



IASCOE Newsletter





2018/2019 IASCOE OFFICERS

President
Jesse Wegner
 CED - Fayette County



Vice-President
Angie Christian
 CED - Kossuth County



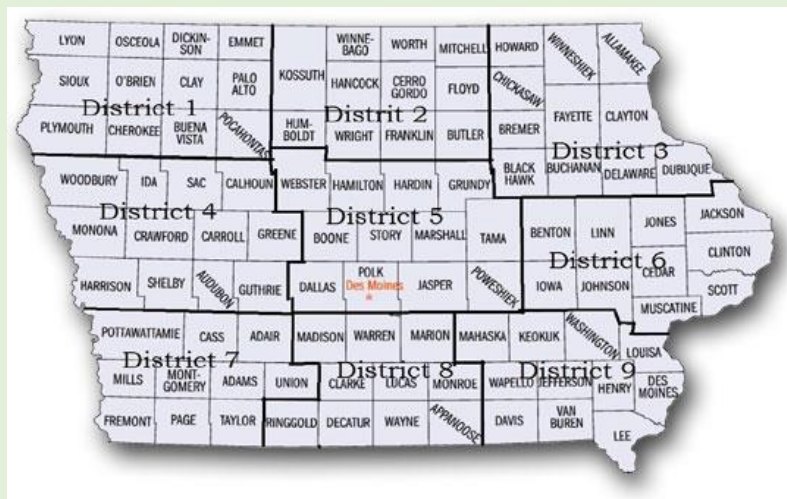
Secretary
Wendi Denham
 CED - Mahaska County



Treasurer
Judy Dameron
 PT - Louisa County



IASCOE DISTRICTS



2018/2019 IASCOE DIRECTORS



District	P.T. Director	C.E.D Director
1	Brittney Mitchell - Dickinson Alt - Teresa Van Sloten - Sioux	Paul Berte - Pocahontas Alt- Samantha Erie - O'Brien
2	Amie Johansen - Floyd Alt - Michelle Uthe - Mitchell	Angie Christian - Kossuth Alt - Rosalie Carlson - Worth
3	Candace Fette- Clayton Alt - BreAnn Hemesath - Winneshiek	Jesse Wegner - Fayette Alt - Andrea Carroll - Winneshiek
4	Cathleen "Skip" Simons - Carroll Alt - Donita Kenkel - Shelby	Steve Luke - Shelby Alt - Pat Warmbier - Harrison
5	Gabriela Thompson - Jasper Alt - Jane McCulley - Poweshiek	Brandon Jazz - Dallas/Polk Alt - Savannah Jungman - Poweshiek
6	Angie Reynolds - Muscatine Alt - Jessica Yuska - Scott	Matt Berg - Johnson Alt - Jennifer Ness - Iowa
7	Jennifer Comer - Page Alt - Nancy Gress - E Pottawattamie	Todd Perdeu – Adams/Union Alt - Max Dirks - Cass
8	Ronda Harrison - Lucas Alt - Vacant	Kathy Henely - Wayne Alt - Jayne Ruble - Warren
9	Judy Dameron - Louisa Alt - Vacant	Wendi Denham - Mahaska Alt - Elizabeth Benjamin – Davis
Directors At Large	District 1- Dustin Miller- Cherokee District 3- Krystal Schatz- Howard	District 4- Mary Roberts- Calhoun District 8- Jayne Ruble - Warren

2018/2019 IASCOE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

District	BENEFITS & LEGISLATIVE Chair – Steve Luke	
	Member	County
1	Rex Wittrock	Buena Vista
2	David Stromer	Hancock
3	Ron Pethoud	Chickasaw
4	Pat Warmbier	Harrison
5	Teresa Simonton	Poweshiek
6	Jessica Yuska	Scott
7	Chris Irvin	Page
8	Kelly Cain	Madison
9	Vacant	

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP
Awards Chair – Vacant
Scholarship Chair – Kathy Henely



District	Member	County
1		
2	Tammy Pruin	Wright
3	Candace Fette	Clayton
4	Donita Kenkel	Shelby
5	Kathy Baker	Marshall
6	Kari Barker	Muscatine
7	Lynette Gruchow	East/West Pottawattamie
8	Dorothy Allen	Warren
9	Lanie Benjamin	Davis/Wapello

PUBLICITY

Chair – Tammy Eibey

District	Member	County
1	Jeff Davis	Plymouth
2	Megan Ruby- Friedow	Kossuth
3	Heidi Nickol	Delaware
4	Heather Muenchrath	Shelby
5	Vacant	
6	Cassy Portz	Jackson
7	Jamie Newbury	Cass
8	Jayne Ruble	Warren
9	Deb Rurup	Mahaska

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP CHAIR – Michelle Uthe/Susan Lange

<i>District</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>County</i>
1	Lisa Forburger	Palo Alto
2	Rosalie Carlson	Worth
3	Breann Hemesath	Winneshiek
4	Cathleen “Skip” Simons	Carroll
5	Katie Kramer	Jasper
6	Joni Birkhofer	Cedar
7	Jennifer Comer	Page
8	Merilee Hamilton	Lucas
9	Lisa White	Washington



OTHER ROLES

Emblems Chair	Kathy Baker - Marshall
Programs Chair	Angie Christian - Kossuth
NAFEC Chair	Mary Robert - Calhoun
Convention Registration	Mary Roberts - Calhoun
IASCOE Web Manager	Brian Beach - Sac
Convention Door Prizes/Silent Auction	Krystal Schatz - Howard & Amie Johansen - Floyd
Live Auction Organization	Wendi Denham - Mahaska

PAST IASCOE PRESIDENTS

1959-61 Kenneth Hatcher	1987-88 Mike Houston
1961-62 Raymond D Vanderhorst	1988-90 Ronald Reuvers
1962-63 Luther Stock	1990-92 Steve Abbas
1963-64 William H Holiday	1992-94 Kevin Fitzpatrick
1964-65 Charles Bacon	1994-95 Jerry Frank
1965-66 Gaylor A Thayer	1995-97 Kevin McClure
1966-67 V. Deane Thornton	1997-99 Jolene Fechter
1967-68 Marguerite Liddle	1999-01 Trice Smith
1969-70 Warner C Walrath	2001-03 John Landgraf
1970-71 Janet Hemm	2003-05 Tom Lane/Alan Donaldson
1971-72 Carl Lantz	2005-07 Dee Lehn
1972-74 James A Riekens	2007-09 Steve Kennedy
1974-76 Cecil F Zollars	2009-11 Cindy Mensen
1977-79 Garnita Ewart	2011-13 Jeff Davis
1979-80 John Ace Parker/Gary Brewer	2013-15 Curt Houk
1980-82 Gary Brewer	2015 Curt Goettsch
1982-84 Larry Niles	2015-17 Jennifer Comer
1984-86 Joe McLaughlin	2018 Jesse Wegner
1986-87 Pat Drew / Ronald Parker	



SED's Letter to IASCOE Membership

July 2018

Even though I have been on the job officially for 8 months, this is my first opportunity to connect with the entire IASCOE organization directly. I was grateful to be invited earlier this year to address the IASCOE convention and Midwest rally and I look forward to meeting many more of you in person as I travel the state to meet with our county office employees. As I've told many of you whom I've met so far, I won't understand our organization (its people or programs) solely from my desk chair in the State Office. I am looking forward to hitting the road again once your workload starts to level off.

As you all well know, summer is an extremely busy time for everyone in Iowa FSA. I know that many of our offices are under strain right now due to heavy workloads. Luckily there is light at the end of the tunnel. I hope that some of the limited help we have been able to provide through TO's and overtime has reduced the burden. I am also excited that we will officially start onboarding new employees this month and will be continuing to hire during the remainder of the fiscal year. Thank you for all you are doing and continue to do in service to our producers.

A quick update on FPAC. Under Secretary Northey does a great job updating employees on FPAC progress in his weekly Friday emails. It sounds like some of our initial FPAC steps including vehicle sharing are going very well. Thank you to everyone for working cooperatively with our sister agency NRCS to make this new opportunity work smoothly. The national contractors continue to spend time in State Offices over the summer to learn more about functions the State Offices provide in service to the counties. They will be analyzing the data later this year and will be providing a report to FPAC leadership regarding any recommendations.

Remember, the State Office door is always open. Please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or any of the State Office staff when you have a question or concern. Thank you for your continued service to our farmers and landowners and good luck with the remaining days of CRP sign up.

Sincerely,

Amanda De Jong

SED



Dog days of Summer?!



Summer Greetings IASCOE,

I don't know about you, but this summer feels like it has been flying by, with no slowdown in sight. What started out as ARC/PLC enrollment turned into a new MPP-Dairy enrollment, which turned into a full-on sprint to reach the July 15th certification deadline, which turned into a CRP signup, which turned into ARC/PLC enrollment. Sprinkle in some CRP cost-share, MAL, and FSFL and you have a full slate of things on your To-Do Lists! You have all done a tremendous job providing our farmers with top notch FSA customer service. The dog days of summer no longer seem to exist, as least not for an Iowa FSA employee.

I would like to welcome all the new members of IASCOE and encourage you to be engaged with the association. There is always a seat available for you at the table to get involved with planning committees in Iowa or nationwide and/or other special projects. Most importantly, please don't hesitate to share any input you may have to help better our careers. Remember, since 1962, NASCOE has been granted exclusive recognition to represent county office employees in negotiation with FSA management.

I would also like to welcome new employees reading this message to the Iowa FSA family and wish you the best on the career ahead of you. I would ask that you considering joining IASCOE. Information is available under the "Reference Center" tab on sharepoint. Click on Employee Association Websites- IASCOE.

The new workload ceilings will take time to adjust too but I want to ensure you that IASCOE continues to work diligently with NASCOE leadership to communicate the human capital investment needed to provide excellent customer service to the Iowa farmer. NASCOE leadership is directly involved at delivering this message straight to the appropriators on the Hill in Washington D.C.

IASCOE appreciates the direct line of communicate with SED, Amanda De Jong and the opportunity to be involved to help find solutions in dealing with the workload ceiling. I remain confident that IASCOE's involvement will be valuable for all FSA employees and COC's in Iowa. I look forward to adding more positions to our ranks in August and marching closer to our ceiling as we continue into FY 2019.

In closing, use the opportunities of annual leave, federal holidays, and alternative work schedules to help slow your summer down to spend time with family, friends, town festivals and county fairs. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

-Jesse

IASCOE President



Treasurer Report



It's summertime in southeast Iowa. It's been hot and dry, but the crops are looking good. Corn tasseled early, and it was head high by the 4th of July.

The Midwest Area Rally/State Convention was once again a success. I am happy to say that I was once again elected as your state Treasurer.

The Raffle brought in \$884 and the winners were:

Karen McNeil, Winneshiek - \$25

Skip Simons, Carroll - \$25

Julie Hiller, Cherokee - \$25

Jessica Yuska, Scott - \$25

Dan Wells, Adair - \$100

Jill Roberg, Delaware - \$200

The Spirit Pull brought in \$630; registrations brought in \$4280 and the auctions brought in \$2997.56. Since we were hosting the MWA Rally, we had to give NASCOE 25% (\$749.39) of the auction proceeds. Dillards graciously donated \$2000 towards the Rally and \$750 towards our state convention.

We are now in FY19 for membership. Our membership drive was very successful. I am happy to say we have 21 new members. That puts us at 399 regular members and 48 associate members. Thank you all for your continued support of IASCOE/NASCOE!!

The National Convention is August 2-4 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Angie Christian and myself will be attending as Iowa's delegates. If you have any questions, concerns, or anything else that you would like us to take to the Executive Committee, please let one of us know.

Judy Dameron
IASCOE Treasurer



Benefits Information by Steven Luke, Benefits Committee Chair:

Sam's Club – IASCOE Members that join or renew their Sam's Club membership can receive a \$10 Sam's Club gift card. To take advantage of this offer, you must (1) have the paper offer or show it on your mobile device, and (2) show proof of membership with IASCOE / NASCOE. To save money, new membership cards were not printed for everyone. If you need a membership card and didn't get one, please contact your district benefits committee person or any IASCOE director. Please allow time to get the membership card to you.

Working Advantage – Employee Discount Program is an on-line travel agency that can be used to book hotel reservations; tickets to movies, shows, events & theme parks; car rentals; and offers gift card & shopping deals. To take advantage of this offer, you must create an on-line login which will ask for your "company ID". NASCOE has an ID which will be provided to 'members only' upon request.

AirMedCare: AirMedCare Network is an alliance of affiliated air ambulance providers. Membership ensures the patient will have no out-of-pocket flight expense if flown by a participating company. (annual membership \$10)

Dillard Financial Solutions: Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc. is a company that specializes in Federal Benefits. The primary focus is retirements, but they also offer a wide range of financial products, complimentary retirement reviews & costs associated with the different products.

(Listing form their brochure which can be found on the NASCOE web site)

- Insuring Your Retirement Income
- Matching Bonus for TSP Rollovers
- Monthly Deposit Roth IRA's
- Providing Lifetime Benefits for TSP
- Independent Retirement Reviews
- Roth and Traditional IRA's
- Federal Employee Retirement System
- Federal Employee Group Life Insurance Alternatives
- Thrift Savings Plan Options

- LifeLock Identity Theft Protection
- Benefits Analysis
- Life Insurance / Term to 100
- Civil Service Retirement System
- Products That Provide Income for Life
- Survivor Benefit Plans
- Retirement Package Completion
- Cancer, Critical Illness & Hospitalization Insurance

Cell phone discounts – (available to all employees). From time to time, certain cell phone companies are requesting that you confirm your government employment to continue receiving the discount. Some employees that are Verizon customers are reporting that their local Verizon store will not accept the proof, and are asked to submit the information to a “main” Verizon location. If this happens to you, please contact me and I will try to assist you.

Feedback: If you use any of the Benefits offered, your feedback, negative OR positive is helpful. You can submit comments to Steve Luke at Nestegg@metc.net.



2018 IASCOE Scholarship Recipients

Four IASCOE Scholarships were awarded in 2018. Katie Berte and Caleb Lines each received a \$400 Traditional Scholarship. Tyler Blind and Laura Nicholson each received \$400 Continuing Education Scholarships.

Katie Berte (daughter of Paul Berte, Pocahontas County CED) graduated with honors from Pocahontas Area Community High School in 2018. She has been accepted at Iowa State University where she will begin her college career. Katie plans to major in Business/Finance with a minor in Spanish. Her goal is to obtain a career in the business field that utilizes the Spanish language.



Growing up in rural Iowa on a small family farm has been the defining experience of **Caleb Lines'** (son of Dean Lines, Floyd County PT) life. It is where he learned the values of hard work and community. Those values have transferred to other aspects of his life, and he applies the same work ethic and solution-focused perspective that he does on the farm. Caleb plans to continue his education at Wartburg College, pursuing a degree in biochemistry and leadership studies.

Tyler Blind (son of Christine Keck, Henry County PT), lives in the southeast corner of Iowa, south of Mt. Pleasant. He is currently attending college at Southeastern Community College in West Burlington. Tyler is enrolled in the two-year Automotive Technology Program. His schooling will allow him to become an ASE certified pro-tem technician, and work towards gaining the experience to someday own his own business.





Laura Nicholson (daughter of Diane Nicholson, former Mahaska County PT), is currently a junior at Creighton University with a double major in psychology and theology. She plans to further her education by pursuing a graduate degree in internal relations after graduating in December 2018. Laura's ultimate goal is to work for a nonprofit organization or to start one that focuses on helping refugees transition into their new lives in the U.S. After visiting Haiti several times with the Many Hands for Haiti organization, Laura has a special interest in refugees from Haiti and Africa.

Scholarships through IASCOE/NASCOE include:

- **Traditional Scholarship** (member's child) graduating high school senior or first year college freshman, full time student with a minimum of 12 hours
- **Open Continuing Education Scholarship** (member, spouse, child, or grandchild) 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year, or graduate student, with 6 or more credit hours per semester
- **Member Continuing Education** (NASCOE member) continuing their education
- **Continuing Education for Adult Children of Members** (member's adult child, or grandchild) 5 or less credit hours a semester
- **Grandchildren Scholarship** (member's grandchild) 12 or more credit hours per semester
- **Associate Member Scholarship** (associate member, spouse, child, or grandchild) minimum of 6 hours of enrollment

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

The Scholarship committee would like to thank all scholarship applicants.



AWARDS, A GREAT FORM OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT!

The Anytime Anyone Extra Mile Award

This is 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? Or how about a USDA Service Center that went all out for Breast Cancer Awareness day? Or 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! Simply contact your IASCOE District Director (see the IASCOE website for listing) and provide the details and they will order the certificate and it will be mailed to you!

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 or higher of unused sick leave and is awarded at the National Convention. Simply send the name, county, and # of hours reached to your District IASCOE Awards Chair or Committee member 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 at any time with questions.



Cass County News

Cass County Fair: July 25-July 31, 2018. Events include Bull Ride on Friday, 7/27, and Tractor Pull on Saturday, 7/28. See Iowa State Extension website for more fair information.



Check out the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce page for more information on the following events:



AtlanticFest: Saturday, August 11, 2018, downtown Atlantic IA: includes Food Vendors, Tractor Ride, Road Race, Motorcycle Show, Car Show, Craft & Activity Booth, and Carnival.

Coca-Cola Days: September 28-29, 2018, Atlantic IA. This is the 2nd largest mini-convention in the world (second only to Atlanta, GA). Tailgate Party Friday evening at the Depot/Chamber Office; Swap & Sell Friday evening and Saturday at the Herring Building.



Atlantic Fireman's Parade & Atlantic Sesquicentennial Celebration: Saturday, October 13, 2018, downtown Atlantic IA.



BPW Fall Craft Show: Saturday, October 27, 2018, at the Cass County Community Building, Atlantic IA.



As you are reading this Fair time has been in full swing here in District 6. Benton County had their fair at the end of June. Clinton and Cedar County Fairs were July 11-15th. Muscatine's Fair started July 18-22 followed by Johnson County Fair July 22nd-the 25th. The Jackson County Fair starts July 24th-the 29th. If you didn't get to enjoy any of these fairs don't forget about the Iowa State Fair. The Iowa State Fair is Thursday, August 9th – Monday, August 20th. Admission for adults (12 and over) is \$12, Children (ages 6-11) are \$4, and Children 5 and under are FREE every Fair day. There are a variety of activities from livestock shows, entertainment, contests, rides and much, much more. Let's not forget about the butter cow!!! It is very easy to spend a couple days at the Fair. If you are interested and looking for more information you can go to www.iowastatefair.org. Hope you all have been having a wonderful summer!!

FSA Fellowship Program- Submitted by Angie Reynolds, Muscatine County PT

I had the honor of participating in the FSA Fellowship program in Washington DC from May 6th – June 29th with CEPD. I can only describe it as an experience of a lifetime.

The task I was assigned consisted of developing CRP slides for the AgLearn training environment. I have probably just made a few enemies by mentioning AgLearn training, however the intent was to have the training be basic so PT's new to the CRP program would have a place to start and more knowledgeable PT's could freshen up on their skills. In total, I developed 9 different training courses ranging from practice descriptions (with pictures), to step by step TERRA/COLS instructions. I was also involved with question and answer sessions about the 848 process as well as assisting with development of an automated Haying/Grazing worksheet. At this time the CRP Grasslands slides are in the AgLearn production environment and should be out to the field soon.

During my time in DC my eyes were opened as to how the process works. As you all know Continuous CRP was opened to limited practices on June 4th. Getting to see that sign up transpire from the National Office down to the Counties was an unforgettable experience. I can now understand a little better why it seems our producers know about announcements such as CRP sign up before we do at the county office (which has always frustrated me). The steps to get to the point of the actual announcement are described as a "hard stop" meaning nobody speaks of the events until the Secretary of Agriculture makes the announcement to the public. So, it is true, the CO's find out about it at the same time the producers do!

I will not go into every little detail of my experience in this article, but I am more than happy to share whatever any of you may be interested in hearing at any time. Feel free to shoot me an email or give me a call. I have lots to tell!!

I encourage everyone to apply for the Fellowship program. I learned so much from my time there and met some exceptional people. From the first day everyone was very helpful and accommodating. I brought home a lot of knowledge on how the National Office flows and their desire to help us in the County Office. They really are interested in what we have to say, and they do put forth effort in trying to make our jobs less stressful. Each person I talked to who had worked in a County Office prior to WDC stressed how much they missed the County Office. They also assured me they are just normal people like we are and not to be afraid to give our opinions because if they don't know, then they can't help us. I have a newly developed appreciation for our National Office and all they do for us behind the scenes.

Very thankful for the experience!

P.S. They hate the ULO's as much as we do!!!!



South Building – 7 wings, I worked in wing 7.

Bill Northey took a few minutes out of his day to meet
Long walk to get anywhere!!!



Caught him in the hall of the Whitten Building.
He didn't stop to chat but did give me a wave.



Meet and greet with Steve Peterson



Tomb of the Unknowns



Statue at the Vietnam Memorial



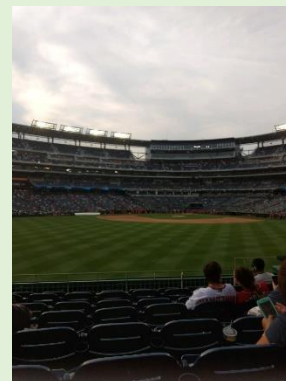
The Capital Building



Plane buzzed us on the Potomac
Too Close for Comfort



Pentagon from the Potomac



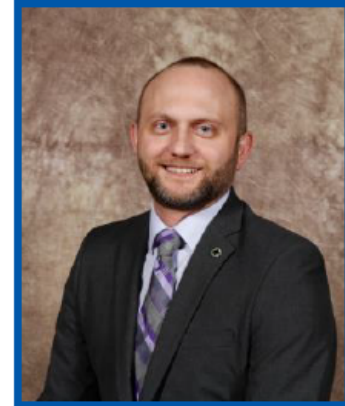
Washington Nationals vs. New
York Yankees

MWA Executive

Chris Hare chrishare05@gmail.com

Leading the Way to an Even Better Midwest Area

Greetings Midwest Area! What a productive last month NASCOE has had! Your NASCOE Leadership has been working hard for its members! Starting off with our successful Midwest Area Rally in Des Moines, Iowa. I feel that the VTC call with Under Secretary, Bill Northey was flawless! A huge thanks to Jeff Tibbles and Randy Tillman for taking care of the IT and making this happen. Followed by another great Q & A with FSA's Acting Administrator, Steve Peterson. A big thank you to IASCOE for hosting the 2018 MWA Rally, to our Area Committee Chairs and their proxies (you know who you are), and to everyone that attended.



During the week of April 2, NASCOE's Executive Committee and Area Negotiations Consultants traveled to Washington D.C. for the 2018 Negotiations Meeting with Management. I hope you enjoyed reading through Debbie's Negotiations report. The Midwest Area was well represented and I was very impressed with all of the first timers who attended and presented to Management our negotiation items. I personally feel this is my favorite part of NASCOE. Being able to sit across the table and negotiate items face to face with management. Hey Midwest Area, D.C. gets it. They listen and they too feel our pain and frustrations as well. I was told by a few that we met with, this was some of their favorite things to do as well; speak, listen and negotiate with the field office employees.

At the Saturday morning MWA Rally business meeting, Jackson stated that the Post Rally bulletin will be more focused on state reports. Since Negotiations was a week after the Rally, I wanted to combine our Rally business, Negotiations update, and State reports in one bulletin. Please take the time and read this bulletin. One of the best things about this organization, is sharing ideas and using other state ideas to promote and support membership within another state. Your Post Rally MWA Committee reports are online. Please go to <http://midwestnascoe.org/> to review the hard work and great things your MWA Committee Chairs have been up to.

I have received many compliments in regard to our Saturday Leadership Break Out Session Jackson and I provided at the MWA Rally. It was suggested I broadcast this in a way that all members can read since everyone can benefit from this. So here we go:

Welcome to the 2018 MWA Rally Leadership Break Out Session.

As the MWA Executive, I have been contacted by many members in regard to issues they are having within their states and even their own offices. I have come to realize that the commonality of many of these issues is lack of respect, misunderstanding of roles and responsibilities, and even holding grudges. I find myself reminding members/ employees that we all deserve to a happy working environment. We are very lucky to have these jobs and benefits. No one should ever dread going to work. I also remind those who contact me that the requirements of PT position descriptions is different than those of a CED's position description and that co-workers, no matter if they are fellow PT's or a CED and PT; we need to respect each other, compromise, and work together.

During my tenure as the Midwest Area Executive, I have seen a lot of great things our membership has to offer. When I think about the strengths of our area, I think of the unity, the dedica-

tion and hard work of everyone, the ideas of how each state delivers our message, and the passion. The passion for this organization is rewarding. Beyond words. When I look at the weaknesses of our area, I also think of the passion. It's funny how one of our greatest strengths is one of our greatest weaknesses. Sometimes we forget how strong our passion is for this organization. This strong passion can be perceived in ways that they were never meant to be. Whether you're a state officer, state committee chairperson, or a regular member, we are all leaders. I tend to ask myself "Are we working smarter, not harder? Are we giving our new officers, new board of directors, committee chairpersons, or even our new employees the information they need to do their respective duties? Are we being proactive rather than reactive?"

Another thing I have noticed as the Exec, is that each state has a divide. Whether its north/south, east/ west, or even northwest/southeast, as leaders we have to find a way to unite everyone to strengthen our organization. To date, there have been over, 4,200 Program Technicians who have attended the Program Technician Skills for Success Enhancing the Future, and over 2,000 Managers trained in the National Leadership Training- Influencing Excellence: Effective Leadership at FSA. Our national leadership has spent time and money to make the best of its employees. I have heard many of the techniques that employees are learning can be used not only at the office, but also in their personal lives, including NASCOE.

Let's face it, we are all human and we will never make everyone happy. We cannot change others, but we can change how we react to them. Through the Leadership Break Out Session at the MWA Rally and this bulletin, I want to cover a few items that hopefully can resolve the frustrations and divides within states (and even offices) and bring everyone back to the united front we are ... NASCOE and FSA.

Leadership:

Whether you realize it or not, you are always communicating. Whether it's verbal, non-verbal (body language), or written we have to keep in mind that if we are awake, then we are communicating. Respect each other. Listen to what others have to say. You might have a good idea, but maybe someone else's idea might be a better way of doing business. Give credit and accolades to those who deserve them.

Communication:

Lack of communication can cause uneasiness, frustration, and even anger. Good communication is the key to recruiting and maintaining membership. It's important to recruit new members. However, it is also important to keep current members informed and included as well. Our voice only gets stronger with more membership. At the MWA Rally, it was refreshing to listen to the reports of what each state was doing to communicate to members and nonmembers within their states. It was so refreshing I didn't really have to cover the communication portion of the Leadership Break Out session. Many states are already using email distribution lists, conference calls (using freeconferencecall.com or Google Hangouts), Facebook, e-news, and now the MWA Website. As soon as you have an association meeting, get your minutes to your members. Let them see what your state association is doing for its membership.

Training and Education:

When you have new officers, board of directors, or committee chairs take the time to train them. Review what the roles and responsibilities are for the positions. Many times, I hear of

frustrated leaders because someone has taken a role in their state but they aren't as engaged as they should be.

At the MWA Rally Leadership Breakout Session, I handed out a packet of handbook references. These were common references I felt that all state associations needed to be made aware. Many phone calls and emails I have received in regard to how to handle certain situations revolve around these paragraphs. Please take the time to review these references. The packet contained:

- 16-AO Par. 111
- 27-PM Par. 453A
- 27-PM Par. 454
- 27-PM Par. 53
- 27-PM Exhibit 8

Delegation:

State Presidents are you effectively delegating and working with your Vice President's? Are you working toward a smooth transition when your term is over? Your state association is too large for one person to handle. Delegate to those around you. Empowering and engaging your officers, committee chairpersons, and others will strengthen your association.

Self-Analyze:

How many times have you had a great idea, but when it came to reality it didn't go as planned? When this happens to me, I find I would ask myself, "what did I do wrong"? "How could I have handled this better"? "How can I fix this"? When I make a mistake, I tend to self-analyze and then seek input, if needed, to make sure I don't make that same mistake again. It's ok to make mistakes. We are human. Apologize. Learn from them. Don't pass it off as someone else's fault... You're a leader, own it. Then, apply what you have learned and think about that prior to implementing the next plan.

As I sit here today and contemplate the last year and a half of my tenure as your MWA Executive, I realize that all the items I listed above, I might have known about before serving as the Exec, but I actually have learned or enhanced these abilities while being your Exec. Working with Jackson has been an honor. We have as much in common as we do in differences. I could not have asked for a better Alternate Executive. I truly cherish his respect. It was told to me after the rally, that "Jackson and I work really good together and set the tone for our area". While this makes me smile, I tribute this allowing our Committee Chairs and State Presidents to do their jobs, and to our communication between each other. We aren't afraid of being honest with each other. We aren't grudge holders. It's nice to know we share the same agenda. Jackson and I are here to serve you, our membership.

With that, I hope you take a few of these items or techniques and utilize them. Look forward to going to work and serving the American Farmer and supporting NASCOE. We are all in this together. I thank everyone for their support and dedication to NASCOE and keep on promoting our association to all of our non-members.

MWA Rally Notes

March 23 – 24, 2018

Des Moines, Iowa

The 2018 Midwest Area NASCOE Rally was held on March 23 and 24, 2018 at the Downtown Marriott in Des Moines Iowa. MWA Executive **Chris Hare** opened the session at 8:00AM. The presentation of colors we performed by the Beaverdale VFW Post 9127. Roll call was taken by **Jennifer Comer** and answered by eight states with 16 delegates present. Iowa State Executive Director, **Amanda De Jong** welcomed all attendees. Ms. De Jong stated she was honored to represent FSA and fellow SEDs in bestowing a round of “Thank You’s” to all that have been asked to do more with less through out the agency. The attendees were a testament to the commitment to FSA and Agriculture. After the welcome, the attendees were introduced via VTC to **Under Secretary Bill Northey**. Mr. Northey informed us of more details on the newly formed FPAC including how FSA, NRCS, and RMA will be brought together as one agency. The attendees were allowed time to have a question and answer session with Mr. Northey (see notes).

Next on the agenda was **Acting FSA Administrator Steve Peterson**. Mr. Peterson has been with FSA for 33 years he came from the Maryland State Office to Washington DC as a National Program Specialist. As a specialist, he wanted to learn how to implement the rules and regulations that Congress passes. In September, he was asked if he would be interested in interviewing for the Acting Chief of FSA, from there was appointed to the Acting Administrator of FSA. Mr. Peterson offered his appreciation to all FSA employees for their hard work and commitment to agriculture, the backbone of American culture.

Mr. Peterson gave additional information on FPAC. He reiterated the statement that is to “realign the mission areas”. Prior to May 2017, FSA was not with NRCS, we were under FFAS, Secretary Perdue recognized that we serve the same producers and felt it would make more business sense to align us under one mission area. He stressed that there will not be one agency leading the other, all agencies will keep their identities. The goal is to have the producers see continuity across the board. If leadership disagrees on an issue, there will be one “boss” to go to – Under Secretary Northey.

The Business Center will focus on mission delivery areas not related to rolling out programs. For example, bringing budget, HR, and IT together allows field office managers more freedom to do their jobs of managing programs. This will leverage the process to get the best from all worlds. How does it affect County Offices? It will have a bigger impact, employee wise on State Offices, Kansas City and WDC. These offices will work to combine resources. The core groups will stay in each respective agency and not have to move to do their jobs. However as attrition occurs, each position will be looked at to determine if the role could be combined or better served in a different location.

Mr. Peterson commented on hiring. In September FSA had a plan for hiring, however it was a number. The Secretary wanted a tool to better plan on how many employees were needed to do the work. A workload analysis task force was formed. That group met in WDC recently and presented a model that that not only allows numbers in regards to where the work is but a management tool. Critical hires were recently allowed, FSA came to the table with 500 and were allowed 150 (75% internal 25% external). The reason it was so low is that leadership wanted to make sure we filled a need and not just a position. Internals were hired to ensure work is getting done. External hires will be coming very soon.

Other topics Mr. Peterson addressed:

- **Bi-Partisan budget, February 2018:** This will allow additional funding for disaster programs. Not limited to hurricanes and wildfires; removes cap for ELAP as well. It will also allow money for training for disaster programs. Also added additional funds for ad hoc disaster money for hurricane and wildfire assistance, the Secretary wants these programs implemented quickly and efficiently. Weeks not months!
- **MPP** – change the formula to lower the amount of premium producers pay. Provides a risk tool for producers. Producers will have to sign up again for 2017 but working behind the scenes to get a lot of work done before the producers have to come in to the offices.
- **Cotton** (seed) no longer a generic base. Will go back to 2014 to establish base, reallocate acres and pick a program.
- **2018 Farm Bill** – Congress is working diligently with departments to gather information and interact on technical advice in planning the new farm bill. Not certain it will get done in 2018. Currently looking at options for extensions for CRP and programs.
 - **CRP** – If the farm bill allows producers to sign up again, some groups want to increase the cap others want to keep it the same to allow row crop to become available for new and beginning farmers.
 - **ARCPLC** will be discussed and could possibly see some changes. He believes Congress will be more prescriptive to data that is used. Location of farms relative to benefits received could be discussed again.
 - **Disaster Programs** – not anticipating a lot of change, those were permanent programs in 2014 FB.
 - **FLP** – Loan limits may be increased, and probably should be but that takes funding so not sure it will happen.

Next on the agenda was **Michelle Motley** for the National Association of District Directors (NADD). Michelle informed the group that they had 190 members nationwide. Their current membership is at 92%. They continue to provide support for new DDs and collaborate with State Offices. NADD appreciates working together with NASCOE on policy and procedures and she commented on how successful we are when the boards work together. Some of the accomplishments that NADD and NASCOE have achieved are:

- Implementation of Key PTs
- National Leadership Training – over 1800 supervisors to date have been through training.
- Implementing joint meetings with WDC, this allows more voices at the table and more success when everyone works together.

Dennis Ray, NASCOE President was the next speaker. Dennis introduced the NASCOE leaders in the group, **Curt Houk**, NASCOE Treasurer, **Chris Hare**, MWA Exec, **Jackson Jones**, MWA Alt Exec, and **Teresa Holmquist**, NASCOE Publicity Chair. Dennis also thanked Iowa's **Patty Murray** for her work and support in HR. Dennis discussed the negotiation process and how it is important to build it at the local level. He encouraged members to meet with their SED and communicate regularly as it makes transitions and difficult situations so much easier. He also talked about effective communication and how important it is to share information with our members as quickly as possible. Encourage your state's members to sign up on the national

database, this is the quickest way to get information. If you are hearing concerns or issues, it is important to communicate those back to NASCOE.

Dennis discussed the following highlights of the meeting he and VP **Brandon Wilson** had with WDC.

- **Workload Tool** – NASCOE had a seat at the table to work with Leadership. A lot of consideration in what to count and how to count items. That piece is done and now working on implementing it as a staffing model. The model needs to be available at the CO level, which is still being worked on with WDC. NASCOE will continue to monitor any potential office closings. Will ensure that they are closed because of workload and NOT circumstances.
- **Dedicated funding for COC meetings.** Currently budget is the same as TO money for COC meetings. Some states are reducing COC meetings to ensure money for TOs. NASCOE is wanting a separate budget fund to ensure there is money available if COC needs to meet.
- **PM 2983 Performance Work Plan memo.** There are parts of this memo that are very contradicting. There are extreme differences in the memo on how a rating is earned. Working with a competency work group to better define how a rating is earned with no arbitrary hold downs.

Jackson Jones, Midwest Area Alt Executive visited with attendees on a couple of topics:

- **The importance of the COC and NAFEC.** There is no other place in the federal government where federal programs are administered by locally elected committees. The COC environment offers an opportunity for a producer to appeal a decision handed down by a program official back to a locally elected board who knows the local conditions and understands what is going on in the community. The COC system is constantly being threatened by DC officials and some State Offices. NAFEC is the association formed to fight to protect the authorities given to our committees so we don't have to put ourselves in a situation where we are going up against bureaucracy putting our jobs at risk. Jackson encouraged all of us to be an associate member of NAFEC and encourage our COCs to be members.
- **Legislative.** The legislative committee is working to identify members of each congressional district that either had a relationship or was willing to form a relationship with their member of congress and or their two senators. Basically forming an "emergency contact list". This is something that was started, progress slowed, and then Chris picked back up. Basically it is a listing of key congressional contacts to use in case of an emergency. Jackson reminded all the State Presidents and Leg Chairs to work on these lists and keep them up to date. These contacts can become very key as the new farm bill is drafted as well and budget items discussed.

Dillard Financial Services Staff updated us on their programs and discussed the availability of benefits training they offer for each state. They invited **Tony Augustine** to give a report on working with them on a retirement analysis and planning. Tony sang the praises of Dillard's and how they have assisted him to better understand his benefits and continue to maximize TSP to be better prepared for Retirement.

The area Legislative Committee gave us an update from Committee Chair Kay Lumsden who was unable to attend the rally. They updated the attendees on budget, the Farm Bill and the recent negotiation meeting. Tony Augustine discussed the PAC and reminded us how AMAZING the MWA really is!

A **NAFEC Report** was given by MWA NAFEC Chair **Mary Roberts** and NAFEC Secretary/Treasurer **Bob Braden**. They reminded us to keep the lines of communication open with our COCs and encourage them to become members of NAFEC. They have the voice that we do not have in WDC. The COC is essential to the mainstay of FSA and without them or the COC system we will no longer be "farmer run". NAFEC is working to get the COC funding as its own line item on the budget rather than using the same as temporary staffing funds. They have had some issues with membership and payroll deduction. If you have signed up to be a member and your payroll deduction is not being taken out, please check with your State Chair or Mary Roberts and she will get it taken care of. You may need to renew your membership.

RASCOE. Cindy Hall, National Treasurer reported on RASCOE. She informed the attendees that they were offering a 2 for 1 membership for all associate members that signed up this weekend. And reminded the group that any new retirees, your first year of membership is free. Cindy also reminded any attendees that if they have not forwarded pictures and information for any members that have passed from their states to please do so. She is working on the memorial slideshow for the NASCOE convention.

The rest of the afternoon was spent listening to Dillard Financial Services present to the attendees information on retirement benefits and how Dillard's can work with you to maximize your benefits. They always provide excellent information

The day was adjourned at approximately 4:30pm.

MWA Rally Saturday March 24, 2018

Saturday morning attendees reconvened at 8:30AM. There was inclement weather starting across the Midwest, so a few attendees chose to head out early and beat the weather. However, those left in attendance discussed several hot topics with MWA Executive **Chris Hare** and President **Dennis Ray**.

- Office realignments – *mostly happening in the State Offices. Works well in situations where the STO are in the same cities. Those that are not in the same city will take more effort and may not happen due to the hardships it would cause on employees and the costs associated with the moving employees doesn't make sense.*
- Leasing – *needs to be back in the hands of the COC. Concern was expressed over a lease that is expiring in August and nothing has even begun on renewal. This has been a negotiation item in the past and working with WDC to get it back on the list.*
- Workload and Staffing model. Workload has changed dramatically, what years are they looking at for current numbers? *Previous three years. Working to make sure the work load levels are available to the county, currently it is designed to stop at the SEDs. Needs to be at the county so that work can be properly distributed among employees. ARS also needs to have*

better activity codes. We realize that but probably won't happen any time soon.

- *Is there any thought to giving credit to county offices that do work for other counties? Right now, the only way to get credit for time worked in another county is to be detailed to another county for more than 40 hours a week. We know it is happening, but finding a way to count it is difficult.*

A presentation was given by **Joel Foster**, SDASCOE on the 2018 National Convention being hosted by South Dakota. The 2018 NASCOE Convention will be held in Sioux Falls SD August 1 – 4, 2018. Joel reviewed all the planned activities and invited attendees to get their registrations made as soon as possible. Raffle tickets are available for \$20 each for cash prizes along with tickets for a quilt and SDASCOE is selling cookbooks.

State Presidents were asked to give a report of activities happening within their state associations.

Committee Reports were given at this time. (Reports may be found on the [MWA Website](#))

After the State and Committee reports, Chris asked if there were any candidate announcements. The following have announced their candidacy for 2018:

Jackson Jones, Midwest Area Executive
Mary Roberts, Midwest Area Alt Executive
Dennis Ray, NASCOE President

New business was discussed. All attendees were given the following reminders:

- Use personal emails when communicating about NASCOE. With each new administration our associations are scrutinized to ensure we are following policy and procedure.
- Communicate often and effectively with your membership, share information as soon as it becomes available.
- Engage with your SEDs and State Committees. Don't always take a problem, take solutions as well. "Work smarter, not harder".
- Encourage everyone to be involved!

MWA Executive called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by **Charlene Neukomm** (IL) and seconded by **Char Stone** (OH).

The 2019 MWA Rally will be hosted by Illinois.

Respectfully submitted;

Jennifer Comer, IASCOE

**MWA Distinguished Service Award -
Service to NASCOE Recipient
Tony Augustine, IL**

Pictured (L to R): MWA Exec Chris Hare,
Tony Augustine, MWA Awards Chair
Kathy Balbaugh (OH), Debbie Staley (IL)



**MWA Distinguished Service Award -
Service to FSA/Agriculture
Recipient
Kevin Beekman, MN**

Pictured (L to R): MWA Exec Chris Hare,
Kevin Beekman, MWA Awards Chair
Kathy Balbaugh (OH)



Website tip: Negotiations

Do you have an item that you would like to submit for consideration for negotiation with management? Submissions can be made at any time using NASCOE's simple to use online submission tool.

Visit <http://nascoe.org/forms-downloads/negotiations-submission/>

MWA Rally Question & Answer Session

Steve Peterson and Dennis Ray

March 23, 2018

Q1: During the FPAC townhall meeting there was a statement that each supervisor can manage up to 10 employees. Will that standard be implemented at the county office level?

A1: Right now, we are looking at that more at the State Office, National Office and Kansas City. Too much to trickle down to county offices. In some instances, it would take up to 3 county offices combined to get a 10:1 ratio and that is just not the intent.

Q2: In regards to temporaries, are they the most efficient means of staffing help? Usually a temporary is a 90-day appointment, it takes 20-30 days to get an Alt Linc Card, then time to get access to systems. Often the 90 days is close to expired before any proper training has occurred.

A2: First off it sounds like we have a problem with "on-boarding". Solution to this problem would be something to look at. Focus on taking advantage of temps to allow a step in the door to try them out before becoming a long-term employee. We need to try and come up with a training piece to train people about the importance of our job. For now, I will go back to WDC and discuss the onboarding issues with temps.

Follow-up: HRD is in the process of creating an on-boarding guide, which is a very helpful tool. They are mostly complete with a few minor tweaks. This should help with the process and will be shared soon.

Q3: You mentioned the ad hoc disaster programs that the COC would have approval authority if the county doesn't meet the 35% loss for wildfires and hurricanes. Does this have to be applied to wildfires and hurricanes? Tornadoes, freezes, and ice storms affect our producers in other parts of the country.

A3: Ad hoc disaster gives COC authority on wildfires because they often do not get a Secretarial Disaster Declaration like others (i.e. tornados) do. The Secretarial declaration provisions are not changing.

Follow-up: The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 authorized an Ad-Hoc Disaster program for ONLY losses due to hurricanes and wildfires. The county must be a presidentially declared disaster county. However, County Committees will be given latitude and guidance on approving individual applications in non-designated counties where the applicant claims they were also impacted. The losses must still be a result from a hurricane or wildfire.

Q4: What is the % nationally of FSA/NRCS offices that are NOT co-located? And is there a plan to co-locate FSA/NRCS offices at the State levels? -

A4: Right now, the majority of the county offices are co-located - approximately 85-90%. As for state offices, we have determined where the STO's are in the same city and are currently working on a plan to co-locate those in the future. We will start with the ones that are close to or working on a lease right now. In the instances where the offices are not in the same city, it is not as easy and we will have to look at locations, staff size and locations in between. Ultimately, YES, the plan is to co-locate the state offices as well.

Q5: What is the current enrollment acreage number? We have several options about how CRP may be handled this year. When will a decision be made and when can we start notifying producers? Note: in my county I have over 200 contracts expiring on September 30, I take calls every day on what options do the producers have?

A5: Ultimately it depends on the Farm Bill. In the past we have made a 1-year extension to allow the Farm Bill to be worked out. We are briefing the Secretary about concerns from producers. He fully understands that something needs to be passed on to the producers but at this time, we don't have any further information.

Q6: You stated this morning that we are not losing our identities, but the perception in the field is that we are. FSA logo has been pulled and we are to use the USDA logo, but have been told NRCS is maintaining their logo. I fully appreciate that we are all USDA but could you expand on this please?

A6: No one is losing their identity. We are One USDA. Have to work on the logo piece but will try to obtain newer information.

Follow-up: The agencies will remain. There will still be FSA and NRCS. There will still be a CED and Conservationist to report to the SED and/or the State Conservationist. Cross-training will be provided on the common programs available in order for both staffs to know which direction to point them in. However, the specific agency staff will still be responsible for enrollment.

Q7: In past online tools for producers for sign-ups, entities have been unable to do so and be recognized. With Farmers.gov, will access and privileges be easier to acquire for complicated business partners?

A7: When it rolls out will be customer facing to start with. As it gains momentum, entities will be able to get access. Have been in discussion with IT to grant Level 2 access for entities. The first roll out will be Farm Plus & Bridges.

Follow-up: The full intent of Farmers.gov is to have necessary information for employees and farmers. Additionally, the farmers.gov is being built to provide more simplistic and easier functionality. This will be in phases and will take time to get to full functionality.

Q8: Will there be additional funding for BCAP?

A8: BCAP has kind of fallen off the radar. Mr. Peterson indicated he will follow up when he gets back to WDC.

Follow-up: Due to the Omnibus Bill language we are not allowed to perform work on any BCAP at this time. All BCAP related software has been disabled until further notice. The website/AskFSA/Gov Delivery sites for BCAP are being hidden until we are given authorization to administer BCAP again.

Q9: USDA Service Center lease expiration. My county office lease expires on 09/30/2018 and must move. RPLO and our State Office has told me (CED) that my role with respect to finding a new space is limited to prevent conflict of interest. So how can I envision a new service center?

A9: County office needs to have input in the space. GSA space is first choice but that doesn't mean the county office will not or should not be involved. Mr. Peterson stated that he will look into this when he gets back to WDC and follow up with RPLO representative and the state office.

Q10: Can you elaborate more on when the workload tool is going to be available for the counties and states? Are we waiting for a tool to determine the hiring needs?

A10: Yes, because that is what we need to justify to the Secretary where staff is needed. WebTA is very important, we are at a point with the WebTA reports that we can use them to tie

into our workload tool. It gives us a place to start. Do all of the pieces have to be in place before hiring? We would prefer it was yes, but it is not holding up everything 100%. It is to a point where we can share the information with the Secretary and state a case to justify the hiring that needs to be done.

Q11: With FPAC driving customer service to get better. It is very tough on the county office when they have appointments set and the computer system is extremely slow or not working on a regular basis. Is there a plan to do an over haul or upgrade of a computer system that can handle the entire agency?

A11: Bringing IT under the operations of FPAC we are working with them to do a "refresh" of equipment. We are hoping that budget will allow us to replace 1/3 of systems, equipment etc. every year. Currently safe guards have been built into systems that alert IT staff to a potential issue before it starts. IT is engaged and wants to make things better.

Q12: Is there a plan for DAFO to have a pool for non-ceiling COTs? States need to fill PT & CED vacancies immediately but they also need to have COTs on board because of the year long training. States need to decide whether to meet today's needs and sacrifice tomorrow. Non-ceiling COTs will allow flexibility for states.

A12: We have not discussed this specifically but we are discussing streamlined applications. Possibility of using a "register" type of employee. Will take this suggestion back to WDC. Thank you.

Follow-up: Through the use of the staffing tool, HRD information and predicting retirements, headquarters is looking at additional tools to utilize for succession planning. COT's are just one position which is being discussed.

Q13: What do you anticipate the staffing level to be for FSA CO Staff? Any thought of "right sizing" staff by states?

A13: Workload models will show where staffing needs to be at. Right sizing provides some solutions but gives decision to put people together. Are we staffing for continuous need or according to workload today? Looking at 25 programs for staffing and weighting information on each of them. Our plan would be to pull all 50 SEDs into understand the model to roll it out to the county offices.

Follow-up: The SED's will be in WDC the week of May 7th to discuss the staffing model.

Q14: This morning you said you went to the Secretary's office and asked for a number of employees for FSA. What is that number?

A14: Based on 2017 funding and the continuing resolutions our ceiling is around 11,000 employees. We are currently way under that. If we get approval to hire, the numbers will be shared across the agencies. The attrition rate over the next few years will be astounding.

Q15: Where has the money gone that has been saved through salary and benefits by being understaffed for so long?

A15: It will come back as TOs and hiring. If there is a surplus, it will be ear marked for skills training.

Follow-up: Money saved is being utilized very diligently. We have used a portion to increase the performance award percentage in December, as well as funding the maximum amount of

spot award monies. We have also utilized some of these funds for additional interns to states offices, which we are still in the process of hiring, as well as the computer refresh. Travel dollars have been allocated to allow state, county and hq employees to travel to assist with necessary disaster recovery efforts, as well.

Additional Questions that we did not have time to ask/answer:

1. **How is work counties do on behalf of other counties being considered in the workload model? For example: employees who travel to other county offices to help with programs or certifications for farmers who farm in multiple counties.**

Response: Currently that work is counting in the county which the employee is assigned to. This is a very minor adjustment in the workload model in most cases and does not have an effect to hiring proposals. However, there are certain situations where this would have to be identified by the local manager and discussed with the SED. In the future, there is a change in the plans to allow that work to be attributed to the location where worked.

2. **When the three office closures in Iowa occurred a few years ago, FSA closed but NRCS remained open in those counties. How will those NRCS offices be affected by FPAC?**

Response: This would be a NRCS response along with FPAC.

3. **Why do we continue to have CO and GS employees?**

Statutorily there are still two employment systems authorized by law. Additionally, the County Committee has the authority to hire CED's and this can only be accomplished using the CO hiring authority.

4. **Do we as USDA have a plan on how to improve the efficiency of our LincPass Card system? I work in a light activation office in Iowa. We are happy to provide this service to local USDA employees but always wonder why the whole card activation cannot be done every office to reduce travel? Also, improvements to eliminate down time when activation doesn't work properly and the number of contact options to fix a variety of problems is limited.**

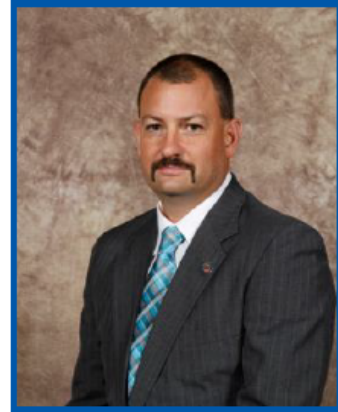
Response: This will be discussed with EPD.

5. **When you referred to the "issues" we (the county office) had with SURE and the worksheet. Do we understand correctly that the new disaster program will be under Farmers.gov and producers can apply from home using a worksheet? Seems like we are unaware that realistically producers will have the same "issues" and end up in the county offices for help. The money and budget for this type of software for producer use could be spent at the county level on software and training because it is likely that he producers will end up applying at the county office in the end.**

The producers will not apply for WHIP from home. They will be able to obtain certain information from farmers.gov, but will not complete the application. Funding is appropriated by Congress separately for software development and personnel/travel/training. IT funding cannot be used for personnel and travel.

MWA Alternate Executive

Jackson Jones, Missouri want2c_bass@hotmail.com



What's the state of your labor management relationship?

This has been the busiest convention season I have had since becoming active in NASCOE. I have had the pleasure of representing NASCOE at 4 different state conventions as well as the MWA Rally in Des Moines Iowa. Every convention is different because every state is unique in tradition, customs, and culture. But one thing I have made note of in each state is how amazing most of our state offices are, and how willing they are to participate alongside state associations.

It is imperative that our trade association has good working relationships with our state offices to ensure open dialog between employees and our state leaders. There are difficult situations, but we need to find common ground and fix the issues that are in everyone's best interest. Even though NASCOE primarily represents county office employees, NASCOE does indirectly work to protect the interest of state office employees as well. Without our producers, a strong safety net, robust footprint, and adequate front-line staff, state offices would be rendered obsolete.

In those rare cases where state office staff are not on the same page as NASCOE or the state affiliate, I would hope that we could at least still carry on an open dialog about the issues we do agree on. For the most part I believe most of our differences in ideology can be overcome by open and transparent negotiations and direct communication. Our association is about promoting the loyalty, service, courtesy, and effort of our employees, not creating an us versus them mentality. We are about promoting good sound ideas that make business sense and make ours a stronger agency into the future.

And to our state associations who are having difficulty in negotiating with our state offices, please take the time to examine your tactics. Make sure we are extending an olive branch, and that we are meeting our state office leaders well past the middle. Our intent should be to improve our employee experience and ensure the best possible customer service for our farmers and ranchers, as opposed to winning debates on principal alone.

Sometimes it is best to go to management with an offer before we have an ask. Trust is gained over time with positive experiences and lost immediately with poor judgement or even innocent missteps. Unfortunately, it is much more difficult to gain trust than it is to lose, so consider your actions and statements carefully.

State leaders, of NASCOE and State Offices, please take stock of your labor management relationships and let's try to find as much common ground as possible building on the rich history we have of being the "can do" agency. Let's continue fostering productive relationships through loyalty, service, courtesy and effort.

The 2018 NASCOE Convention will be held in Sioux Falls, SD.



August 1-4, 2018

Ramkota Best Western, Sioux Falls, SD Telephone: (605)977-4501

<http://book.bestwestern.com/bestwestern/groupSearch.do?groupId=6P3TJ4R5>

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NASCOE & Midwest Area State Websites



NASCOE

<http://nascoe.org/>

MWA-NASCOE

<http://midwestnascoe.org>

*Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota,
Ohio and Wisconsin
[statename].midwestnascoe.org*

Iowa

<http://iascoe.org/>

Missouri

<http://www.nascoe.org/>



FSA GOLF TOURNAMENT - 4 PERSON BEST SHOT

Friday, August 24, 2018

4-Person Best Shot

\$35 per person
18 holes with cart

\$140 per Team

Schedule of Events

9:00 am Registration

9:30 am Shotgun
Start

Spring Lake Golf Course

3286 Karr Ave

Wall Lake, IA 51466

www.springlakeecc.com

Please Pre-Register by August 1, 2018

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119 Boulder Dr.
Lake View, IA 51450

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Block of rooms reserved under
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*Located 1 mile east of Lake
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Lunch:

Grilled Pork
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and
coleslaw/
cottage cheese

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Mail one **check per team with names to:**

Ryan Leners
500 N 12th St
Sac City, IA 50583

Thursday Night Hospitality

The Thirsty Carp
930 9th St (on HWY 175)
Lake View, IA 51450

*Located 1.5 miles west of hotel by Dollar
General*

Starts at 6 pm, come whenever you like.

All experience levels are welcome to play! The main goal of the day is having fun and meeting some colleagues you may not have met before!

+++++

Directions to golf course: 5 miles west of Lake View at the Junction of Highway 175 & 7