

# IASCOE NEWSLETTER

The Iowa Association of FSA County Office Employees



# September 2007

The Quarterly Edition

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***From the desk of Derryl McLaren, SED.....***

Labor Day is approaching, and that signals another Fiscal Year in the life of a Federal (non-Federal) employee is nearing an end. It has been a long, steady grind this year, and it was truly a TEAM effort. We all owe many thanks to the volunteers from within Iowa and our colleagues from Illinois that stepped forward to help. With their help, along with one last surge, we will all cross the finish line together.

It is important in so many ways that we all end the Fiscal year in relatively the same shape, one office to another. GIS acreage adjustments should now be behind us. CRP corrections and REX should be history. Signature authorities and eligibilities had better be current and review-proof, for the IPIA audits will continue for the foreseeable future. We should all be prepared to put our best foot forward as we enter Fiscal 2008.

So what will 2008 look like for us at FSA? While we have pronounced finality to GIS data entry, there will be new tools to implement using this new data base. Old CRP contracts will expire as new CRP contracts under REX will begin. Or will they? IPIA audits will continue, so we will continue to review reviewers' reviews of reviews for some time. The new Disaster program will be initiated, but it will have limited impact in Iowa. The new Performance Management System will be "old hat", with a whole year under our belts. Out with the old Workload system and in with the new. Our computer system is also old and may remind us of a three-legged dog, but it is our family dog.

And what will 2008 look like for Iowa's producers? With the possible exception of weather, the only thing to dampen optimism for 2008 will be finding storage space this Fall. Higher profits will drive higher cash rents which will drive increased risk which, along with higher input costs, should support our farm loan volume. Increased opportunities will bring younger farmers in greater numbers back to the farm, which will provide greater diversity to our farm loan customer base.

In short, the landscape is being altered in our farming communities, and maybe the demographics will change, as well. Our new marketplace is in our own backyard! Price discovery is happening in Boone, Algona, and Shenandoah, Iowa, instead of New Orleans, Galveston, or Rotterdam. This change is happening around us as we debate a new Farm Bill, for the old one ends with the Fiscal year. That is why we have no choice but to have our desks clean by the end of September; there is no Farm Bill authority after September 30.

As we have worked toward our finish line, I have observed a common theme in the volunteerism and assistance demonstrated over the last several months, and it can be described in one word, "TEAM". A TEAM moves together, toward a common objective, or goal. A TEAM accepts praise together, and it also shares the blame from a single member's failure. Unlike family, where you are unable to choose the members, a TEAM can improve itself by every ONE accepting the common objectives as their own and adding additional members that support the goals of the Agency. Unlike a TEAM that strives for excellence, a family will "carry the baggage" of the members that work against the common objectives.

From the many comments I have heard over the spring and summer from all of you, and particularly those that volunteered, I judge us to be a TEAM, and a darned good one, at that. So pat yourselves on the back. You deserve it! It will soon be a job well done!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derryl McLaren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# The President's Page



Steve Kennedy, CED Jasper County

## The Farm Bill and Why We Should Care

*“There are 2 things you don’t want to see made – sausage and legislation”* - Otto von Bismark (1815-1898), Chancellor, Germany

Perhaps you have heard this saying and maybe even agree with its sentiment. The way our government laws are created can sometimes make us want to turn away, but I strongly encourage you to stay involved. I find the current Farm Bill process very interesting and exciting while at the same time understand the seriousness of the matter and the direct impact such legislation may have on our future as employees.

The Farm Bill discussion is unique in that the divisions oftentimes don’t breakdown between political parties (Democrat / Republican). Rather it can be North vs. South during the committee hearings and later rural vs. urban when it goes before the full House or Senate. This all makes for some interesting bedfellows amongst the politicians and the various interest groups.

As of this writing, the US House has passed its version of the Farm Bill. The US Senate committee plans to take up the legislation in September. It is important to realize that two of the key players on the Senate side are Senator Harkin (Chairman) and Senator Grassley (Minority Member). Our senators have a vital interest in making sure that the interests of Iowans are fairly represented.

What does this all mean for us? Well, truthfully nobody knows at this juncture because it is anybody’s guess as to what the final version of the Farm Bill will be. The Farm Bill is remains a work in progress and the process will likely continue over the next several months. The important point is that we as an organization (NASCOE) **MUST** be a part of the process. I can assure you that this is the case. We will be sending two representatives (Tammy Eibey, Delaware; Cindy Pistek, Hancock) out to Washington, DC, in early September to meet with our senators. Without a doubt there are many, many special interest groups involved in the Farm Bill discussions. It is vitally important that NASCOE / IASCOE be at the table to remind our government representatives of the important service, knowledge, and skills that our employees have traditionally provided.

Before I end, I want to say a few words about the 2007 NASCOE convention I recently attended. First of all, let me say that South Carolina did a wonderful job in hosting a very successful convention. Their “southern hospitality” was at its best. I am still trying to break the habit of saying “you all” in every sentence. The weather on the other hand was anything but hospitable – with several days of 115-degree heat index.

One of the most important tasks we as delegates have at the convention is the election of officers. This year provided some well-run – and very intense – campaigns. I believe that we have a strong team in place to represent NASCOE. I do want to note that our new president, Bonnie Heinzman, (West Virginia) brings several “firsts” with her. She is the first NASCOE president from the Northeast Area; the first female; and the first to come from the PT ranks!!! What I appreciated most about her acceptance speech was her statement that she is committed to representing **ALL** NASCOE members – CED’s and PT’s alike. That is the way it should be and I firmly believe is what makes us such a strong organization.

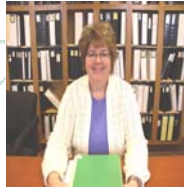
Lastly, the delegates voted to have the 2009 Convention in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. My wife and I stayed 1 night there on our return home to check the place out. It is a beautiful and unique area and I think it will be a great place to hold the 2009 convention. But what about the 2008 Convention? Where is it going to be held???? Well, I hope you all know our neighbor across the river – Nebraska – will be holding the 2008 National Convention in Omaha. It is my goal to see a LARGE contingent of Iowans attends next year’s National Convention. I hope you are making plans now!!!

As always, I along with the rest of the Board want to represent you, the members. Let us know of your concerns. And thanks for being an IASCOE member and staying involved!!!

Steve Kennedy  
IASCOE President

# THE VP Report

## THE VP Report



**Cindy Mensen, CED Clayton County**

### Many Reasons to Attend a National NASCOE Convention

I attended my first National NASCOE Convention August 7-11, 2007. It was held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Yes, I could see the ocean from the room I shared with Kaylyn from Idaho. I really enjoyed the group from Idaho, they were very welcoming and full of enthusiasm. Some parts of their state have been plagued by wildfires so we should keep them in our thoughts and prayers. We in Iowa are only one part of a much bigger picture and attending the convention made me so much more aware of that fact.

Some more things to note about the convention:

- Each state proudly displays a sign and announces their presence to the convention. I sure hope there are many of you that will attend next year's convention in Omaha (just across the river into Nebraska) so we can all stand together proudly and represent Iowa with a HUGE group in attendance. Put it on your calendar for next Aug 6-9, 2008!
- Over 700 friendly FSA employees and guests were registered for the convention....many rewards for meeting and greeting (you'll see why as you read on). It was interesting to hear about cotton and peanuts. Lots of NAP, too. We are a diversified agency! NAIP imagery was a big topic—we are lucky to be getting it here when much of the nation is not. Office closures are happening in many states.
- Many PT's and CED's spend a great deal of their own time and dime fighting for our benefits and rights. Our strength is in our membership and letting our government leaders know how we feel. I'm glad I belong....I hope all of you join and provide support. Do your part to encourage non-members to join. Membership does have its benefits, too. Stories of how insurance policies through JM Marketing are providing comfort in stressful situations, dental policies to look into, cell phone discounts, amusement park discounts, etc. Do some digging and take advantage of all that is available to members.
- Ms. Lasseter and many WDC staff spoke frankly and answered questions. Their goals are to provide IT support, reduce program errors, and manage budgets wisely. The new Activity Reporting System (ARS) was demonstrated (that will replace our current time & attendance). They want input and suggestions from the field. I saw the "Programs" part of Nascoe in action and plan on using it in the future so that suggestions we have in our office can be sent through Nascoe channels and possibly make our jobs more efficient and easier to perform. Share your wisdom!
- The next Farm Bill will dictate the when, what and how our job life will operate in the next few years. Take some time to learn how CAPWIZ works so that you can voice your opinion from your home computer. Ask your friends and family if they feel the same way you do—they can be on CAPWIZ, too! Keep your legislative representatives informed of NASCOE's issues. Timely action is important.
- I was a "sticker" magnet. There were campaigns for Area and National positions and it was interesting to talk to all the candidates as they handed out "something to remember them by". A common theme for candidates—represent the members, stay informed, communicate and educate. Each state is allowed two delegates to vote. I was honored to have this responsibility. Steve Kennedy and I took each vote seriously and all candidates were winners in that they gave it their best shot.
- I was proud to watch fellow Iowans be recognized for their involvement at the National level. Thank you, Trice Smith, for your work on the Legislative Committee as National Co-Chair. Thank you Tammy Eibey and Dee Lehn for the time you dedicated as Midwest Area Committee Chairs. Give these ladies a pat on the back. Some will continue or have new responsibilities for Nascoe. Thanks for all you do!
- More fun news—I was a winner, too! First-timers are given a challenge—meet people and get their signature. WDC people and NASCOE leaders are worth even more points. I mingled and mingled with pen and paper in hand and when Saturday night's banquet came, I was announced the Second Place First-Timer and won \$100! For those of you who have never attended—that gives you even more incentive to attend next year's convention!
- And just so "ya'all" know, I saw four deer just next to the road on my shuttle to the airport. Those wild beasts are everywhere! Felt just like home in northeast Iowa.....except when the tide rolled in.



# The Secretary's Corner

Sue Beemer, PT Taylor County

## GREETINGS FROM YOUR SECRETARY/TREASURER

School has started and I don't know where the summer has gone. Shortly we will be busy going to volleyball and football games. Our daughter is the varsity volleyball coach at Bedford so we attend as many games as possible. Last year Bedford made it to the State Tournament, so we are hoping for a repeat performance this year.

Taylor County is very short on hay this year so we have been over whelmed with managed haying and grazing of CRP. We were looking forward to July, August and September as a time to catch up on things that were set aside because of eligibility review, DCP signup and certification but that didn't happen. We are assuming the price of corn and beans will stay up resulting in no LDP's this fall. We have also been wondering what the new Farm Bill will bring and hoping it won't be like the last one.

IASCOE is winding down on our membership drive. We still have a few counties that haven't turned in their transmittals, so if you haven't done that yet, please mail them to your district membership chairperson. It is very important for all employees to show your support of IASCOE by becoming members. The greater percentage of membership we can show WDC the more clout we have with Congress. IASCOE/NASCOE has negotiated a lot of employee benefits over the years. There are still lots of items I would like to see adopted and I know NASCOE is my only hope of seeing any of these happen. NASCOE can't make these accomplishments without your and my support.

As fall approaches, hopefully everyone will have time to enjoy the cooler weather, the beauty of the trees as the leaves change color, the cool crisp night air at a football game, the feeling of accomplishment as the combines roll across the fields, the love of family and friends and as a FSA employee knowing you have performed your job to the very best of your ability.

Enjoy the fall and have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Sue Beemer P.T.  
Taylor County



Thank you NASCOE members for electing me to be your next NASCOE President. I am very excited about the coming year, and at the same time very humbled to be in this position. With all that will be happening - Farm Bill, possibility of USDA Reorganization, continuing IPEA reviews, etc., I know it will be a very challenging year. It can also be a very rewarding year as I believe there will be many opportunities for NASCOE to make our voice heard. The continued support and encouragement of you, the members of NASCOE, will ensure success. YOU are NASCOE!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if ever I can be of help to you. My e-mail is [bheinzman@suddenlink.net](mailto:bheinzman@suddenlink.net) .

Sincerely,  
**Bonnie Heinzman**  
NASCOE President



#### **IASCOE Members:**

Hello, I am your neighbor to the southwest (east central Kansas), and you're newly elected NASCOE Vice-President, Myron Stroup. I truly look forward to serving you in this capacity in the coming year and hope to have the opportunity of meeting many of you. We have several issues to keep us all busy in the coming year, Farm Bill, Position Classifications, Office Consolidations, IPIA reviews, etc. Even through some issues may be contentious; they will also provide us opportunities if we just look and seek them out. I ask everyone become proactive in assisting NASCOE attain established goals. Your organization has been very active in the past and I want to congratulate you for your extra efforts. You are appreciated. My communication line is always open so feel free to contact me.

**Myron Stroup**  
NASCOE Vice-President



# NASCOE



I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to serve another year as your NASCOE Secretary. It's a lot of work but it also gives me a great deal of satisfaction knowing that I am giving something back to an association that has benefited all of us at one time or another.

I'm sure you've all heard about the challenges we will face in the coming year concerning the budget and a new farm bill. As secretary I am not always involved in the day to day operations of NASCOE but please be assured that I will do whatever I can do to assist any of you or answer your questions. I will do my best to represent not just the PTs but all of you in our sessions with Management and will always have the members' best interest in mind in every aspect of the position of Secretary of NASCOE.

**Darlene Schouten**  
**NASCOE Secretary**



"I am really honored to have been elected as the next NASCOE Treasurer. I am very anxious to get everything set up and working, and am looking forward to the next year working with the NASCOE officers, execs, and committee chairs. I think we are going to make a great team!"

**Shelly Odedenkirk**  
**NASCOE Treasurer**





## MWA News!



My name is Jon Williams and as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, I will officially be the Midwest Area Executive. I am honored that the Area delegates feel I can represent them on the NASCOE Executive Committee.

For those who don't know me, I have been a CED in a small county in south central Wisconsin just north of the Wisconsin Dells Area. I have been a CED in Juneau County for almost 21 years. I have three PTs and the least number of years with the agency on my staff

It will be a challenging year with five new executives, a new Vice President

**Jon Williams**  
MWA Executive



### **MWA Alternate Executive**

Charlene Neukomm has been a PT in Iroquois County, IL for 20 years. She serves the Illinois association as Secretary-Treasurer, and this year was the MWA Negotiation Consultant. She also serves Illinois' district 2 as the Conservation Advisory Contact. She and her husband, Walt, live on the family farm with their three daughters, Hannah, Natalie, and Lyndsey.

**EMBLEMS! EMBLEMS! EMBLEMS! EMBLEMS! EMBLEMS!**

**NOTICE!**  
**WEBSITE NAME CHANGE!**

From:

[www.thenascoestore.com](http://www.thenascoestore.com)

To:

[www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com)

EFFECTIVE SEPTMEBER 1, 2007  
(You will need to re register on the new website)

# NASCOE National Convention

## UNOFFICIAL RECORD OF EVENTS

August 9, 2007

Myrtle Beach, SC

**Call to Order:** Dan Root, President, Welcomed everyone and recognized all speakers, NASCOE Execs and Committee Chairs, Retired employees

**Invocation:** Johnny Jenerette, CED, Horry Co, SC

**Presentation of Colors:** Aynor High School, SC ROTC Color Guard

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Mable Robertson, CED Edgefield/Saluda Co, SC

**National Anthem:** Bryan Rogers, PT, Marion Co, SC

**Roll Call and Seating of Delegates:** Darlene Schouten read delegates and the list was approved.

South Carolina gave a presentation and a welcome to everyone.

702 members present.

**Convention Agenda Review:** No changes were recommended.

**First Timer's Packet:** *Herb Sorley:* Gave out packets and explained the rules. The idea of the packet is to help new attendees get acquainted with everyone. He encouraged everyone to have fun with it.

**Mayor of Myrtle Beach, John Rhodes:** Welcomed everyone to the number 2 family resort area in the nation. Tourism is the number one industry in the state. Recently re-developed a local Air Force Base. He discussed how important it is to adapt to change.

**South Carolina, SED, Ken Rentiers:** Welcomed everyone and hoped they all enjoyed the southern hospitality. This state is rich in history and agriculture. South Carolina used to produce a large percentage of rice grown in the country, but that has lessened over time. SC is very diverse in agriculture and there are many festivals in honor of ag. There are many major horse events including significant horse races.

**SC State Committee Chair, Larry Yonce:** Myrtle Beach is the playground of South Carolina. He introduced the state committee. South Carolina is second in peach production, but that has been cut in half over the last 20 years. Weather is a major factor in this situation. He discussed the changes in agriculture and the need for the farm bill to keep in step with these changes. Discussed the unbalance of ag exports.

**Membership Awards: Frank Bender:** Presented 40, 45 and 100% awards to individuals and counties that achieved that level of membership.

**FSA Administrator, Teresa Lasseter:** Welcomed everyone to South Carolina and to the south. She discussed being sick while working for FSA and how much of a benefit having sick was in her case. We need to support our employee organizations. She works closely with the NASCOE leadership. She discussed the following:

- *Improper Payments:* We have a much better report than last year. CRP, DCP, LDP and MILC are within an acceptable range for payments. Loans, disaster and NAP need improvement, but are much better than last year. This is a direct result of the hard work of the county office employees. There are many issues that still need to be addressed.
- *Deceased Farmer Payments:* many payments are correct, but the documentation has been lacking. We must be sure to review and document any payments in this area.
- *Misuse of Government Equipment and time:* this has come to light recently and there is a review now under way. No reports will be issued until an investigation is done. She reminded everyone of the proper use of the computer and all government equipment.
- *Privacy:* We must be very careful with data and if there is any time the agency is at risk, it must be reported.
- *Office restructuring:* This was one of the main reasons she came back to the agency and she felt that she could have a positive affect. However, we must be aware of the changes in

agriculture and FSA has to evolve appropriately. We must stay focused on the job of administering programs as accurately and efficiently as we can. We do not need as many offices as we did in the 1930's, but we need to have better equipped offices to do the job. Offices that have no employees need to be closed to do justice to the taxpayers. She has been an advocate of not cutting COF employees. We need to use our resources more effectively. We need to make some changes. There is legislative proposed that will halt office closures for now. She encouraged everyone who supports this position to think about how handicapped management will be if faced with the situation.

- *COF visits:* She and her staff visited Dan Root's office and she feels strongly that Washington DC staff needs to do such visits in order to understand the needs of the offices. Management is committed to providing better IT equipment so the COF can work more efficiently.
- *Disaster:* Software and handbooks are being developed. National training is scheduled for September.
- *Farm Bill:* This will be discussed more in detail later.
- *It is very important to take care of yourselves.* Be sure to take time to rest and relax. She commends everyone for attending this convention and she encouraged everyone to have fun during this week.

**Formal Signing of Labor Management Agreement:** Signed by Teresa Lasseter and Dan Root.

**PAC:** Gene from South Dakota, member of RASCOE, spoke on the importance of supporting the Political Action Committee and the benefit of having the PAC.

**RASCOE- Clara Ruth Saint, President:** Brings greetings from all RASCOE members. Thanks NASCOE for sharing the convention. RASCOE's purpose is to work for benefits in conjunction with NASCOE. She wants all to encourage all retired members to join. Regular and Associate dues are \$10.

**NAFEC- Dennis Kuhlengel, President:** He discussed change and how it affects everyone. We must understand change before we overreact. Membership continues to increase. The CED is the link to the COC and it is important to get information on NAFEC to the COC. Office restructuring: many states have plans in effect and NAFEC is working with COC's to ensure the plans are done in the best manner. He congratulated all employees on their good work and as a farmer, he truly appreciates everyone and their dedication.

**NADD- Steve Pratt, President:** It is important that all associations work together and this has been a goal of the officers of the different employee associations and our common goal is to work for America's farmers. They are dealing with CCC-770's on Farm Loan Programs. They are trying to get District Director orientation programs lined up. There is discussion regarding the District Director grade 13 classification. "You can get a lot done if you don't care who gets the credit." The farmer reaps the rewards of what we do.

**NACS-Michael Gibbs, President:** He announced all the new officers for NACS. He discussed farm bill and discussed the elimination of term limits. NACS also wants funding limits raised and wants jobs to be classified as inheritably governmental. This prevents some types of contracting out. Territories are getting too large and producers cannot get good service. There may be some expansion to the Pigford vs Veneman law suit and this may cause more claims to be filed. There could be another 65,000 claims that could be filed in addition to the 88,000 already filed.

**NACE: Nancy Fuchs, President:** This organization is for support staff. Their mission is to promote the betterment of FSA, improve program delivery for farmers and to improve good working relations with other employee organizations.

**JM Marketing-James Mace, President:**

*Dental Plan.* If you fill out an application here at the convention, the plan goes into force on September 1, otherwise it will be become effective October 1. JM Marketing has paid out over \$28 million in benefits for NASCOE members over the last 18 years.

*Long Term Care:* There are 9 states where this is not available. There are packets available and can be turned in now. This is an excellent program in price and benefits.

*Enrollment:* 38% of employees are enrolled in some type of program with JM Marketing and this can be done by payroll deduction. JM Marketing donated \$9714 to NASCOE. \$288 and \$240 were also donated from proceeds of non-members. Part of the money is used for the scholarship fund and the rest is for NASCOE use.

**Bids for 2009 Convention:** Tennessee gave a presentation for the bid to be in **Gatlinburg, TN.**

**2008 Convention: Omaha, NE:** The Nebraska delegation gave a presentation for the 2008 convention.

**Budget Performance Management System (BPMS) and Activity Reporting System-Heidi Ware, Chief of Administrative Expense Branch, Bob McGrath, Agricultural Program Analyst, Vicki Larson, Section Head of Co Budget and Work Measurement Staff**

**Heidi Ware:** She gave a presentation that will also be available on the FSA website. As the pieces of the plan are developed, it is tied to the Strategic Plan. BPSM ties a lot of data together. FSA will use software tool called EPO. Activity reporting will differ from old work measurement system. The new system will reduce the number of items that will be concentrated on. There will not be 180 work items in the new system as was in the old system. There are pilot states participating. Some data is coming through the system and the feedback has been positive. This is tied to the time and attendance system that will be in effect for all USDA agencies. Activity information is captured and reported through the 20 digit accounting code. The last 6 digits contain activity reporting data. Employees will report the work on their T&A.

**Vicki Larson:** She discussed how the reporting system works and it will look at programs and activities. She discussed the matrix developed to capture workload. There are 5 major program area blocks. Actual programs are listed down the bar with the code numbers. There will be an Activity Dictionary that will help identify which activity you need to select. The Dictionary and Matrix are being adjusted as the Pilot counties report needs or shortfalls of the system. A daily scratch sheet is a tool to help record your activities. You can use your daily calendar for the same purpose. She discussed how we will access the time sheet and how we will actually fill out the time sheet.

**Bob McGrath:** Discussed how the time manager functions will work. You must select the favorites before you can use them for the time sheet. You must be sure to check the right type of employee on the list and pick the project code. You will select the activity and the type of work that you do. The entire training for BPMS training is available on the FSA intranet website. He reviewed how the system will work on the timesheets. Must remember to hit save after each entry. You will send the timesheet to the timekeeper and no changes can be made at that time until the timekeeper reviews the time sheet. This will not be fully implemented until the testing shows it is fully functional.

**Adjourn for the afternoon:** Committee and Area Meetings to follow.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Deb Esselman-Baird*



# NASCOE National Convention

## UNOFFICIAL RECORD OF EVENTS

Friday, August 10, 2007

Myrtle Beach, SC

**Call to Order:** Bonnie Heinzman, Vice President

### **Officer Candidacy Announcements:**

**President:** Bonnie Heinzman-WV

**Vice President:** Myron Stroup-KS and Mark Van Hoose-OH

**Secretary:** Darlene Schouten-MN

**Treasurer:** Mary Johnson-SD and Shelley Odenkirk-OH

**Redding and Associates-Robert Redding:** He discussed the Farm Bill process.

- There are 3 phrases that have hurt us in the farm bill process, Reserve Fund, Pay-Go and Re-Balance. Reserve Fund- in order to have a fund, the money has to come from somewhere and this is difficult when developing a budget for the farm bill. Pay-Go is simply put, if you pay for one program you must take money from another program. Re-Balance- this is a goal to get the general budget balanced.
- There is more regionalism in this farm bill than in the past due to budget and crop concerns. Fruits and vegetable growers, nutrition groups, conservation groups, specialty crop growers and an expanded energy title are making demands for program funding. Mr. Redding went through each of the major crops and discussed proposed target prices and loan rates in relation to the current farm bill. FAV growers had a strong lobby seeking more real money for fruits and vegetables. Due to cuts in crop insurance and payment limits, FAV producers were able to secure more funding in the house version of the farm bill. Planting flexibility was especially important to FAV growers.
- Payment limits: AGI dropped to \$1 Million, one entity payments, and other changes are proposed. He discussed the possible Senate version of payment limit restrictions and the final product will be a combination of both the house and senate versions. Research is an important topic.
- Conservation: the administration of conservation programs changed when pressure came regarding a possible increase in taxes. NACD opposed FSA administration of conservation programs. Opposition came from several western legislators due to the lack of FSA offices in their districts and this is a key argument to disallow FSA to admin conservation programs.
- Office Closures: He discussed the differing opinions regarding office closures in congress. Chairman Peterson opposes closing offices.
- September 17 is the date that the Senate is expected to do the markup on the Senate Ag Version. There might not be enough time to actually pass the farm bill before the end of the fiscal year. There could be an extension if that were the case. Harkin, Lugar and Grassley are moving in the same direction. Sen. Conrad-ND, will be a key player in the farm bill process. NASCOE members must be aware of his role and react accordingly. Contacts to our legislators is critical in the farm bill development. Grassroots, education, and PAC and the key elements in working with legislators. Grassroots refers to the people out in the field keeping in contact with congress. Education of the congressperson is essential. The PAC enables NASCOE to get the attention of key legislators .

*A motion was made and seconded to have the election for Vice President and Treasurer done by secret ballot. Majority voted yes by voice vote, motion passed.*

**Kevin Dale: Coalition Partner of the Year Award:** He read the response from NACD member, John Starnes, Kansas, winner of the award. Myron Stroup accepted the award in his absence. Kevin also had plaques for other coalition partners who have aided NASCOE in the legislative Arena.

**Deputy Administrator Field Operations-Steve Connelly:** He discussed the following:

- Use of Government Equipment: There is a memo from the Administrator regarding use of government email and be careful not to use the government computer for lobbying efforts. This is a very serious issue and we must ensure that what we send is work related.
- Office Restructuring: This started in January, 2006. The states are to have a work group to recommend changes. 41 states have submitted plans and 192 offices to close and one to open. 7 states have submitted plans with no office closures. 9 plans are in phase one. 2 plans are in the final stages. 14 states are holding public meetings at this time. 9 states are under review. They will be holding public meetings in the near future. Administration will follow the law and now working within the limitations of the current budget and law. There is no moratorium on office closures at this time. We must focus on service to our customer.
- Improper Payments: The results from the last report are surprisingly good and are within the 2.5% threshold and this is to the credit of the COF employees and their hard work.
- Hiring FLOTS and COTS: DAFO has been able to secure funding at the national level so that personnel are able to be trained and ready to fill vacancies. These positions have not been counted against state ceilings and this enables Washington to ensure new people are ready.

**Deputy Administrator Farm Programs: John Johnson:** He discussed the following:

#### **AGRICULTURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

- On May 25, 2007, President Bush signed into law the "U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007" (2007 Act). The 2007 Act provides approximately \$3 billion in agricultural disaster aid for America's farmers and ranchers.
- The 2007 Act provides funds for a Crop Disaster Program (CDP), Livestock Compensation Program (LCP), Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Catfish Grant Program (CGP), and Dairy Disaster Assistance Payment Program (DDAP-III).
- The 2007 Act also provides \$16 million in Emergency Conservation Program funding subject to AGI provisions.
- In addition, the 2007 Act extends the Emergency Forestry Conservation Reserve Program (EFCRP) signup until December 31, 2007, with the extended signup period beginning August 6, 2007.

#### **Projected rollout of Disaster Assistance program signup is as follows:**

1. Livestock Compensation Program (LCP) and the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) – Signup targeted for September 2007.
2. Crop Disaster for quantity losses from natural disasters that occurred in 2005, 2006, and for 2007 crops if planted before February 28, 2007. (National Training in late September) – Signup targeted for October 2007.

3. Crop Disaster for quality losses from natural disasters that occurred in 2005, 2006, and for 2007 crops planted before February 28, 2007.
4. Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP-III) - \$16 million – Signup is dependent on comments received on proposed rule.
  - ECP signup periods are set by the FSA County Committees, and the \$16 million provided is subject to AGI provisions, which means a separate allocation type funding code on our ledgers. An announcement providing details of the 18 states (99 counties) receiving funding is forthcoming.

#### 2005 Hurricane Assistance Provided

- HIP (Hurricane Indemnity Program) – \$39.7 million
- TIP (Tree Indemnity Program) – \$19.3 million
- FIP (Feed Indemnity Program) - \$4.8 million
- LIP (Livestock Indemnity Program) – \$22.2 million
- ECP (Emergency Conservation Program) -\$179.3 million
- EFCRP - \$82.1 million for approximately 180,000 enrolled.
- LIP II - \$198 Thousand
- Dairy Disaster Assistance Program (DDAP II) - \$3.9 million
- Emergency Assistance Loans - \$11.8 million
- Aquaculture Grant Program provided \$25 million in block grants to the state governments of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas.

#### MORE UPDATES

- DCP – Currently 1,885,262 active contracts with signup expiring August 3rd, and about this time last year we had 1,902,941 active contracts.
- Open Estates/Deceased Persons - Review must be completed by August 31st.
- Farm Programs Delivery Task Force – Time Management; Organization; Best Practices; Process Changes; Internal Controls; Effective Delivery Methods; Mentoring; Streamlining processes. Training recommendations have been provided to upper Management.
- National Notices CP-617 and 618 – 2007 Crop Year Compliance Activities –
  - In a 2005 audit of FSA compliance activities OIG found FSA:
  - completed too many spot checks and compliance reviews
  - could redirect an estimated 368,000 work hours, valued at over \$3.7 million annually, by
  - employing statistical sampling methods in lieu of its current automated selection processes
  - needed to develop a more meaningful and comprehensive method for reporting spot check results.
  - Subject to revision as needed.
  - Current legislation provides authority through the 2007 crops for DCP and MAL's & LDP's.
  - DCP participants receive final direct payments in October 2007.
  - MAL's and LDP's through spring of 2008, depending on the crop.
  - House Agriculture Committee Passes Farm Bill (H.R. 2419) on July 27, 2007.

#### **Title I and II Benefits**

- Continuation of direct and counter-cyclical program
- Inclusion of a revenue-based counter-cyclical program
- Lower Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) threshold

- Direct attribution / No three entity rule
- Continuation of the MILC program
- Reauthorizes CRP through 2012 with maximum enrollment of 39.2 million acres
- Biomass Energy Reserve Program
- Administration's Farm Bill Proposal – Major Reforms
- Administration's and FSA participation with the entire mark-up
- Senate Version of Farm Bill – Not Released Yet

**Deputy Administrator Management: John Williams:** This is the 10<sup>th</sup> convention that he has attended. He discussed the following:

- Farm Bill- He discussed the different proposals between the House and Senate versions. Both versions are below the current budget we have. Carryover funds have made up the difference in the past few years and that is the case for the next coming fiscal year. A request has been made to use the carryover funds.
- Budget: every year the agencies have to absorb the raise in COLA's. National and state office staffing is being examined. A consultant has been hired to determine where there may be opportunities to gain in budgetary savings. A report should be available next spring.
- Leasing: Congress dropped the authority for the COF to negotiate leases and mandated GSA guidelines regarding leasing. This will require a great deal of oversight and makes the process far more cumbersome. FSA has approached congress to restore leasing authority. To date, the language to reverse this situation has not been put in legislation.
- Homeland Security: There will be a Federal ID Card. This process is underway and has started in the National Office. The card will be necessary for access for FSA facilities and computer systems. This is no small endeavor. The process will be slow and costly, but will be done.
- Retirement: Mr. Williams will retire in January, 2008, and thanked everyone for their hard work and their dedication.

**Question and Answer Session:** Bonnie reviewed the rules for asking questions.

Q: Disaster programs require crop insurance or NAP coverage. Has this been waived?

A: John Johnson: reviewed the requirements regarding insurance requirements for previous disaster programs. Section 90-12 intended different wording, but the final version did not contain the intended verbiage. Congress did delete 90-12 and the obstacles have been removed for forage producers.

Q: What options are available for COF's with no full time employees, especially in temporary shared management situations? The question was clarified to describe how the COF employees are bearing the brunt of trying to administer programs with no resources.

A: Teresa Lasseter: This situation is a result of management issues and the moratorium on closing offices will not improve that. There are no real options for employees at this time. Budget drives the number of employees and staffing that can be used. We are trying to do a lot with limited funding. We need to think about how we can modernize and do our job better.

Q: Why are performance appraisals also tied to one office? The question was clarified to describe the work done is not credited in the county where the work is done.

A: Lasseter: This needs to be investigated and it will be looked into.

Q: How will the new awards program be administered?

A: Johnson: It will be tied to performance appraisals and policy will be coming out in September-October. A % will be allotted for performance appraisals.

Q: How will be supervisory grade classification when consolidations are completed?

A: Farmer: there is a CED task force to research this issue.



Q: Much information was removed from 22-PM, when will this be restored?

A: Chott: The grievance policy will be restored soon and some of the information will go into another handbook.

Q: Employees are the most valuable asset for any company. The moral is at a low at this time, what incentives are planned for employees? Examples were sites: more insurance coverage, etc.

A: Lasseter: government has restrictions on what is available to offer employees. She reminded everyone that we have good jobs even though we have a lot of work to do. We should all feel good about what we do and it's important to continue to have strong farming operations in this country to feed this country and the rest of the world. Moral: we need to stop and think about the benefits we are already receiving. We want to support COF employees and do everything we can to help, however, we must make an effort to make ourselves feel better. They are more than willing to listen to suggestions, especially if it is cost effective.

Farmer: There are restrictions on what is available to government employees. She reminded everyone of how good the benefits are right now. Awards are a bit moral booster. By working closing with employee organizations, Washington becomes aware of employee situations. AgLearn-we need to encourage our managers to participate in on-line training.

Q: Will CED and/or PT classification be considered in the future?

A: Farmer: There is a task force being assembled for CED reclassification. Nothing has been submitted to date regarding PT Classification.

Heinzman: NASCOE is going to submit PT Classification to HRM in the near future.

Lasseter: She reminded everyone that if there are increases in salaries, it has to come out of the budget and congress has not given enough money to cover these types of increases. We need to be cognizant of this when asking for such items.

Q: There are serious backlogs to have new employees approved for security clearance, is there any recognition of the problem this has caused?

A: Williams: Washington does recognize this problem and they expect to see a substantial improvement in this situation in the near future.

Q: It seems that some states are receiving 2007 imagery. How is it determined what states will receive current imagery?

A: Johnson: The agency had to decide how to fund IT needs, \$28 million was needed to accomplish this and so it was decided to use NAIP funding to aid in this need. This reduction caused a severe reduction in the number of states that could receive 2007 imagery.

Q: What IT items have been fixed?

A: Lasseter: Are you not better off than in January? The group consensus was that it was better. Washington has spent long hours in an attempt to rectify this situation. The system needs to be modernized and they are working toward that goal, within budget restrictions.

Q: What authorities do the STC actually have regarding implementation of ECP without input from the local COC?

A: Johnson: this is the first I have heard this concern and we will follow up on this.

Q: The new BPMS system, how will this indicate the difference between efficient and inefficient offices?

A: Taitano: This would be difficult to differentiate. We will be moving away from National Averages and untimely feedback. We want to benchmark each office in program delivery. Then comparisons can be done based on cost estimates to administer programs. It is difficult to determine how productive FSA is at this time with the present workload system and BPMS will aid in this area.

Q: How are the coefficients determined with each program?

A: Taitano: BPMS will not use coefficients. We must have standard data to use across the nation, using time, cost and units as a measure.

Q: Will pay grades be integrated into this system?

A: Taitano: Yes this will have to happen.

Q: How will BPMS actually reflect the true staffing needs across the nation?

A: Taitano: This new system should aid in this effort. The Pilot states have reported good success.

McGraff: Pilot states have been working on this and more states are to start. By the end of September there should be a report on the effectiveness of this system.

Q: Please clarify when all records that contain sensitive data need to be in safe storage?

A: Sanders: FSA is already mandated to have all sensitive data in locked storage. The cost of obtaining such equipment is under advisement and there is no good answer at this time. However, we are under the same restrictions as NRCS and other agencies to be accountable on how we handle private information. As far as electronic records, there are guidelines on sharing electronic data. Software will be sent that will encrypt information. This has started on some types of files.

Connelly: Replacing file cabinets with locking cabinets would be extremely expensive and this situation is being researched to find a cost effective means to provide the necessary security.

Lasseter: We must take extra measures to protect information. If we see any type of situation that could compromise sensitive information, please report such circumstances to supervisors.

Q: Performance plans are becoming more important and these plans are evolving. What efforts are being made to ensure a solid standard is used?

A: Williams: There are plans to ensure that states are complying with the intent of the 5 tier performance plans and the results that are desired.

Heinzman: it is very important that supervisors review what is expected at the beginning of the year, so it is clear what is expected?

Q: What are the plans for GIS?

A: Johnson: he is frustrated with the integration of programs with GIS. The problem is that the entire county is not certified at this time and that is what is causing a delay in utilizing GIS in program delivery at a better level.

Q: What are the plans to provide reports that would identify inactive producers in SCIMS and Farm Records?

A: Sanders: There are some canned queries that are available. There are problems with creating reports using current data base systems. Canned queries can be developed. There are limitations to the canned queries. Washington can look into what can be done.

Q: Why do DD's have authority to override performance ratings on employees that they do not supervise.

A: Williams: the DD's are reviewers and this is appropriate for the DD's to perform this duty. There must be some objective basis to change the supervisor's determination.

Q: What is the minimum number of employees necessary for CED grade classification? DD's are required to have 3 FLM's to have a grade 13 classification.

A: Farmer: CED's already have the requirement to supervise 3 employees to keep the grade 12 level. There are other considerations that can be taken into account.

Q: What options are available to states that need 2007 imagery for COF's that cannot do field work effectively?

A: The states that will not get imagery will have to work it out.

Q: Will DD's be able to use CED's to keep their grade 13?

A: Connelly-NO

Q: What is Washington doing to stop payments to estates and deceased farmers?

A: Johnson: There are many circumstances that the estate is eligible to receive payments, the problem comes in when the payments continue to be made to the estate. Currently, FSA is trying to tie into the Social Security database to stop incorrect payments because producers do not report such information directly to FSA. Independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party insight would be an effective aid in preventing this. He is hoping that a report can be available in a few months.

Q: Why are re-locations costs not available to PT's in combined offices?

A: Connelly: relocation reimbursement is available to anyone if over a 50 mile drive.

**Announcements:** Nebraska will be hosting a hospitality room, 402.

**Adjourned for the afternoon.** Area meetings and committee meetings to follow.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Deb Esselman-Baird*

## **NASCOE National Convention**

**UNOFFICIAL RECORD OF EVENTS**

**Saturday, August 11, 2007**

**Myrtle Beach, SC**

**Call to Order:** Dan Root called the meeting to order

**Memoriam-Laura Scholte:** Slide show done to honor the employees who passed away in the last year.

**President's Report-Dan Root:** Discussed the past two years as a president. The first thing that he had to contend with after being elected was FSA Tomorrow. NASCOE has worked hard to rebuild the relationship with Washington DC.

- 3 legislative conferences and the Secretary of Ag addressed NASCOE twice and this was an indication of his interest in NASCOE's opinion.
- In the process of building a relationship with NACD
- State Office Restructuring Plans: NASCOE will support plans that the state associations approve
- Membership has lessened from over 11,000 members four years ago and now down to over 8,000 members. This is mainly due to less employees.
- Robert Redding aids in helping guide NASCOE in legislative items
- PAC- this proves a little contribution gives NASCOE a stronger voice with Congress
- Conservation Administration: FSA should administer this program but we need the administrative resources to accomplish this.
- Need to eliminate duplication of services, ex: crop reports being taken by 3 agencies.
- Staffing: There is not enough money in the budget to get more staff, however, NASCOE will continue efforts to rebuild those numbers.
- FSA Tomorrow: this was a very stressful time and the board worked many hours on that issue.
- He has tried to set the stage for the new leaders. Our strength is in the membership and we all need to have one, unified voice. The Board cannot do things alone, membership must help. FSA Tomorrow is a good example of what can be accomplished when all the members work together. "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country"

Insert NASCOE for “country” and that is what NASCOE is all about and what members need to think about.

- Need to continue to work with legislators, build the PAC, need to look at dues and decide if they will cover costs. With lower membership and higher costs, the Board will have to look at this in the near future. We need to keep our message strong and work as a majority.
- Thanked the Board and all the members for their hard work and support. He also recognized all the committee chairpersons.

**Resolutions:** Shawn Rafferty, Parliamentarian: Reviewed the proposed changes in travel policies.

**Midwest Travel Policy:** Proposed Policy change is to allow the Area Exec to have 8 people attend the Rallies and National Convention and get reimbursed, due to the fact that many areas have separate people in charge of Awards, Emblems and Scholarship Committees and they could not all get reimbursed under the current rules.

**NASCOE Travel Policy:** Clarification on travel statements for Distinguished Service Award Winners and Publicity Award Winners. See Statements

**Secretary’s Report-Darlene Schouten:**

- She discussed the organizational meetings for the national convention. Please send any address changes and associate member changes.
- The 2008 convention will be held in Omaha.
- She discussed the negotiation sessions and the relationship that has been established with management in Washington DC. The negotiation meeting was in Savannah, GA, and the consultants wrote up the items that needed to be sent to Washington. The negotiation session went very well and everything was very organized.
- Exec meeting was held before the legislative conference.
- The Secretary sends out all reports and keeps the mailing list current. The Secretary is the National Convention Chairperson. South Carolina has done a wonderful job with this convention. The South Carolina folks did a great job in organizing and hosting this convention.

**Treasurer’s Report-Larry Segars:**

- Thanked South Carolina for their hospitality and their great amount of heat!
- Finished the year with over \$394,000, this is less than the normal \$400,000 balance, but NASCOE is still in good financial shape. Costs are increasing and dues are less each due to declining membership. Within the next few years the Board will have to take a look at the amount of dues.
- Visibility of NASCOE is at an all time high due to legislative conferences, etc and this is very beneficial to members.
- Plans are in place to transfer all records to the next treasurer.
- Sends monthly reports to the Execs and they are reviewed at that time.
- Had a clean audit last year and expect the same for this year.
- Be sure to contact the treasurer with any changes in the states.
- Thanked everyone for their support.

**Selection of 2009 Convention Site:** Tennessee put in a bid for the 2009 convention in Gatlinburg, TN. A motion was made and seconded to accepting Tennessee's Bid. All yes, motion carried.

**American Corn Growers, Larry Mitchell, CEO:** He described his position with the American Corn Growers and the work involved in the development of the farm bill. He discussed crop surpluses, crop prices and the proposals for commodity payments in the farm bill. There has to be a portfolio of crops dedicated to energy and used for Ethanol. There are concerns about the new compliance rules and the use of "statistical sampling" method to determine spot checks. He remarked on how certain issues are headlined by the media and they force the focus off the real issues that FSA is dealing with. There will be hearings later this year on crop insurance issues. There have been 2,000 spot checks on AGI for millions of farmers. This caused a lot of concern with Congress regarding the few actually checked. There is an attempt to privatize grain inspections for export. This is a real concern about this because it would directly affect grain prices in this country. Chairman Obey got all appropriations bills passed before the August recess. The Senate has also passed some bills. This congress is moving along with business. Office closings must be monitored closely because it doesn't make sense to close an office before the farm bill is passed. He discussed certain aspects of the proposed farm bill and the affect it will have on FSA and farmers.

Q: will we have a farm bill? A: there will be a farm bill, but it remains to be seen if the new farm bill is in place. Otherwise, the bill reverts to the old farm bill. He feels the Senate version is farther along than most people think.

Q: Where did he think the money will come from for IT? A: He didn't know where the money come from the Corn Growers are aware of the dire straights of IT.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Publicity: Cindy Peterson:** Diane Holowaty, the NASCOE webmaster met with the committee to describe ways to enhance state sites. Discussion was held on newsletters and the honorable mention awards because areas do not have such an award.

**Recommendation** to discontinue the Honorable Mention Award and be removed from the Publicity Manual.

**Benefits: Becky Zirpel:** Benefits descriptions are available on the NASCOE website. She recognized all the area chairpersons. Jim Mace attended the committee meeting and described policies available. There is a plan that will be available for health insurance for college students. They will ask to renew the contract with JM Marketing for another 2 years. JM Marketing offers the best prices and coverage available to NASCOE members as compared to other vendors. There are some significant discounts available through cell phone companies. There are many other benefits available that are outlined on the NASCOE website.

Dental Insurance with JM Marketing: the policy is a group policy for NASCOE. There is a \$.50 per pay period per person sent back to NASCOE for each participant. This will continue to be offered to members only, but participation needs to increase in order to keep premiums low.

Long Term Care: want this open to family members but will be paid by employee

Travel discounts: There will be website available and 4% commission would come back to NASCOE for anyone who would book travel through this site.

**Recommendations**

1. Travel Company-approval to establish NASCOE's very own travel company for membership and families
2. Improved Health Benefits-secure new policies for short term Major Medical Coverage to member's students reaching 22 years of age
3. Improved Long-Term Care Benefits-long term care benefits extended to parents and in-laws of members, as long as premiums are paid through employee payroll deductions
4. JM Marketing Inc. Contract- approve 2-year contract of services available to members through JM Marketing with wording changed to include NASCOE membership be provided to JM Marketing to determine eligibility of benefits
5. Legislative Committee Support- continue addressing changes in benefits received under member's health insurance plans including raising maximum coverage age for children; influencing government to lock in percent of premium paid by Agency rather than locking in specific dollar amount and continue pursuit allowing FERS employees to receive retirement credit for accumulated Sick Leave hours in addition to Windfall Elimination and pursuit of PT Reclassification.

**Awards/Scholarship/Emblems: Herb Sorley:** Emblems: sold over \$29,000 in emblems, commissions are over \$1800 on those sales.

Auction: reaped over \$5,000 in benefits, largest amount received to date.

**Recommendations:**

1. The Committee recommends that NASCOE fund a \$200 pre Area Scholarship Award for NASCOE members taking college courses to improve their knowledge and skills to further their career with FSA.
2. The Committee recommends that NASCOE eliminate all financial requirements from the Scholarship application and score sheet.
3. The Committee recommends that the Host state or Host hotel provide for avenues for shipping scholarship auction items.

**Membership: Frank Bender:** Discussion was held at the committee meetings regarding ways to promote strong membership. There were packets from states that had some good suggestions on ways to build membership.

**Recommendation:**

1. Develop a membership packet to be distributed to each state. Packet would contain NASCOE information, invitation to join NASCOE, thank-you for joining NASCOE letter, benefit information, etc
2. Update the current "An Invitation From NASCOE" Brochure
3. Work closely with the National Benefit Committee to provide updated benefit information.

**Programs: Shelley Odenkirk:** Had 79 issues sent in and got responses on 65 of those. Program committee takes care of negotiation items that deal with program issues. The committee took 47 of those items to Washington DC to discuss during the negotiation session. The form seems to be working well and will not

be revised at this time. Washington DC representatives were present at the Area Meetings and answered many questions.

***Recommendations:***

1. The National Program Committee Chairperson should be made a permanent member of the NASCOE negotiations processes with WDC FSA officials, as they have annually determined to be for the previous three years. We recommend this would be added to the Executive Committee Policy.
2. The National NASCOE Executive Committee have communication with the NASE/NACS boards to suggest there be only one process to forward farm program efficiency issues to WDC. Also, to request WDC forward any efficiency issues sent to WDC not through this joint process be forwarded on to the NASCOE Program Committee Chair for review/concurrence.

**Legislative: Trice Smith/Mike Mayfield:** Robert Redding spoke at the committee meeting and described the farm bill process. Tammy Eibey, CAPWIZ Coordinator, gave a report on CAPWIZ and outlined how to use it and what was available through this system. Everyone can use CAPWIZ, you do not have to be a NASCOE member. Cliff Fussell gave a report on PAC and how to set up an allotment. He described what an efficient legislative tool this was for NASCOE. Kevin Dale spoke on the Coalition Partnership efforts and the award given out this year to John Starnes. Office closure was discussed at length. The legislative action plan was outlined and discussed. A fly-in is scheduled on Sept 11-12 to meet with key congressional personnel.

***Consensus from the Area meetings was to continue the following:***

1. NASCOE's Conservation message
2. Pursue Risk Management oversight and administration
3. Continue on push for additional staffing
4. Be proactive on reorganization issues
5. Continue to help and support the NAFEC organization and stop the erosion of County Committee authority

***All Committee reports were accepted as submitted***

**Report by Area of Election of Area Executive Committee Persons and Alternates:**

**NWA:** Kerry Smith thanked all the area committee chairs. Good people make the leaders shine. "The greatest challenge facing an organization must be looked up as an opportunity." "If you just sit there, you will get run over." Keep these quotes in mind. Keep positive attitudes and be proud of what you do.

**Exec:** Cindy Peterson      **Alternate:** Cindy Hall

**SWA:** Myron Stroup thanked many folks for their help and support. There were about 20 members present.

**Exec:** Keith Whiteneck      **Alternate:** Kevin Dale

**MWA:** Mark Van Hoose discussed all of the issues that have been presented during the convention. If you want to be successful, surround yourself with good people.

**Exec:** Jon Williams      **Alternate:** Charlene Neukomm

**NEA:** Keith Richmond reported that all areas and employees have the same concerns. There were about 22 in attendance.

**Exec:** John Lohr

**Alternate:** ?

**SEA: Morris O'Quinn:** Had good area meetings. Concerns identified: staffing levels and the need for help; lack of training; PT classification, IT problems, restructuring plans, and purchase cards. He recognized all the area committee persons. The area is at 89% membership.

**Exec:** Cliff Fussell

**Alternate:** Perry Dykes

*Area reports were approved as read.*

### **Discussion of NASCOE Business**

#### **Review and discussion of Proposed Travel Changes**

##### **Resolutions**

1. NASCOE will reimburse Area Committee Chairs, Alternate Executives, and Negotiation Consultants \$250 to attend the National Convention and \$150 to attend their respective Area Rally. This reimbursement would be limited to a maximum of 8 committee chairs per area as approved by the Area Executive.

**Voice vote taken, All yes. Resolution passed.**

2. Proposed Policy Statement for Distinguished Service Awards: national winners under the Awards program for Distinguished Service shall be paid the lesser of a round trip plane ticket from their respective home state capital or mileage to the site of the National Convention purchased according to NASCOE Travel Policy. In addition to the above, \$250 shall be awarded to each winner to assist in defraying the cost of attending the convention and up to \$30 to help offset the cost of the required photograph provided they attend the entire National Convention

Proposed Policy Statement: The national winner of each category (Best Newsletter, Best State Website, Best Single Issue and Best Article-Humor and Best Article-Human Interest) of the NASCOE Publicity contest shall be paid the lesser of a round trip plane ticket from their respective state capital or mileage to the site of the National Convention purchased according to NASCOE Travel Policy, plus a banquet ticket, and up to \$30 to help offset the cost of the required photo provided they attend the entire National Convention.

**Voice vote taken, all yes, Resolutions passed**

3. Sean Rafferty read the resolutions regarding:

RASCOE, NAFEC, Appreciation to South Carolina for hosting the National Convention

Billy Wayne Denison read the resolution regarding COC system

The resolutions were approved as read. A motion was made and seconded to accept the resolutions. All yes, motion carried.

**Nomination and Election of NASCOE Officers:** Elections will be held by secret ballot and Dan Root explained the process.



*Nominations were made for the following positions and election results are listed:*

**Secretary:** *Darlene Schouten-MN.* She was elected Secretary by acclamation.

**Treasurer:** *Mary Johnson-SD and Shelley Odenkirk-OH.* Nominations were closed and the area Execs distributed and collected ballots. Shelly Odenkirk won the election.

**Vice President:** *Myron Stroup-KS and Mark Van Hoose-OH.* Nominations were closed and the Area Execs distributed and collected ballots. Myron Stroup won the election.

**President:** *Bonnie Heinzman-WV.* She was elected President by acclamation.

There will be a meeting for all the new officers and execs immediately following the convention.

**Adjournment at 2:30 pm**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Deb Esselman-Baird*

***THE PRECEDING NOTES ARE UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS OF THE  
NATIONAL CONVENTION PROVIDED BY DEB ESSELMAN BAIRD OF  
TAYLOR/PRICE COUTNY WISCONSIN.***



***The OHIO State Convention will be held November 3-5<sup>th</sup>  
at the Airport Sheraton in Columbus Ohio! Plan on  
attending!***

***The IOWA State Convention will be held March 27-29,  
2008 at the Stoney Creek Inn! Look for more details in  
future newsletters and mailings!***

# Report from the Minnesota State Convention

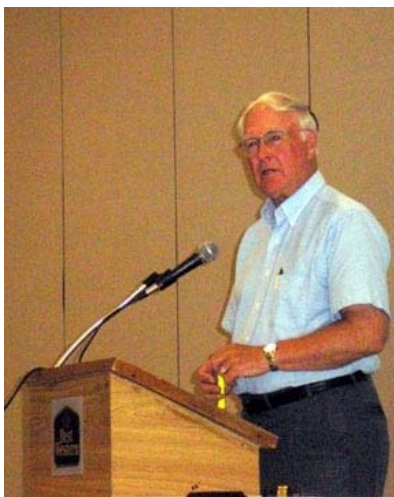
*Submitted By: Dee Ann Lehn  
CED, Keokuk County*

I had the pleasure of attending the Minnesota State convention again this year held July 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. A golf outing was on the agenda for Thursday afternoon with those choosing not to golf shopping the street fair in downtown Fergus Falls. That evening was a picnic in the park located at the golf course. The DD's provided the food and did the cooking. A scavenger hunt was scheduled as part of the picnic activities. I teamed up with John and Deb Baird from Wisconsin and we had a crazy time trying to find our way around the town but still managed to come in third out of nine teams.

The general session began at 8:30 on Friday morning. Minnesota also does a joint convention so we heard opening remarks from both Kevin Beekman, MNASCOE president and Mark Drewitz, MACS president. Speakers included the Farm Loan Program Chief, a representative from National Association of Retired Federal Employees, J M Marketing and Wally Spraby, a representative from Congressman Colin Peterson's office. Mr. Spraby is a former Minnesota SED and assured members that Congressman Peterson is a true friend to FSA. Although, the Congressman withdrew language in the farm bill write-up concerning FSA having all administrative duties, he plans to approach that subject from a different angle in the future.

After a joint lunch, the two organizations split into their own sessions. MWA Alternate Executive, Jon Williams, spoke on NASCOE issues and the president gave his report. Election of executive committee members was held. The military mom gave a presentation and candidates for MWA and national offices were allowed time to speak. A Board of directors meeting followed the general session.

Pictured below is guest speaker, Mr. Spraby.



## Benefits Committee Meetings

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn  
Mid West Area Benefits Chairperson



This year was my first opportunity to attend the benefits committee meetings at the national convention as I took over duties as the MWA area benefits chairperson following the national convention last year. I enjoyed finally meeting the other area chairpersons. We had all talked earlier on a conference call hosted the National Benefits Chairperson, Becky Zirpel, and passed many e-mails between ourselves but several of us had never met face to face.

Jim Mace of J & M Marketing was the first speaker on the agenda. Mr. Mace addressed the open season for Dental Insurance, introduced a new short term health insurance plan for NASCOE to consider. This plan would cover those students who have reached the age of 22 and are still attending school. We also discussed the possibly of extending Long Term Care policies to parents, etc. of members. The policy would be carried in the insured name but the premium would be withdrawn from the member's salary.

The committee discussed an idea concerning a NASCOE travel website. Kelly Lunsford, SWA chairperson, had researched a network that offers to help set up a website for nonprofit organizations similar to websites hosted by Orbitz, Cheap Tickets, etc. NASCOE would receive a percentage of the commission fee after paying a one time set up fee.

All items were presented to each area during the area meetings and recommendation will be presented to the NASCOE board this fall for consideration.

***Membership has its Benefits!***



**Contribute To The Next IASCOE Newsletter**

If you have any stories, photos, jokes, quotes, or information that you would like to include in the next IASCOE Newsletter, send them to Tammy Eibey at [tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov](mailto:tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov)



## CAP WIZ Iowa's Numbers!

Hello IASCOE!

I just wanted to pass on some CAP WIZ news and numbers that are specific to Iowa. CAP WIZ was approved for renewal at the National Convention and will continue to be used as one of NASCOE's legislative tools.

Iowa has 553 CO employees and 158 GS employees for a total of 710 FSA employees in Iowa. IASCOE has 497 (90%) CO members and 8 (5%) GS members. CAP WIZ numbers for Iowa aren't as impressive percentage wise as our membership. We have 194 members or 39%. We have done very well and do lead the nation in numbers but we do not have the most NASCOE members! Kansas and Texas are closing in on us. We also do not have the highest percentage of members in CAP WIZ either. I would really like to see Iowa push its numbers over 200. My actual goal would be 50% of members so closer to 249! IT doesn't have to be just IASCOE members that sign up. It can be spouses, producers, COC members, or anyone who will support NASCOE's mission.

One other point I would like to make is that we need to have more of the 194 actually send the alerts and messages. The last alert that went out we only had 54 send the message. That is only 28%. It has been lower on other alerts. We wouldn't be sending the alert if the issue wasn't important for NASCOE's members. Please try to act on the alerts as soon as possible after receiving them, most issues are very time sensitive.

As always, if you have email address changes, questions or comments, please contact me.

Thank you,

Tammy Eibey



Just a note: I am no longer the MWA Legislative Chair person but I am still a member of the legislative committee as CAP WIZ Coordinator. Kevin Beekman from Minnesota is our MWA representative. I will also be the National Publicity Chair and will need all your support and help in that endeavor.

Has anyone seen TOTO?  
After the Storm!

On June 1, 2007 at 12:35 PM, our office in Muscatine was hit by a tornado. It started out as a "normal" day....as normal as they get any more. We knew storms were predicted, but we did need the rain and so we were happy with the prediction. At about 11:30 or so, my husband called and asked if it were raining in Muscatine. Being the good little worker that I am, I had absolutely no idea, but did get up from my desk and wander over to a window to look out.....Nope.....no rain yet, but it did look threatening. I pulled up the weather map for Muscatine on the internet.....didn't look too bad, but there were areas of threatening weather approaching. Back to work.



Mary was returning from our mailbox outside when the warning sirens went off. We had 2 customers at our counter and they didn't even glance up. Angie started going from window to window looking to see why the sirens went off and I pulled up the weather map again for Muscatine County. This time there was a huge RED blob approaching Muscatine County and at the top it said "TORNADO WARNING" in effect. We discussed where we should go and decided that the LANWAN room would be the safest. We got the key from it's hiding place and talked to NRCS about our plan to go to the LANWAN room. We decided to unlock the door "just in case". (Angie still looking out all the West windows available) Suddenly Angie's phone rang and it was her mother that works not far from Fruitland (the place hit the hardest) and she told Angie to take cover immediately....a tornado was coming. We told everyone to go to the LANWAN room and crowded in. One of the customers called someone on his cell phone and promptly told us that there was nothing showing on his weather radar for Muscatine.....we told him that he was welcome to leave if he wished, but his crop report would be taken at a later date. At that time, the DC from NRCS and a couple of employees left the room along with the skeptical customer.....wasn't long (about 30 seconds ) before all of them were back in the room with the door

shut. The DC told us that he saw debris flying in the air right west of our building. Right then my ears started hurting horribly. I put my hands up to my ears and the tornado hit.....we all threw ourselves to the floor (both of those skeptical customers were the first to hit the floor) and covered our heads.....but it was all over. Mary heard the "train sound", but Angie and I only had our ears hurt. Our fire alarms started going off and we all opened the door to look out. You could not see 2 feet in front of you. We could not smell smoke, but it sure looked like smoke was everywhere. The producers headed out the door with their cell phones to their ears..... We saw the roof of the north side (FSA side) of the office was gone.....ceiling tiles, lights and INSULATION was everywhere. That is what we thought was the smoke.....it was so thick in the air.....



We decided that since our CED was at home (his compressed day) that he should be informed of the situation. Mary called his home and I think he was pretty disbelieving at the very beginning....but could tell by the tone of her voice that she was serious. Randy was without transportation because his truck was being worked on, but said he would try to find someone to bring him down or a truck to borrow. We also called the state office and informed them that we had been hit. We asked if we could close the office, but they said NO!. We knew that we should get our computers out of the destroyed rooms.....they were 2 feet deep in wooly insulation and we still

could not breath because of the insulation in the air. We started un connecting the cords, unplugging plugs, (very hard when they are all covered with insulation) and carrying them to our counter. Our shredder was running and running because it was full of insulation; the lights were still on, even though they were lying on the floor and covered with insulation. By that time our customers (the two skeptical ones) were back in and helping us carry things out of the damaged area.

Next to arrive was the building owner. He had been told that the building was flattened...(rumors were flying everywhere and were mostly false) He quickly called his contractor that was working on the new Louisa County Office and asked him to come to Muscatine. We had carried everything electronic or that plugged in out of the area. We were very lucky to not get any rain. By that time we were wondering about our own homes and families. We tried to call them on our cell phones, but could not get a connection at all. We started calling home on the office phone. All of our personal homes were not touched. In fact at my house, we got 1 inch of rain in approximately 15 minutes.

We thank god that everyone was safe so we could deal with the upcoming aftermath. We set up temporary work stations within NRCS at any space available so we could resume certification that was in it's height of glory!! Most producers understood but we dealt with a few before we were set and ready to start taking information. There are always some that don't understand why you can't help them, even though your roof is gone and you have NO means of copying anything for them to take to insurance companies anyway. Yes, we were stressed at these moments!!

Here we are August 14 and still do not have everything put away. We had to set up temporary storage in the owner's garage when we had to move out files so we could have room to move in our new work areas. We are back in our own area now but we just haven't gotten everything gone through and we continue to find remnants of the insulation that was blown all over the office.

Lesson:

What we have learned is don't assume you are safe, take the precautions needed, make sure you know where your shelter is in the office.

When you hear a siren or are alerted to danger of any kind, don't take it for granted it won't happen to you!

Submitted by the Staff of the Muscatine County FSA Office



**County Office Staff:**

**Randy Madsen, Angie Barnes, Joni Birkhofer, Betty Williams, Mary Smith**



The clock of life is wound but once  
and no man has the power  
to tell just where those hands will stop  
at late or early hour

To lose ones wealth is sad indeed  
to loose ones health is more  
to lose ones soul is such a loss  
and no man can restore

To present only is our own  
so live, love, toil with a will  
place no faith in tomorrow  
for the clock may then be still

Submitted by: Lisa Forburger, PT Kossuth County





**Ron Reuvers, CED from the O'Brien County FSA office receives an award for 40 Consecutive years of Membership in NASCOE/IASCOE which was presented at the August Managers Meeting by Jeff Davis, CED Plymouth County and IASCOE Director, after originally being awarded at the National NASCOE Convention in Myrtle Beach on August 11, 2007.**

**CONGRATUALTIONS RON!**





Larry Niles, CED from the Emmet County FSA office receives an award for 40 Consecutive years of Membership in NASCOE/IASCOE which was presented by Jeff Davis, CED Plymouth County and IASCOE Director, at the August Managers Meeting after originally being awarded at the National NASCOE Convention in Myrtle Beach on August 11<sup>th</sup>.



**Enjoy fishing, boating, camping??  
Union County is worth a look!**

Union County's lakes offer an array of outdoor recreational opportunities unmatched in south central Iowa. Five lakes and 2500 acres of publicly owned woodland and prairie all conveniently located within a 20-mile radius. Here are some highlights:

**Green Valley State Park:** Great fishing, hiking trails, boating and skiing, sand beach with swimming area, and a huge modern campground located 2 miles north of Creston

**Thayer Lake:** Excellent fishing in this spring-fed lake. Though fishing boats are allowed, most do just as well angling from the shoreline. Primitive camping is welcome anywhere around this 10-acre lake and 47-acre nature area. Pitch your tent or bring your camper – electrical hook-ups are available.

**Summit Lake:** Prize fishing and a concrete boat ramp just off Highway 25 offers easy access for fishermen. A large wetland area at the upper end of the lake provides excellent waterfowl habitat and in-season hunting.

**Twelve Mile Lake:** Twelve Mile Lake is surrounded by 1,000 acres of upland game habitat. Prairie woodlands above the lake are open to in-season hunting. Excellent fishing offers angling opportunities year around.

**Three Mile Lake:** This lake project has three primary objectives – drinking water, flood control and recreation. Excellent fishing, camping, boating and skiing and wildlife offers many recreational venues. All-weather rental cabins are also available at the modern campground.

For more information contact the Union County Conservation Board at 641-782-7111



THREE MILE LAKE

## **BABY NEWS!**

**Say hello to Braelyn Marie. She was born yesterday (August 13<sup>th</sup>) at 3:56 to Chris & Laura Davis. She was 7 pounds 3 ounces and 20 inches long.**

**All are doing well. Grandpa is tired. It has been a busy summer!**

**Proud Grandpa is Jeff Davis, CED in Plymouth County.**



-----IASCOE-----

### **Subscribe To The IASCOE Newsletter**

To receive an email notification of new IASCOE Newsletters and web page updates, go to our web site at [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) and click on the subscription link.

# John Bahnsen.....A Hawkeye Fan maybe?!?!?!?



## IMPORTANT IASCOE and MWA INFORMATION

May be found by going to the [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) website  
click on the Midwest Area Site icon to reach the MWA site  
or directly at: <http://www.nascoemidwestarea.org> for the Midwest Area website.

## IMPORTANT NASCOE INFORMATION

May be found by going to the [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) website  
And then click on the NASCOE home page icon  
Or directly at: [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)



### College Life

Who has more fun during those years of college – the kids or the parents? Probably the kids, however; Larry and Jane Trauger have had a lot of fun during the last four years. Lets see, in the beginning there was the packing, the moving; the cramming on elevators or if you were brave – the stairs. Then the first semester is coming to an end when you get the dreaded phone call – “I’m moving to another dorm with so and so”. Yikes – you remember how long it took you just four months ago, and believe me a lot of stuff can fit into those dorm rooms. And then the long drive. But as a parent, you feel it is your duty to help out. Then you remember all the fun you had at the tail gate party and the football games you attended and nothing is better than watching the Iowa Hawks!

The first semester is over and once again the packing, the moving and the cycle starts all over again. This time to an apartment with a college friend – what a relief, this will be for the next 3 years. **WRONG!** By the end of the first year, there was another roommate added and the search for a three bedroom apartment. And yet more packing, moving and please don’t forget all the cleaning of these dorms/apartments before moving out. Remember they are college students and they (or you as parents) don’t need to be charged for any damage or cleaning – refunds are nice.

Finally graduation is nearing; the job search is on and then of course the search for yet another place to live. The packing, the moving, and the cleaning . . . . .

Graduation night is here and on that night and that night only you completely forget about all the trips you have made; the packing; the moving; and the cleaning. You are proud of all the accomplishments that your child has achieved and you want the best for them as they open another chapter in their life. The past is history and you just hope for the best in the future.

Adrienne Trauger, daughter of Larry and Jane Trauger, graduated from the University of Iowa on Thursday, August 9, 2007 from the Radiation Therapy program.

Submitted By:

Jane Trauger , PT Humboldt County FSA Office

“Somewhere over the rainbow . . .” keeps singing in my head after spending three workdays in Greensburg, Kansas to restore a tornado struck house back into a home.

## After the Disaster!

**Greensburg, Kansas** was hit with a tornado on May 4, 2007 and they are now 15 weeks out and trying to rebuild. About ninety percent of the town was destroyed, population just under 1800. Greensburg has the World's Largest Hand-Dug Well, good thing it's underground!

Faith United Methodist Church of Humboldt, IA gathered eight volunteers to go to Greensburg and work. Included in the group were a banker, a church secretary, retired teachers, a micro-biologist, an NRCS Soil Conservation Technician and a FSA Program Technician.

Our job was to continue the work on a house (the only one of two left standing for blocks) that had had the roof repaired. Our job was to replace windows, fill in the nail holes from the torn off siding and paint the house.

Our first day found us loading a dump trailer with all the destroyed roofing material, once that was cleared it gave the place a cleaner look. Then the men were busy replacing and fitting in the windows. We gals filled nail holes and primed the siding.

Our second day started out with rain after a night with 50-60 mile an hour winds that had turned over semi-trailers around town. I'm sure the people there were anxious once more.

The sun finally came out about noon, so back to replacing siding, a couple of large holes where something had hit the house, and priming the outside.

Our third and final day we completed all the replacement siding and painted the whole house. It looked great and we felt great.

Electricity will need to be brought back in before the family can move in. The family consists of a husband, wife and two boys. They were so appreciative of our help and took us all to lunch at the local restaurant, which had been destroyed by the tornado also. So it consists of a lunch wagon with tables sitting on the flooring of the former restaurant building.

I cannot begin to describe how I felt while there and now back home. It ranged from tears to see such destruction, to the warm feeling of seeing smiles on the faces of the family as their home was taking shape, and to pride in seeing the completely painted house with windows restored!

If you ever get a chance to go work on such a mission project do, it not only helps others but your heart is blessed as well.

Barbara J. Adams, Humboldt County Program Technician



## **Iowa Women's Foundation Annual Luncheon October 9th 2007**

The 2007 Iowa Women's Foundation Annual Awards Luncheon will take place at noon on Tuesday, October 9th at the University Athletic Club in Iowa City. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend this memorable event. Enjoy good food, great company and a dynamic speaker: Sally Mason, President, University of Iowa.

This luncheon, titled, "*We Did What? ..... Working Together with Women and Girls of Iowa*" highlights previous grantees and the successful outcomes of their programs.

Registration 11:30 AM  
Luncheon and Program - Noon - 1:30 PM  
Reserve your ticket by Monday, September 24, 2007

For tickets and more information:  
**Iowa Womens Foundation**  
1150 Fifth Street, Suite 261  
Coralville, Iowa 52241  
**Phone:** 319.337.4222  
**Toll Free:** 888.488.4293  
[www.iawf.org](http://www.iawf.org)

**The mission of the Iowa Women's Foundation** is to bring about a just society by supporting the empowerment of all women and girls throughout the state of Iowa.

[Another link that may be of interest:](#)

[2007-08-15 AARP Foundation Women's Scholarship.pdf](#),

**AARP FOUNDATION WOMEN'S SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**  
Helping Women 40+ Discover New Lives and New Futures

*DeAnn Hensdale, Federal Women's Program Manager  
West Pottawattamie County, Iowa*

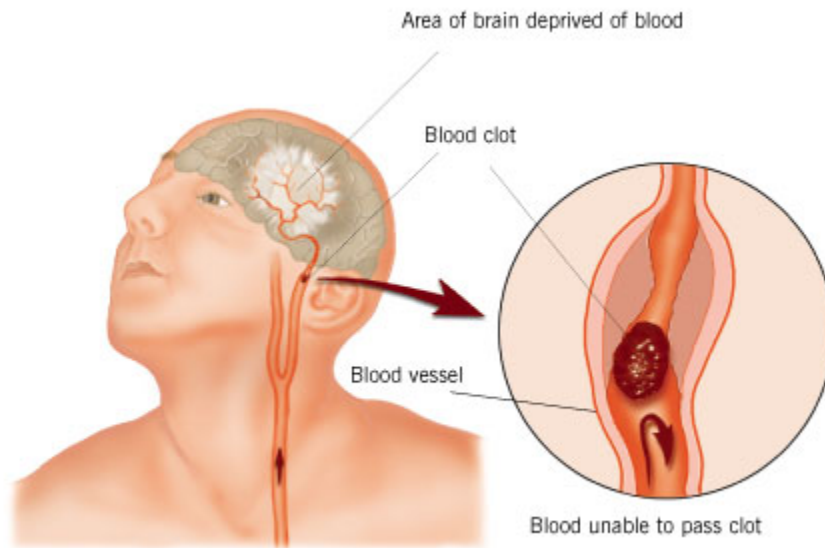




# IOWA GAMES

TEAM NAMES	SCORES
Beautiful Clayton Co	3827
Duh	3826
Hancock County Chicks	3803
STO Brainstormers	3803
Plymouth Rock Heads	3790
Ditsy Chicks	3703
Woodbury Wise Acres	3678
Flirtinis	3624
Page County Nit Wits	3586
Team Winneshiek	3580
Buchanan Brainiacs	3573
www.waywoostwomen	3564
Thirty Somethings	3532
Jasper CyHawks	3444
Cifoxers	3379
Team Knowledge	3360
River Rats	3311
Franklin Brainiacs	3306
5:00 Somewhere	3260
Gamblers Anonymous	3087
Poky Prodigies	3056
Lyonettes	2970
Champions Of The State '07	2880
Cotton Sisters	2501

## **STROKE: Remember The 1st Three Letters...S.T.R.**



**My friend sent this to me and encouraged me to post it and spread the word. I agree. If everyone can remember something this simple, we could save some folks. Submitted by Lisa Forburger**

**Seriously.. Please read:**

### **STROKE IDENTIFICATION:**

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall - she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics) and that she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes. They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening. Ingrid's husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - (at 6:00 pm, Ingrid passed away.) She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Ingrid would be with us today. Some don't die. They end up in a helpless, hopeless condition instead.

It only takes a minute to read this...

*A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the effects of a stroke...totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.*

## RECOGNIZING A STROKE

*Thank God for the sense to remember the "3" steps, STR . Read and Learn!*

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

**S** \* Ask the individual to **SMILE**.

**T** \* Ask the person to **TALK** to **SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE** (Coherently) (i.e. . . It is sunny out today)

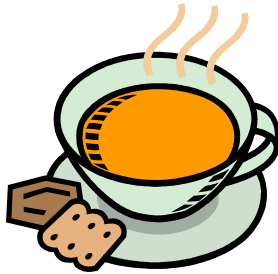
**R** \* Ask him or her to **RAISE BOTH ARMS**.

**\*NOTE: Another 'sign' of a stroke is this: Ask the person to 'stick' out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke. If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.**





## FSA COOKING RECIPES! September Issue



Cream of Tomato Soup

4 heaping cups of ripe tomatoes, chopped  
1/4 c. chopped onions  
6 T butter  
1/4 c. flour  
1 1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
2 c. half and half  
2 c. milk

Simmer tomatoes and onion in butter over low heat until onions are translucent. Put in Blender and blend well. Return to pan. Mix flour and salt and pepper and add to tomatoes. Stir in baking soda, half and half and milk. Heat through but do not boil.

Lisa Forburger  
Program Technician  
Kossuth County FSA



**Dill Sun Pickles**  
**Submitted by: Candy Hoyle**

**In bottom of jars(pint or quart) put a couple of garlic cloves and a couple sprigs of dill weed(really as much or as little as you like) and fill rest of jar with cucumbers. They can be cut in slices/spears/or chunks.**

**Mix: 2c dark vinegar, 4c water, 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  T. canning salt**

**Pour mixture over pickles cold. Add slice of dark rye bread on top of pickles and put 2 piece lid on. Screw tight.**

**Set in sun for 3 days (4 if one is cloudy).**

**Must be refrigerated at least 2 days before you can eat. But the pickles will keep good and crisp up to a year in the refrigerator.**

---

**BAKED CABBAGE**

I usually double this as it is requested for every family get together:

$\frac{1}{2}$  head cabbage, chopped

Partially cook the cabbage and drain well, and I mean well.....put in 8" by 8" pan-

Cheese sauce:

2 T. flour

2T. oleo

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk

1 c. Velveeta

Melt oleo and add flour. Add milk and cook until thickens and then add Velveeta and cook until cheese is melted. Pour over cabbage and cover with crushed potato chips.

Bake for 45 minutes in a 325 degree oven.

Can be made the day before; just don't put chips on top until you bake it.

Submitted by Connie Straw who doesn't remember who she stole the recipe from.....

## TEQUILABERRY SALAD

### Ingredients:

2 heads lettuce, cut up

1 head cauliflower, cut up in tiny pieces

1 lb bacon, fried and crumbled (2 is better of course)

1 pint real mayonnaise

2  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons white vinegar

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar

1 cup parmesan cheese

Preparation: Combine lettuce, cauliflower and bacon.

Mix mayo, vinegar and sugar.

When ready to serve, add dressing to salad and then add the parmesan cheese and serve immediately.

This makes a large salad just right for a football gathering. The salad does not keep so make sure you have plenty of hungry people. You can make the dressing the day before and just mix it all up when you are ready to serve.

Submitted by Connie Straw who stole the recipe from Ardella Felper, Howard County CRP PT



## Canning Peaches

To can peaches choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking. Peaches can be packed in very light, light or medium sugar syrup They can also be packed in water, apple juice or white grape juice. Prepare the liquid syrup and keep it hot.

Remove skins from peaches by using a small paring knife or if preferred, dip fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off skins. Cut in half, remove pits and slice to quarters for better fit. When canning Cling peaches before removing skin it is necessary to cut around the peach and down to the pit with a paring knife and then while holding peach in the palms of your hands twist fruit in opposite directions to separate halves. Then use a peach pit knife to remove pit.



Drop cut fruit into mixture of 1 gallon water and 2 tablespoons each salt and vinegar. This will help to keep peaches from darkening. When all the fruit has been cut, rinse and drain before packing.

Cold Pack into sterilized jars and cover with boiling sugar syrup leaving 1/2 inch head space.

Run a rubber spatula or table knife gently between peaches and jar to release trapped air bubbles. Add more syrup if needed. Wipe rim and screw threads with a clean damp cloth. Add lid, screw band and tighten firmly and evenly. Do not over tighten.



Place jars on rack of hot water bath canner lower rack gently, bring water back to boil and process using the hot water bath method

pts. 25 min.

qts. 30 min.

**Yields** 48 pounds--18 to 24 quarts

After processing, remove jars immediately, place on a rack to cool. Test for Seal!!!.



## Salsa Recipe

4 quarts fresh tomatoes (this fills my sink about 2/3 full)  
3 cups coarsely chopped onions  
3 cups coarsely chopped green bell peppers  
3 cups coarsely chopped Jalapeno peppers  
1 quart sweet corn (fresh or frozen)  
1 1/2 cups sugar  
3 cups white vinegar  
6 Tbsp salt

Blanch and peel tomatoes. Cut them into fourths. Combine all ingredients in a large kettle. Bring to a boil. Turn down to a light boil and cook until thick. This will probably take at least 4 hours. Put directly into hot jars. Keep mixture boiling lightly while filling jars. Seal with hot lids and bands.

The recipe that I was given does not call for processing of any kind, and we had no problems. You could process in a hot water bath for 20 minutes if desired. Wear gloves when doing the peppers...BE CAREFUL WITH YOUR EYES!

---

## Rhubarb Jam Recipe

4 1/2 cups prepared fruit (about 2 1/2 pounds fully ripe rhubarb and 1 cup water)  
6 1/2 cups sugar  
1 box powdered fruit pectin  
1/2 teas. margarine or butter  
Few drops red food coloring (optional)

Chop rhubarb finely; do not peel. Place in a 4-quart saucepan; add 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer 2 minutes or until rhubarb is soft. Measure 4 1/2 cups into 6 or 8 qt. saucepot.

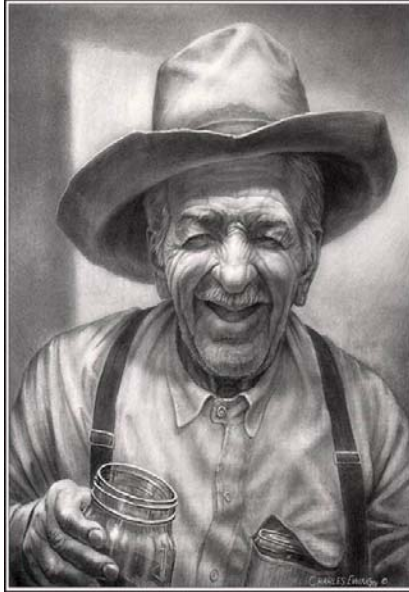
Prepare jars. Keep jars and lids until ready to fill.

Measure sugar into separate bowl. Stir pectin into fruit in saucepot. Add margarine. Place over high heat; bring to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Immediately stir in all sugar. Bring to a full rolling boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim off foam with metal spoon. Add food coloring, if desired.

Ladle quickly into prepared jars, filling to within 1/8-inch of tops. Wipe jar rims and threads. Cover with two-piece lids. Screw bands tightly. Process in boiling water bath for 5 minutes.

**Canning Recipes submitted by Tammy Eibey**





Submitted by Judy Dameron, Louisa County PT

An Old Farmer's Advice:

- \* Your fences need to be horse-high, pig-tight and bull-strong.
- \* Keep skunks and bankers and lawyers at a distance.
- \* Life is simpler when you plow around the stump.
- \* A bumble bee is considerably faster than a John Deere tractor.
- \* Words that soak into your ears are whispered...not yelled.
- \* Meanness don't jes' happen overnight.
- \* Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.
- \* Do not corner something that you know is meaner than you.
- \* It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.
- \* You cannot unsay a cruel word.
- \* Every path has a few puddles.
- \* When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
- \* The best sermons are lived, not preached.
- \* Most of the stuff people worry about ain't never gonna happen anyway.
- \* Don't judge folks by their relatives.
- \* Remember that silence is sometimes the best answer.
- \* Live a good, honorable life. Then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
- \* Don't interfere with somethin' that ain't botherin' you none.
- \* Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.
- \* If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
- \* Sometimes you get, and sometimes you get got.
- \* The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every mornin'.
- \* Always drink upstream from the herd.
- \* Good judgment comes from experience, and a lotta that comes from bad judgment.
- \* Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in.
- \* If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
- \* Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God .

*PERILS OF POLLY P.T.*

*PART 23*

*Written by Roseanne Woerner*

*Created by Dee Ann Lehn*

At first, Homer Soleski was okay with paying a late fee because he didn't certify on time, but then I told him that we raised our rates this year. Now he insists that it's our fault that he didn't come in. Luckily, I am thinking fast on my feet today and I counter every accusation with a great response. "We put it in the newsletter twice," I tell him. "Plus, we had a reminder in the newspaper and Tessa mentioned it on her radio show. Heck, we even sent a postcard and you still didn't come in. It's not our fault Homer."

When I finally convince him that he's either going to have to pay a late fee or repay his DCP advance, he makes this 'humph' noise and pulls this little green book out of his middle overall pocket. He has a separate page for every field. The pages aren't numbered, nor are they consecutive according to farm. I see right away that this is going to be a sizeable commitment of time. Homer has twelve farms with lots of fields.

It takes about fifteen minutes to record crops and planting dates on the first farm. Since it's already after 3:00 P.M., I decide to ask for help. I turn around, but no one is at their desk. Everyone else in the office, including Tessa Starr, is glued to one of the three windows that line the back wall. Meanwhile, Homer is cogitating over some scribbles in his book and muttering furiously. I tell him I'll be right back and he waves me away.

I sidle up to Kadie Vaughn. "What in the heck is going on?" I whisper.

"This guy just pulled up in a truck and started changing his clothes," she says.

"You mean his shirt or something?" I ask.

"I mean his shirt, his pants, his shoes, you name it, he took it off," she tells me.

I look outside and see this big hairy back that is ghostly pale. I start to squeal, but then I remember Homer back up front, so I slap my hand over my mouth, in hopes it will muffle my shriek. "He's almost naked," I say.

"I know," says Myra Stromberg. "And if it was Matthew McConaughey out there baring it all, I guess I wouldn't mind. But this guy is gross. We should call a cop or something."

"Thank goodness his door is blocking most of the view," Tessa says as she stands on her tip-toes, and then cranes her neck as she moves from side to side.

Meanwhile, I remember Homer. I collect myself and ask for help as the man outside pulls on his shirt and slides his bare feet into a pair of loafers. Darnel Finch follows me up to the counter.

When I return to the counter, Homer is rotating his book this way and that. “I didn’t bring my glasses,” he says. “Some of this fine print is hard to read.” He shoves the book across the counter. “I wondered where you went.”

“Sorry,” I say. “I went to get help but I got a little distracted.”

“You must have been watching that naked guy.” Homer tells me. “Who is that anyway?”

“We don’t know him,” I say.

“He’s obviously from Missouri,” Darnel says.

“How do you know that?” I ask. “Oh, I get it...you must have seen the license plate.”

“I wasn’t looking that hard,” Darnel says.

“Then why are you so sure he’s from Missouri?”

Darnel breathes out some air. “That’s easy,” he says. “Missouri is the Show-Me State.”

**TO BE CONTINUED...**



**THANK YOU TO ALL THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE!**