with registration

Saturday, August 5

8:00 a.m. - Noon	NASCOE Convention Continues (Detailed agenda pending)	
8:15 a.m. - Noon	Youth Activity - The Magic House	\$15/child (lunch included)
5:00 p.m. - Midnight	Youth Activity - Movie Night (onsite, dinner & snacks included)	Included with registration
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Social Hour	Cash bar
7:00 p.m. - Midnight	NASCOE Banquet, Awards, and Entertainment	\$50/person



NASCOE 2016/2017 Leadership



NASCOE Accomplishments...

What they have done to support all employees! Membership Matters!

During the 1960's

- Government Life Insurance
- Civil Service Retirement
- Severance Pay
- Increased Leave Earnings
- Transfer Employment into USDA without loss of grade, leave or tenure
- Pay Increases – Timed with Civil Service's

During the 1970's

- Reclassification of CED's and PA's
- Secured "Saved Grades" where grades were reduced due to reduction in workload/reclassification.
- Credit for past County Office experience in lieu of education for CED training positions.
- Vacancies in jobs above the County Office level now released to the County Office.
- Secured a Washington consultant to represent interest of County Committee employees.

During the 1980's

- NASCOE Scholarship Program
- Legislative Fund
- Advertising Program Assistant vacancies to County Offices within the state
- Passage of Transfer Bill
- Supplemental Insurance on payroll withholding
- Upgrading of PA job description
- Negotiated for a significant increase in number of Grade 12 offices.

During the 1990's

- PT reclassification approved
- CED reclassification approved
- CPT reclassification eligible for upgrades
- Lead PT grade increase in shared management offices
- Compressed work schedule made available
- ASCS/FSA Awards Program increased 500%
- Donor Leave Program Implemented
- Grievance procedure reintroduced in handbook procedure
- Appeals procedure information made available
- NASCOE Scholarship program increased
- Legislative program improved
- Maxi-flex Implemented

During the 2000's

- Established NASCOE Program Committee
- NASCOE Website established as an effective communication tool with membership
- NASCOE Emblems Online Storefront concept
- NASCOE Now publication developed
- NASCOE PAC established
- Moved to electronic communication and distribution of information to membership

In more recent years

- Return of Time off Awards and Cash Awards
- Expansion of Key PT's to one per district for those states willing to embrace the opportunity.
- Returning GovDelivery back into the hands of the County Offices to be able to make decisions when key outreach should take place.
- NASCOE chosen members are on more task forces than ever before and more PT's than ever!
- Building strong relationships with management quickly to address the needs of our members.
- Building relationships with the ACRSI team to input & monitor the future of acreage reporting.
- A legislative agenda that was effective in procuring and protecting CO staffing dollars above all other concerns.
- Having an effective NAFEC committee in place to support the only thing that makes FSA different than any other government agency, the County Committee system.
- Planning and implementing a NASCOE budget that has our organization in the black with restored monetary reserves to battle what might come our way.
- Reduction in PAC banking fees from a high of \$4855 per year in 2013 to a low of \$1661 projected for 2015 which leaves more funds to help candidates in the PAC.

Future Goals of NASCOE

- Strive to protect and improve benefits that employees currently have.
- Continue to work toward PT and CED upgrades and other benefits with a priority on those who have waited the longest on these improvements.
- Emphasize the need for training to improve the image and ability of FSA & NASCOE people to serve the national agriculture community.
- Work for and actively pursue good working relationships among employees of all USDA agencies.
- Seek benefits and privileges that are equal to those enjoyed by other federal employees.
- Continue to work with and support the County Committee System and the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC).
- Continue to work and support Commodity Groups in promoting agriculture throughout the nation.
- Keep NASCOE members and potential members informed about NASCOE activities.
- Strive to attain proper staffing levels for the county-ty offices.
- Strive for 100% Membership of FSA employees in NASCOE

Home on the Riverbank Analogy

by Debbie Stalzy, IL IASCOE President

Picture this: You purchased a quaint little home on the riverbank. You loved your home and most of the time the river would rise and fall without notice. However, one day your home is threatened by a flood and a team rushes to the aid to save, not only your home, but everyone that lives on that riverbank. There were many helping, i.e. Neighbors, community members, even strangers not from your area came to aid for all those who would be affected, and all the time, YOU choose to sit on the porch...admiring their hard work.

You, of course, are benefitting from their hard work even though YOU did not contribute to it.

Let's be honest, don't you want to be a part of the work and not a porch potato? Your home is like your career, the river rising and falling is much like our benefit issues that come up in Washington, some are noticed and, again, many are not. NASCOE is much like the workers; there are many involved, some you know and many you do not know. Regardless, there is a team of workers putting in long hours, phone calls, many miles in travel and other ways to calm the waters or sandbag the issue and potentially work for something new in all of our interest. The point here is we are ALL recipients of the hard work, big and small! Being a part of the work is good for you and good for NASCOE. **Membership is the Strength of our Association!!**

Benefits were never a given for our predecessors and as a member, you have the assurance that the state and national leadership and its members are constantly monitoring discussions that could affect the benefits that we currently value.



AWARDS, A GREAT FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT!

The Anytime Anyone Extra Mile Award

The Anytime Anyone Extra Mile Award one of the nicest certificates NASCOE offers to its members! The beauty of this particular certificate program is that you can request an Extra Mile Award certificate for virtually ANYONE, not just IASCOE members that has gone the “Extra Mile”! Do you know a young person that donated hair for the Locks for Love program? How about a USDA Service Center that went all out for Breast Cancer Awareness day? How about an elderly neighbor that raked your leaves while you were at work? Bottom line is that with this certificate, you can show your appreciation to anyone, NASCOE Member or not to say “Thank you!” for what you have done. The certificate does not come wrapped with ribbons or bows, nor is it framed, it is a professionally prepared certificate to honor the deserving recipient. Guaranteed to put a smile on the giver and the receiver every time! Just fill out the online form under the Awards tab on the NASCOE web- site (www.nascoe.org) and the certificate is mailed to you within days!

Distinguished Service Awards

The three Distinguished Service Awards honor fellow NASCOE Members that have gone over and above in their:

- Service to Communities**
- Service to NASCOE**
- Service to FSA- Agriculture.**

To nominate a deserving fellow NASCOE Member for any of the above categories that you feel they have earned the nomination, please complete the online form that can be found under the Awards link on the NASCOE website at www.nascoe.org and send it to your State Awards Chairperson no later than February 1st. The nominations do not have to be lengthy; just point the facts/highlights for the Judges. For help in preparing the nomination, please see the section under the Awards link on the NASCOE website.

Sick Leave Certificates

The NASCOE Awards program offers sick leave certificates to persons that have, for the first time, reached a new sick leave milestone during their career with FSA. Sick leave certificates are a great way for a state to recognize dedicated NASCOE Members whom have reached 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 2,500, 3,000 plus each additional 500 hours of unused sick leave. Normally the deadline is February 1st each year. However, you may submit your names, county, and hours at any time. The certificates are issued at the State and/or National Convention as applicable. NASCOE also provides a plaque for NASCOE Members whom have achieved 3,000 hours of unused sick leave and is awarded at the National Convention. Simply send the name, county, and # of hours reached to your State Awards Chairperson no later than February 1st each year.

If you have any questions on any of these awards, please do not hesitate to contact your IASCOE District Committee person as listed on the IASCOE.org website or myself at any time with questions.

IASCOE State Awards Chairperson
Karen LaCour , 2320 110th Ave., Lake Park, IA 51347
Phone: 712-330-1347 Email: cmego@evertek.net



And She Took Me Along to New York City

By Jeff Davis

I would just like to say we had a great time. As some of you know, my wife Jeannette won the Grand Prize at the NASCOE Convention held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa last August. (Doesn't that figure, I bought the ticket and she won) I am happy to say that she did at least choose to let me tag along. We ended up taking a trip to New York City. (It is a place to visit but wouldn't wish to live there (ever)) We left on a Wednesday morning early, it took 2.5 hours to fly from Omaha Nebraska to New York City (LaGuardia), and then it was only 2.5 hours to travel the 8.5 to 9 miles from the airport to our hotel on Time Square. We stayed at the Marriott Marques. We were on the 44th floor and in New York; it is a little weird because the lobby of the hotel is actually on the 8th floor. After the grueling ride from the airport, we had to figure out the elevators. Where I am from you push a button, the elevator opens, and once you get on you push the button as to which floor you wish to go to. Not this one, you told it which floor you wished to go to on a key pad and it told you which elevator to get on (needless to say me not reading directions made us ride the elevator a couple of extra floors before being able to get off). Since we had left early that morning, we ventured out to find something to eat before we left to find the subway that took us to the Cubs vs. Mets game at Citi Field (only a 30-minute subway ride). We found something to eat, walked around a while and then headed for the subway. The excitement was that I was all turned around as I couldn't see anything but tall buildings and had no sense of direction (and that was a struggle the entire trip). We got to the game in plenty of time and waited for the gates to open. Once we got inside, we wondered around and actually had good seats. The game started with a bang and then after about 4 pitches the Cubs were up by two runs. Well the tide changed and the night got long then we had to make it back to our hotel on the subway, as that is how we got there. It was not bad and we actually made it to the subway and talked to a guy and his girlfriend while we were waiting. We made it back downtown and it was about 11:00 or 11:30. Time Square and Broadway were a buzz of many, many people. We did make it back and headed to our room.

The next morning we had purchased some hop-on and hop-off tickets to see the city, as we didn't have any major plans for the day. We headed up town and then to the Bronx and Yankee Stadium on the bus which was stuck in traffic most of the time. After about a 8 or 9 hour day we got back to the area of our hotel and hunted for someplace to eat supper and headed back to our room as we knew we had an early wakeup the following day to see Ellis Island, Statue of Liberty and the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. As we got back to the Hotel, we punched the button for the elevator and nothing. They were not working. I went to panic mode as I know I couldn't walk up 44 floors. We found out that someone had died in the hotel and the police had shut down the elevators. We were instructed to go to the service elevator and we would be taken to our floor. We decided to go out after getting back to the room and had to call the desk. They sent the service elevator to take us down again so we could go out and see all of the crazies in Time Square.

We were up early on Friday and off on the subway to get on the ferry to take us to Ellis Island. Toured there for a few hours and then back we headed to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. Both were great and if I had to do it over again, I would have done it on two separate days. Way too much to rush through and I wanted to take my time but wasn't able to. The 9/11 Memorial and Museum brought back a lot of memories and things that I had somewhat forgotten. It brought tears to my eyes again as it did when it happened. I just can't imagine the two towers being there one minute and not the next. Very scary and chilling. Again, my internal direction finder was not working so we walked around in circles for a while before finding our way back to the hotel. We ate supper on the way back and once we got back to the hotel slept very, very well that night.

Saturday was more of the hop-on & hop-off tours but we went to "The Lion King" on Broadway (which was right outside the doors of our hotel) and that was very impressive. There was a giant crowd there and we were glad to be inside as it was pouring outside. I forgot to say we were out shopping in the little shops and it started to rain earlier in the day (to say it rained may have been an understatement it poured and we got soaked). I could have sold a million umbrellas that day. After the show, we had a nice supper and then went on another bus tour downtown, and went up into the Empire State

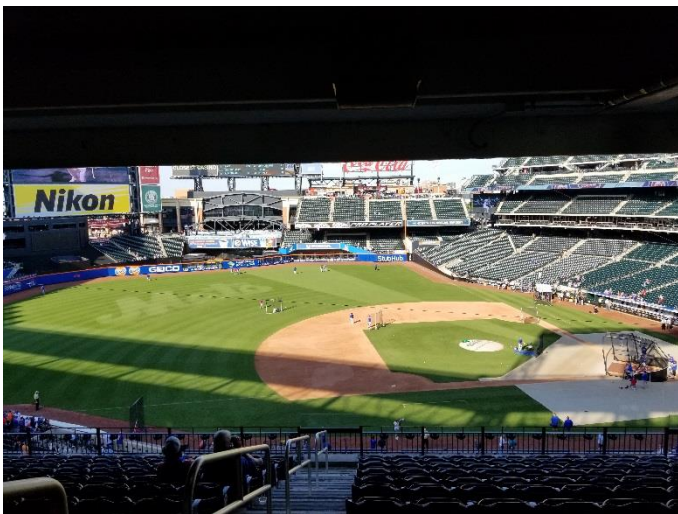
Building. On the 80th floor you could barely see out the window as the clouds were so thick. Being on the 86th floor you were above the clouds and could see other tall buildings in the distance sticking up through the clouds, (it was cool and eerie at the same time).

Sunday morning and it was the day we were leaving for home. As we didn't leave until late in the evening of Sunday we decided to walk to Central Park (about a mile each way) and took a ride through the park. It was pretty fun and informative. I really enjoyed the history and the guy who gave us the tour was very nice and he had to work his buns off to peddle all three of us up the hills. Central Park is HUGE and an unbelievable space right in the middle of the city.

The trip back the airport was only about 1.5 hours and not 2.5 hours. We were there in plenty of time and had time to talk about what all we had done and seen in our tour of New York. Thanks to my wife for taking me along on the trip she won at the NASCOE Convention in August 2016.

I would just like to say thanks to the ones that put the package together for the raffle and to Siouxland Travel for helping book the trip. Another couple of more days could have been fun but I am sure that my hearing was damaged from the hundreds of sirens from ambulances, fire trucks and police cars that we heard. Let me also say that it was a little weird to see so many police with automatic weapons and riot gear on but just standing in Time Square. If we win this year, we are going somewhere a little quieter with a few less people. 😊

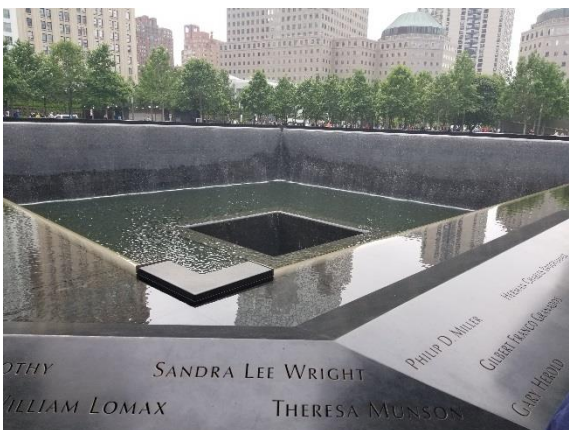
Jeff & Jeannette Davis



Our seats at Citi Field watching the Cubs vs. Mets



The Statue of liberty



The one of the two 9/11 Memorials



9/11 Museum



Broadway & Time Square at about 9:00 pm.

(Iowa Boy Survives New York, New York!)

Warren County Farmer Appreciation Day

Our annual Farmer Appreciation Day was held on May 17, 2017 at the Warren County Fairgrounds in Indianola. Local farmers and landowners enjoyed a relaxing lunch and the opportunity to visit. The Southeast Warren Future Farmers of America (FFA) Chapter served over 400 meals at the event, which recognized local farmers.

The Farm Service Agency has received outpouring support for the event as local agribusinesses have generously donated money and door prize items to make the event a success. The activities were also supported by the local Natural Resource Conservation Service and Iowa State University Extension Service.





Prairie Sky Farm is a diverse, 40-acre farm located near Wesley, Iowa, and is owned and operated by Sara and Bob Pearson. The farm's rotation includes corn, soybeans, oats/grass pasture, and alfalfa. Nearly half of the farm's acres are certified organic, with the entire farm to be certified by 2018. The couple also manages a herd of ten cattle and will be selling shares of beef in 2018.

Another key part of the operation includes high tunnel vegetable production in a 30' x 48' structure. Both early and late-season produce grown in the high tunnel is marketed to area customers. Planting begins in mid-March, enabling the harvest of cool season crops like salad mix, spinach, radishes, kohlrabi, kale, and more to begin the first week of May. Late season production and harvest continues into November. Another half-acre of outdoor vegetable gardens is managed during the growing season as well. Approximately fifty different vegetable crops are grown during the season.

For more information contact farm.prairiesky@gmail.com.

Submitted By:

Megan Friedow



Malvernbank



2017 Sunset Music Series *7-10p Saturday Nights Downtown Malvern*



Located along the Wabash Trace

Malvernia.com



MalvernMarket

	<i>Opening</i>
<i>June 10</i>	<i>George McGargill</i>
<i>June 17</i>	<i>Ben Green</i>
<i>June 24</i>	<i>The Shipwrecks</i>
<i>July 1</i>	<i>Malvern Fireworks! Prime Time Pickers</i>
<i>July 8</i>	<i>Prairie Gators</i>
<i>July 15</i>	<i>Repeat O' Fender</i>
<i>July 22</i>	<i>Jack Miller</i>
<i>July 29</i>	<i>Joe & Alanna</i>
<i>Aug. 5</i>	<i>Jocelyn</i>
<i>Aug. 12</i>	<i>The Shineys</i>
<i>Aug. 19</i>	<i>Fair Deal</i>
<i>Aug. 26</i>	<i>Prairie Gators</i>
<i>Sept. 2</i>	<i>Labor Day weekend break.</i>
<i>Sept. 9</i>	<i>2017 Grand Finale Brich & Killion</i>

<i>Closing Band</i>
<i>B Side 3</i>
<i>Matt Cox Band</i>
<i>Taylor Made</i>
<i>Swampboy Blues</i>
<i>Hired Guns</i>
<i>Daddy Mack & The Flak</i>
<i>Acoustic Groove</i>
<i>Rhythm Collective</i>
<i>Chad Elliot Trio</i>
<i>Ragged Company</i>
<i>Acoustic Groove</i>



Malvern
OF THE MALVERN PUBLIC LIBRARY
502 Main St., Box 180
Malvern, IA 51551

9th Annual Race the Trace



5K Fun Run and Walk

Saturday, July 11, 2015

8 AM START

Wabash Trace Nature Trail Depot

3rd Ave. & W. 5th St.,

Malvern, Iowa

A benefit for the Malvern Library Technology Fund

Sponsored by Friends of the Malvern Public Library



Cass County Events:



Make sure you mark Saturday August 12, 2017 on your calendar because it's AtlanticFest, and you won't want to miss it!

Downtown Atlantic will be filled with fun activities for all ages! Come early and enjoy a pancake breakfast, or start the day off with a run through town in the Annual Road Race or enjoy a leisurely Tractor Ride! There will be crafters from all over Southwest Iowa, as well as some of the best food vendors to help satisfy any appetite! Kids can enjoy the pony rides and bounce house, while the adults can relax in the beer garden or play in the Bags Tournament! And with free entertainment throughout the day, you can't go wrong! Make sure you also enjoy the 19th Annual Car Show and Motorcycle Show. There will be some amazing vehicles there that you can't see anywhere else!

2017 Coca-Cola Days

September 22nd – 23rd, 2017

Atlantic is the Coca-Cola Capital of Iowa, and we welcome everyone to join us for the 25th Anniversary of Coca-Cola Days Celebration. Our celebration is the second largest mini-convention of Coca-Cola collectors in the United States. (Second only to Atlanta, Georgia!)



Page County, Iowa

42nd Annual Glenn Miller Festival, June 8-11, 2017. Join guests and entertainers from around the world as they converge in Clarinda, Iowa, the Birthplace of Glenn Miller, to celebrate the music and memory of Alton Glenn Miller, American bandleader, trombonist, composer and arranger who disappeared while directing the Glenn Miller AAF Band during World War II. Hear exciting bands from around the world including the World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra, and the Glenn Miller Birthplace Society Big Band. Explore the Glenn Miller Birthplace Museum and enjoy stage shows; picnics; dances; historical displays; plus the fellowship of hundreds of Miller fans from around the world.

Clarinda Band Jamboree is held in Clarinda, Iowa each year (September 30, 2017). Bands from Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska converge on Clarinda each year to compete in the marching and field competitions.

The Everly Brothers were an American country-influenced rock and roll duo, known for steel-string acoustic guitar playing and close harmony singing. **Isaac Donald "Don" Everly** (born February 1, 1937) and **Phillip "Phil" Everly** (January 19, 1939 – January 3, 2014) were elected to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986 and the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2001. The Everly Brothers began their music careers at KMA and KFNF radio in Shenandoah. Visit one of their childhood homes and see original furnishings and a signed guitar.

Essex Annual Labor Day Celebration is held in Essex, Iowa – September 2, 3 and 4th, 2017.

ShenFest – held in Shenandoah, Iowa - Shenfest is an annual community-wide celebration held with a huge parade, fun run, entertainment, food vendors, kid's games, tractor show, pancake feed, Miss Shenandoah & Little Miss Shenandoah pageant and more! The Shenfest is held on the 4th Saturday in September each year (September 23, 2017).

Clarinda Craft carnival – 3rd Saturday in October – over 300 vendors.

Wabash Trace Nature Trail - The Wabash Trace is a 63-mile rail trail in Iowa running from the city of Council Bluffs southeast to Blanchard in Page County, Iowa. It was part of the Wabash Railroad's Omaha to St. Louis route.

Page County is the "birthplace" of 4-H. Jessie Field Shambaugh is called the "Mother of 4-H." She started after-school clubs in 1901 while teaching at Goldenrod School in Page County, Iowa. When she became County School Superintendent in 1906, she organized Boys Corn Clubs and Girls Home Clubs in all 130 country schools. Students developed their Head, Heart, and Hands in her 3-H Clubs that included camps, exhibitions and judging contests.

Clarinda A's Baseball Clarinda is home to the Clarinda A's, our summer amateur baseball team. The A's won the 1981 National Baseball Congress Championship, and has sent several players on to the major leagues, notably hall of famers Ozzie Smith and Von Hays – who regularly return to Clarinda for special events.

Fun facts – Page County has several “celebrity farmers”-

Steve Martin, Clay Walker, Steve Miller, Neil McCoy to name a few!



Having Fun at Work by Paul Berte

I thought now may be a good time to talk about the importance of taking time to have fun at work. The current administration has proposed significant reductions to the USDA. It is easy to become worried and stressed as a USDA employee during this time frame. This makes enjoying your job and appreciating your staff even more important. The Pocahontas FSA staff have always made enjoying ourselves a priority while at work. After all, smiling faces make happy people. Not to say we do not work because we certainly do.

Each year around the holidays, the Pocahontas FSA staff gets creative and tries to make a humorous holiday office picture/holiday card. Each year we look forward to this event. A different theme, backdrop, and costumes. I often question WHAT AM I DOING WEARING THIS?? Fortunately, we are not easily embarrassed and I think each of us find joy in looking ridiculous but making surrounding offices laugh around the holidays.

Since 2012 we have been undertaking this ritual. Each year it is a challenge to be more creative than the previous year. Neighboring FSA offices have given us good feedback....SO WE CONTINUE. Some neighboring counties have even started doing their own cards/videos. These things may be small, but I think important to office unity and team building. A good laugh is important to our health and well-being. Laughter also makes us more positive while at work. We certainly have had a few laughs around the holidays. Many of them at my expense, but all worth it!!

Below are a collection of Pocahontas FSA holiday greeting pictures:





'Twas the night before Christmas
 and all through the hour,
 Santa's helpers were feeling
 just a little bit sour.
 He told them he still couldn't
 decide on what to do:
 a new farm bill, an extension,
 or a furlough part deal.
 But while mulling up his mind
 he learned back seat,
 "Why don't you keep busy and earfy
 all the grass, pasture and clover of red.
 His helpers had decided that
 enough was enough,
 and so they threw out Santa
 and all of his stuff!!!

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

From all us in Pocahontas:
 Kim, Anita, Jessica, Paul, Sam, Laurie

P.S.
 but you can't find Rudolph hiding
 under all the snow,
 he's none other than our friend
 from NCCS, ha!!!



#MerryChristmas #OverIt #Whatever #HoHoHo #Creeper

MERRY CHRISTMAS

& Happy New Year

From the 'Elves on the Shelves' in Pocahontas County



Laurie
'farm payment elf'



Tara
'AGI naughty/nice elf'



Heather
'farm loan elf'



Jessica
'too much CRP elf'



Anita
'bin sealing elf'



Joe (NRCS)
'the creeper that
is always peeking'



Suzanne
'temp shredding elf'



Paul
'executive measuring elf'

Every night we return to the North Pole,
to tell Santa what we saw.
Looks like other counties will be getting coal,
while Pocahontas was without a flaw!
(just kidding – HO HO HO)



Sam
'heather's personal wrapper elf'

FSA Golf Tournament – 4 Person Best Shot

Friday August 25, 2017

4-Person Best Shot

**\$42 per person includes
18 holes with cart**

\$168 per Team

Spring Valley Golf Course

1105 140th Ave

Livermore, IA 50558

www.springvalleygc.com

Schedule of Events

9:00 am Registration

9:30 am Shotgun Start

Pre-Register by AUGUST 1, 2017

Hotel Information:

AMERICINN

**307 13TH STREET NORTH
HUMBOLDT, IA 50548**

(Opens July 13, 2017!)

Reservations: 800-634-3444 or 515-604-5000 or at www.americinn.com. A block of rooms is available for \$91 + tax under "FSAMEET082417"

Located on the east side of US Hwy 169 just a half mile south of main Hwy 3/169 intersection in Humboldt. Hot breakfast included!



Mail one check per team with names to:

Angie Christian

4332 110th Ave

Linn Grove, IA 51033

Something New:

Lunch will be a separate cost. You will pay for what you want at the tournament.

Pork loin Sandwich:
\$4.50

Potato Salad or
Chips: \$1.25
Beans: \$.75

Hot Dog: \$3.50
Cookies: \$1.00

Lunch between

11:00 am - 2:00pm

Hospitality Information:

GORDY'S AT RUSTIX

**716 SUMNER AVE
HUMBOLDT, IA 50548**

JOIN US ANY TIME AFTER 6 PM!

Located downtown Humboldt. From hotel—6 blocks east and 3 blocks south. Cold cocktails and



+++++

Directions to Golf Course: From Humboldt take US-169 North 12.2 miles, turn right onto 100th St/CR-C12 2.0 miles, Turn left onto 140th Ave 1.6 miles on left.

Established Teams – Complete this Section

Team Name: _____



Team Members: _____

Team “captain” is responsible for collecting and paying the fee of \$168.00 which includes golf and cart. (Number of team players x \$42 each)

Want to golf and no team? Complete this Section

Name: _____ (\$42 for golf and cart)

We will find you a team to play on!!

Lunch only? Complete this Section

Name: _____

You will just order and pay at tournament but we would like to have a number count.

