

# IASCOE



The Iowa Association Of FSA County Office Employees



**SEPTEMBER 2010**



# 2009/2010 IASCOE OFFICERS

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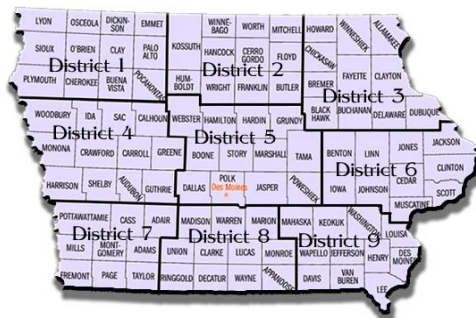
**Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Sue Beemer**  
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## 2009/2010 IASCOE DIRECTORS

DISTRICT	P.T. DIRECTOR	CED DIRECTOR
1	<b>Karen LaCour - Dickinson</b> <b>Alt - Nancy Heideman - Clay</b>	<b>Jeff Davis - Plymouth</b> <b>Alt - Larry Lago - Dickinson</b>
2	<b>Cindy Pistek - Hancock</b> <b>Alt - Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock</b>	<b>Tammy Pruin - Wright</b> <b>Alt - Barry Terhark - Cerro Gordo</b>
3	<b>Tammy Eibey - Delaware</b> <b>Alt - Karen McNeil - Winneshiek</b>	<b>Cindy Mensen - Clayton</b> <b>Alt - Kevin Keegan - Buchanan</b>
4	<b>Mary Lageschulte - Ida</b> <b>Alt - Amy Carlson-Hammen - Calhoun</b>	<b>John Landgraf - Sac</b> <b>Alt - Kevin Fitzpatrick - Greene</b>
5	<b>Chris Grieder - Polk</b> <b>Alt - Teresa Heck - Polk</b>	<b>Steve Kennedy - Jasper</b> <b>Alt - Lee Ann Davis - Boone</b>
6	<b>Jessica Yuska - Scott</b> <b>Alt - Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine</b>	<b>Devalyn Wilson - Cedar</b> <b>Alt - Randy Madsen - Muscatine/Scott</b>
7	<b>Sue Beemer - Taylor</b> <b>Alt - Judy Lundgren - Page</b>	<b>Cindy Bebout - Fremont</b> <b>Alt - Lynette Gruchow - East Pottawattame</b>
8	<b>Patsy Bence - Madison</b> <b>Alt - Connie Bence - Madison</b>	<b>Kelly Cain - Madison</b> <b>Alt - Joyce Frost - Wayne</b>
9	<b>Judy Dameron - Louisa</b> <b>Alt - Dawn Stewart - Henry</b>	<b>Dee Ann Lehn - Keokuk</b> <b>Alt - John Bartenhagen - Louisa</b>





2010 IASCOE Directors

### 2009/2010 IASCOE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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## 2009/2010 IASCOE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### District 1

Benefits/Legislative: Rex Wittrock, Buena Vista  
Awards/Scholarship: Larry Lago - Dickinson  
Publicity: Kelsey White, Emmet  
Membership: Mark VonArb - Cherokee

### District 2

Benefits/Legislative: David Stromer - Kossuth  
Awards/Scholarship: Jeanine Diekhuis - Hancock  
Publicity: Barry Terhark, Cerro Gordo  
Membership: Janine Schwarck - Mitchell

### District 3

Benefits/Legislative: Karen McNeil - Winneshiek  
Awards/Scholarship: Connie Straw - Chickasaw  
Publicity: Rose Woerner - Black Hawk  
Membership: Sheri Rodman - Clayton

### District 4

Benefits/Legislative: Pat Warmbier - Harrison  
Awards/Scholarship: Denise Dugan - Woodbury  
Publicity: Heather Muenchrath - Shelby  
Membership: Cathleen "Skip" Borst - Carroll

### District 5

Bene./Legislative: Teresa Simonton - Poweshiek  
Awards/Scholarship: Connie Safley - Dallas  
Publicity: Kitty Benda - Marshall  
Membership: Rodney Biensen - Story

### District 6

Bene/Legis.: Joni Birkhofer - Muscatine  
Awards/Scholarship: Angie Reynolds - Muscatine  
Publicity: Jessica Yuska, Scott  
Membership: Renee Schultz - Cedar

### District 7

Benefits/Legislative: Chris Irvin - Page  
Awards/Scholarship: Phyllis Reineke - Taylor  
Publicity: Carole Dawson - Taylor  
Membership: Dan Wells - Adair

### District 8

Benefits/Legislative: Kelly Cain - Madison  
Awards/Scholarship: Dave Wynn - Monroe  
Publicity: Rhonda Cooper - Union  
Membership: Marla Morlan - Monroe

### District 9

Benefits/Legislative: John Bartenhagen - Louisa  
Awards/Scholarship: Carol Long - Mahaska  
Publicity: Anna Boecker - Van Buren  
Membership: Cynde Briggs - Mahaska



## Other Roles

### CAPWIZ Co-ordinator

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## A Message from our State Executive Director



As I have driven around Iowa this summer to various meetings, I have noticed the variation in crop conditions. It seems that yes, “these are the best and worst of times.” In many parts of our state, our producers are going to produce record crops this year while in other areas, we have record amounts of prevented planting and crops which did get planted are in such poor condition that you wonder if they will get their seed back from those fields. We all realize that this is the way nature works, not everyone will raise a perfect crop every year. This does help to remind us who serve agriculture to be aware of the issues which producers might raise. At our Farm Progress Show booth, we will have available the phone number for the Iowa Concerns Hotline, not to say to anyone that “you need to call these folks” but just as a “if you ever need this.”

Our CRP General Signup is going well and I have heard that many counties have experienced brisk business. This is often an opportunity for us to talk to some of our producers who we do not see as often as others. We also get the chance to showcase to the general public how well managed our offices are and how hard our staff works to help our producers.

I want to say a big thank you to our county office staff for their diligent work on the SURE program. We all know that this has not been an easy program to implement and we have had reversals along the way which none of us could prevent. The fact that the information we use is data mined from someone else and then “made to fit” our program will always lead to corrections. I am not sure that we could ever possibly test every scenario for every crop or for every insurance policy which can be sold. All of this said, our Iowa staff has excelled once again by taking a complicated program head-on and getting our producers paid.

After one year as your SED, I have gained even more respect for the work you do than I had from the other side of the counter. As a farmer, I knew the programs were becoming more complex, after seeing the other side, I find out that I didn’t realize just how complex they really are and the decision everyone on our side of the counter has to make. Thank you to everyone in the Iowa FSA family for making my first year a great one!





## Midwest Area Exec Report Charlene Neukomm



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the FSA employees of Iowa. I have been a Program Technician in Iroquois County, Illinois for 23 years, with my main duties being Conservation, Disaster and assisting at the counter. The last four years I have served the Midwest Area as your Negotiation Consultant, with the last three of them also serving you as your Alternate Midwest Area Exec. I also hold the office of secretary-treasurer for IASCOE in IL.

It is truly an honor to be the representative for the Midwest Area for NASCOE. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a great fall~

Sincerely,

*Charlene Neukomm*





## A President's Perspective

By Cindy Mensen, IASCOE President

The 2010 National Convention in Arkansas has now become a part of NASCOE history. The Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs, Arkansas, is located near a National Park where people have used the hot springs for more than two hundred years to treat illnesses and to relax. I am proud to say that eleven Iowans attended and represented you well. Meetings began on Wednesday evening and continued during each day until Saturday noon. An awards banquet concluded the event Saturday night. I would strongly encourage all of you to consider attending a NATIONAL Convention – next year TEXAS

will host the event in Corpus Christi, Texas, on August 11-13, 2011.

One of the sessions at the convention included opportunities for those in the crowd to ask questions and get responses from a panel of FSA National Office employees led by Jonathan Coppess, FSA Administrator. NASCOE members from across the nation voiced concerns about a wide range of topics:

- Regarding conservation administration, it appears that management's view is one that does not want to add excessive workload to FSA staff.
- Adequate staffing at the county office level is a high priority for Administrator Coppess.
- FSA has lost some IT integrity—IT leaders attest that improvements are coming and that includes a new system-wide initiative called MIDAS. Server capabilities are crucial and part of the development.
- What is taking so long for a notice about potential PT classification upgrades? Admin Coppess accepted the blame for the delay--and promised to take another look at the proposal.
- A very "hot topic": the loss of productive time used to load data into the new ARS in webTA. One member indicated that if nationwide, 8000 FSA employees spent one hour per week doing ARS, it would cost FSA well over \$10 million payroll dollars per year! Suggestions were made to simply eliminate the activity and just load according to program area. It was noted that our sister agency does not add activities when reporting their work duties. Emphasizing the county level, we need more than 30 lines to identify all our multi-tasking duties. Another suggestion included color-coding the lines that are "credit time". Ricky Valentine, FSA Chief Financial Officer, resounded over and over that FSA needs the ARS data to document "what" and "how" so that we can prove our accomplishments and document how we successfully implement programs assigned by Congress to USDA/FSA. This will in turn give us a basis for requesting additional funds. A final comment was made indicating we then need some way to document the duties and services we are unable to get done – to show the need for additional human resources.
- Crop reporting -- NASCOE believes this task should be consolidated by USDA and assigned to FSA: we were informed that in the future the CIMS program will allow farmers to "choose" where they want to go to certify their crop acres—their crop insurance agent or FSA. It turns out this has been a collaborative effort between RMA and FSA since 2004.
- Benefit training: there is a definite lack of training for all levels of employees. Guidance (and we don't mean additional AgLearn classes) is needed for:
  - Initial benefit choices from day one of employment (lots of reading material in those entrance on duty packets – would be nice to have some face to face training)
  - Assistance in choosing health care options throughout the years of employment, including dental, eye care & Health Savings Account
  - Understanding TSP, how does allocating funds help me or hurt me in the future?
  - Retirement planning – how do I know if my packet is complete? Why do some retirees wait several months for their benefits to begin?

Please keep your IASCOE directors informed of issues you believe should be brought to the attention of our NASCOE leaders. Take a look at the PROGRAMS committee and offer your own suggestions for program improvements. ***I challenge each county office to make a suggestion for a NEGOTIATION item!*** Step up and make a difference in your life and the lives of your co-workers.

And – keep your head above water, certainly a 2010 challenge—***ctm***

## National Convention???



It has been since 1965 that Iowa has hosted the NASCOE National Convention and I have been approached to see what it would take for Iowa to host a NASCOE National Convention in the future. The year 2013 is the next one up for bids. I have been to the National Convention the last three years and I really think that if anyone can do it, it would be the state with the greatest number of members. Iowa has that!

It would take an enormous collaboration with everyone in the state. It would be nice to not have to travel a great distance to the national convention. I really believe that we would need 5 to 7 teams of people that work on different parts of the convention.

The first thing that we would need to do is determine if we truly wish to host the convention. It is a one year process to get ready to bid to have the convention and if we make a bid it is not a guarantee that we will get the bid. We would need to give the NASCOE Executive Board a copy of our intentions to host by April of next year if we intend on bidding for the 2013 convention. It would consist of having a number of members present at the 2011 convention in Corpus Christi Texas.

**What is customary when making a bid?** We would need to have people attend the National Convention so we can convince people to come to Iowa. Sometimes there have been little trinkets that promote the bidding state such as stickers or other keepsakes and/or hosting a hospitality room. A hospitality room can be as elaborate as Texas; in Omaha and Gatlinburg they had what was a room or a number of rooms with at least one bar and room for a couple hundred people to enjoy themselves. It can also be as basic as a room and refreshments for 20 to 30 people (standing room only) such as Idaho had this past year. North Carolina has had a hospitality room at each of the last two conventions and did not get either of the bids. We can ask other states who have bid what they spent on hospitality and promotions. We have to decide on if we are going to make a bid. If we decide to bid we have a lot of work to be done prior to actually bidding - including a package that the NASCOE Executive Board has reviewed. The location must have an acceptable hotel facility, possible tour options, and other things that would be offered while hosting the convention. We have a lot of work to get done with little time if we are bidding for the 2013 National NASCOE Convention.

I would like to get some feedback from the individuals of Iowa as to if we really want to try to host the 2013 convention or a future convention. I will take all of the ideas (good or bad) and give a report to the directors at our next Directors meeting. You can get in touch with me at my home email address [tigerhawk89@hotmail.com](mailto:tigerhawk89@hotmail.com). The following website is the regulations that must be followed when bidding on and hosting the National Convention. [http://nascoe.org/Documents/CONVENTION\\_HANDBOOK.doc](http://nascoe.org/Documents/CONVENTION_HANDBOOK.doc)

On another note, what can we do to have more people attend the IASCOE Convention? I have now been to another state's convention and it was much different than ours. Is there something we can do to get more people involved? In the past we average about 80 to 120 individuals at the annual IASCOE Convention. Since I have been involved as a director, we have always had about the same agenda for the most part. Is there something that we can do to get more people involved with IASCOE other than paying their dues each year? We still need everyone to be a member but we also need people to get involved in other ways. Consider running for the board of directors – think about serving on a committee – volunteer to help at the annual convention. There are many ways to become an active member!!!

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for being a member and challenge each of you to get more involved at the same time. I would like to say that I am open for suggestions and willing to listen. I am letting you know now that my intention is to help this organization be all that it can be. I can't do it by myself but I hope to be a future leader that has been around for awhile and is not afraid of new ideas.

Stay in touch and I hope to hear from you. There is strength in numbers and my hope for our organization, is that it will get nothing but stronger and the only way we can do that is with your help.

*Jeff Davis*, IASCOE Vice-President



## GREETINGS FROM SOUTHWEST IOWA



What a spring and summer we have had. Our area was very wet this spring and the farmers had a hard time getting the spring planting and haying completed. A lot of them waited until the last minute to certify and we also had some prevented planting. Our office was really glad when June was over.

We are currently very busy in Taylor County with CRP signup. We will just get the new bids approved and then it will be time for CRP annual payments to go out. We have also had a lot of interest in managed CRP haying. One thing with FSA, just when you might have some time to get caught up (load POA's for example) something else always comes up to change your plans!!!! I don't think anyone can say a PT's job is boring.

As IASCOE treasurer I have been busy recording dues for the 2010-2011 membership year. If you haven't joined IASCOE I would appreciate you considering doing so. IASCOE/NASCOE works very hard for FSA employees and there are a lot of benefits we wouldn't have without the hard work of a lot of dedicated people. The larger our membership, the more influence we have in Washington D.C. If you have any questions or concerns about IASCOE please contact one of the directors in your district or feel free to get in touch with one of the officers.

I will leave you with a thought for the day. We make a living by what we get - we make a life by what we give.

Enjoy the fall and have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Sue Beemer  
PT Taylor County  
IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer




The page features a decorative border with various autumn-themed illustrations. At the top, there are five items: a brown leaf, an orange leaf, a green leafy branch, a red and orange acorn, and a yellow leaf. On the right side, there are five more items: a brown leaf, an orange leaf, a green leafy branch, a red and orange acorn, and a yellow leaf. At the bottom, there are several pumpkins and gourds in orange, green, and yellow. The background is a light green with a subtle grid pattern.

## MEMBERSHIP

Mary Lageschulte/Membership Chair

We are finishing up the annual membership drive for this year. I would like to thank the membership committee for all of their hard work. To all of the IASCOE members, thank you for your continued support to keep our voice strong. Because of your membership we are ALL able to enjoy many benefits.

A cartoon illustration of a scarecrow with a smiling face, wearing a brown hat, a purple jacket, and blue pants. It is holding several yellow leaves in its arms.

A strong membership is necessary for obtaining new benefits and maintaining those we already have. If you have ever had a cost of living increase or enjoyed a flexible work schedule you know that IASCOE has been working for you.

At this time we have 78 counties that have 100% membership. Districts 1 and 7 are at 100% membership. Great Job!!!! We have not heard from everyone yet, if you are interested in becoming a member you may contact me or contact a membership committee person for more information. Visit us at [www.iascoe.org](http://www.iascoe.org) to see all of the benefits that IASCOE/NASCOE has to offer.

## NASCOE Forms New Membership Task Force

During the NASCOE executive meeting in WDC last April, the Board decided to establish a group charged with formulating a membership plan that will address the projected membership turnover due to occur over the next 5 years. FSA has the potential to turn-over approximately 30% of our total workforce. Likewise NASCOE will be faced with the loss of many members who have been committed to NASCOE for over thirty years. These members must be replaced with a growing number of younger generation members. While this certainly poses a challenge for our desire to maintain a very high level of membership, it also presents a great opportunity to infuse our association with youth, and the great amount of energy and innovation these younger employees can provide. Myron conveyed that the thoughts of the executive board is that members of this group will represent all four generation types, veterans, baby boomers, the generation X, and the generation Y or the millennium generation. Each generation has differences in work-place expectations, values, leadership preferences, and motivation. NASCOE, as an organization, needs to be able to meet the needs of all generation types.

Members of this group are Kevin Dale, SW Area Executive as the executive committee representative. Angie Bierman, Membership Committee Chair and John Marqess, Programs Committee Chair serve as the national program chair representatives on the work group. Myron Stroup, NASCOE President heads up the group and he asked each of the five area membership chairs to also serve on this workgroup as well. These individuals are: Brandon Wilson, SWA, Nancy Chlapecka, SEA, Gloria Covert, NWA, Dave Stratton, NEA, Ann Ulwelling, MWA. John Lohr, NASCOE Vice President was asked to participate also. In addition each Area Executive selected an individual to also be a member of this group. The requirements for the member from each area selected were: The person should be a NASCOE member from the newer generation of employees. We are looking at the under 40 age group. They can be an active NASCOE member or a not so active member that you would like to see get more involved. Listed below are the new members selected.

Sarah Barlow from Virginia, SEA  
Curt Houk from Iowa, MWA  
Tyree Koester from Oregon, NWA

Stephanie Bradley from Texas, SWA  
Brian Sheridan from NY, NEA

NASCOE executive committee and officers realize the importance of a new game plan for NASCOE membership. They believe now is the time to prepare this new a plan of action to be able to meet the needs and expectations of the younger generations. The Membership work group worked this summer to provide a plan of action for the Membership Committee at the National Convention in Hot Springs. This group was encouraged to '*think-out-of-the-box*', be creative, and reach out to others for ideas. Each member of the group was asked to gather thoughts and ideas and be able to bring them all together.

In order to address the turnover and attract the newer employees to this organization and become active and future leaders of NASCOE this group needed to determine:

- What new employees/NASCOE members expect from this organization
- What they need from an organization
- What entices them to join
- What value is placed on this organization
- What would make you want to be involved and active

This list is not all inclusive but the answers to questions like these will help direct, transform, and mold this organization and keep the membership numbers strong and engaged during the turnover period. A draft plan will be developed for review at the National Convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

All members of the work group met in Oklahoma City July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to formulate the draft plan to be presented to the membership at the NASCOE convention in Hot Springs. The meeting started off with some ice breaker activities so that everybody could get to know each other. It did not take the group long to get comfortable and start right into the task at hand. With the short amount of face time we had the wheels needed to start turning in order to have a finished product by the end of day two.

The group formulated a plan with the objective to formulate a five year plan of action to effectively recruit and retain FSA County Office employees for NASCOE membership while enhancing the organizational process of NASCOE to better meet the needs of all County Office employees. The objective includes a goal of 90% National Membership by the year 2015.

The plan has six components to help achieve this objective:

- I. Effectively Communicate & Educate Membership
- II. Effectively Recruit Members
- III. State/Membership Involvement Plan
- IV. Establish Sub Committee & Method for Continued Evaluation
- V. Recommend New Benefits be Pursued
- VI. Develop Future Leaders

All six areas have supporting steps laid out as how to obtain the goals. It will be interesting and exciting to see the response to the plan and to see how much of the plan is adopted by the executive board.

(Continued)



Everybody needs to keep in mind that change is inevitable in all aspects of life. The current generation is more interested in what they see than what they read. This plan will address many of these differences between generations. The success of NASCOE depends upon new ideas and new leadership. NASCOE must continue considering how to develop new members within state and at the National level.

Every member had great ideas to offer and it was exciting to see some of the inner workings of NASCOE. One might think they understand all that NASCOE encompasses, but I believe until you have had the opportunity to actually participate in NASCOE you have just barely scratched the surface.

I am classified as a new employee and also of the younger generation. I have worked for FSA for three years being hired into the COT program in 2007. Previously I worked for NRCS for five years. I was born and raised and still live in Southeast Iowa where my wife and I along with our children farm with my Dad and my Grandfather on a forage and cattle operation.

I would like to thank IASCOE and the MWA for allowing me the opportunity to be involved in such a task. I had the opportunity to work with really great people.

*Submitted by Curt Houk, CED-Poweshiek County, Iowa*



## NASCOE Publicity Information

It was requested by the NASCOE Membership Task Force that NASCOE Publicity Committee begin using social media to stay in connection with members. I am proud to announce that now you can find blurbs and info on a page called **NASCOE News**. I am new at keeping a page like this up to date but there are a few things there right now! Be patient! Check it out now! This doesn't replace our main sources of communication like the NASCOE Newsletters; NASCOE Now's or [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org) website....it is just a tool in addition to the above.

Please take an important role in the communication process as well and make sure the information gets to your state members! So far I have 106 that "like" it or are my "friend" ☺

Tammy Eibey

P.S. The NASCOE webmaster position is currently in transition, please be patient on updates and new features.

## Summary of Benefits Committee Meeting Submitted by Dee Lehn

As your Midwest Area Benefits Chairperson, I traveled to Hot Springs the first week in August like so many other NASCOE members to attend the National Convention. Hot Springs certainly lived up to its name as the first full day we were there the temperature reached 108 degrees but the area finally cooled off by the end of the week to a mere 100 degrees.

The NASCOE convention is an opportunity to meet members from across the country sharing ideas and information in an effort to improve our working environment and our benefits. I attended the benefits sessions held on Thursday and Friday. JM Marketing representatives met with the benefits committee to update members on the products they offer. Two new add-on benefits have been offered by JM Marketing to be included with the \$1000 accidental death policy JM Marketing each member now receives at no cost.

Those new benefits include On Call International which provides such coverage as emergency medical services and assistance in securing passports and visas when you are traveling. In addition, Identity Theft Recovery Services which performs the recovery process for you should you or a family member fall victim to ID has been offered. If you have not provided your beneficiary information for the accidental death policy, please do so. The form is available from your state benefit chairperson or from JM Marketing.

Currently Fidelity Long Term Care policy offered through JM Marketing requires no health questions for enrollment. Beginning December 31, 2010, the policy will require some health questions to be answered prior to enrollment. To help assist with NASCOE's goal to increase membership, JM Marketing will offer this policy with no health questions asked to new members who enroll within 30 days of becoming a member.

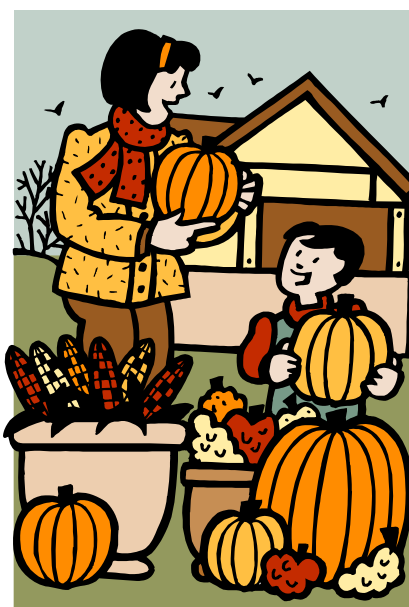
Working Advantage is a website that offers up to 60% discounts on movie tickets, theme parks, hotels, resorts and many other items. Members need to contact their state benefits chairperson to obtain a password to access the site.

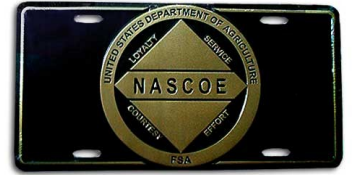
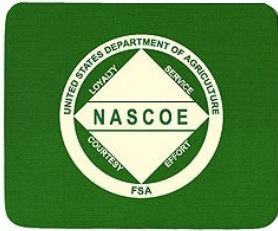
The national Chairperson, Jennifer Blandford, will once again be requesting a Sam's Club discount for members in October. Discounts through Sam's Club can only be requested every 6 months.

Commissions from the NASCOE Travel website total \$1174.39 for the 2009-2010 year.

Remember several different cell phone discounts are available to members including a recently discovered 15% discount from U. S. Cellular.

For more information on these benefits and others offered to our members please contact myself or your state benefit chairperson, Kelly Cain.





## Emblems News

What are Emblems? Why should I purchase items from [thenascoestore.com](http://thenascoestore.com)? Is it a safe and secure website? Where do the proceeds from the sales of items go? Are these a few of the many questions you have? Let me tell you a little about Emblems.

A few years ago NASCOE's Executive Board decided they would provide a web-based site to purchase emblem items. NASCOE contracts with BEJs Advertising, to provide this web-site to purchase items with the USDA-FSA or NASCOE logo. Check out the web-site for the wide variety of items to choose from.

The owner of BEJs Advertising, Era Jarard, just happens to be a retired FSA employee. Owning her own company is a dream come true for Era. If it had not been for NASCOE working to get the benefits she is enjoying today, that dream may not have happened, says Era.

All purchases made through [thenascoestore.com](http://thenascoestore.com) are safe and secure. Items can be purchased with VISA, MasterCard, Discover, check, or money order.

If you're someone who has to see it before you buy it; come to the State IASCOE Convention. Emblem items will be sold during the convention. If there's a specific item you would like to 'see', please let me know and I will be glad to have it included in our 'convention packet'.

Nascoe receives a percentage of sales from the emblems website. Last year we sold a record \$45,760 worth of emblems. With this outstanding sales amount we received a commission check for \$3,526 to be used towards our NASCOE Scholarship fund.

With all this in mind, go now to [thenascoestore.com](http://thenascoestore.com) and make your emblems purchase!

Chris Grieder



## DID YOU KNOW?!!

### NASCOE offers TWO kinds of scholarships? One for your student and one for you!



The **NASCOE Members Scholarship Program** is a special NASCOE Scholarship that is awarded to NASCOE Members that are taking additional college credits to further enhance their careers within the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Each Area will be allowed to award one scholarship winner \$200.00 to broaden their portfolio with adult education courses.

Jim and Teresa Mace (JM Marketing) believe so highly in the opportunities that higher education can bring to each and every one of us that they have generously donated \$800.00 towards the NASCOE Members Scholarship award program! Please consider taking a few minutes from your studies and complete the nomination form to compete for the award! The deadline to submit the scholarship application to your Area Scholarship Chairperson is January 15, 2011.

This year one of our own Iowa members was the recipient of this award. Joyce Davidshofer, CED in Allamakee County, won a \$200.00 scholarship. This is what she had to say:

*Hi, my name is Joyce Davidshofer, CED for Allamakee County, Iowa. I am presently enrolled in college to earn my Masters degree in Business Administration at Ashford University. I encourage all members of NASCOE to apply for scholarships for your continuing education. Besides being a CED, I am a farm wife on the side. My husband and I have a 100 head dairy herd and the farming economy is not the greatest. I was attending college, when I became aware of the NASCOE scholarship program for employees. I talked with Tom Oasen, the NASCOE Scholarship Chairperson, about the employee's scholarship program. Mr. Oasen was very helpful and I applied for the scholarship. I was selected as the recipient of the Midwest Area NASCOE Member Scholarship for 2010. The scholarship went towards buying books for my classes. This was indeed appreciated. This can be possible for any NASCOE employee, it was for me.*

You can apply for this scholarship by accessing the NASCOE webpage and clicking on the Scholarship tab on the left side of the page. The application form is there and is in fillable format. You will find the deadlines and the address of our Midwest Area Scholarship chair, Les Maierhofer, on the application. All applications for the NASCOE Member Scholarship are sent directly to our Midwest Area chairperson:

Les Maierhofer, 7775A Route 47, Yorkville, IL 60560      nadinemm@csky.net

### **IASCOE/NASCOE STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The traditional **IASCOE/NASCOE Scholarship Program** is provided to the children and legal dependants of eligible NASCOE Members. This award may only be used to defray expenses for a student at an accredited school. Applicants must be a NASCOE member's child or member's legal dependent. The NASCOE member's dues must be paid and membership kept current for the past 5 years, or since becoming a permanent FSA County Office Employee. The evaluation criteria are based on academics, extra curricular involvement, work experience and community contributions. A state committee reviews the applications that are submitted and scores them. IASCOE currently awards four scholarships of \$300 each.

Each application submitted to the State Scholarship committee is forwarded onto the Area competition – regardless of whether they won at the state level or not. Area winners are selected from State entries. Each Area awards a \$1,500.00 scholarship. The National winner is selected from Area winners, and the National winner receives \$2,500.00.

IASCOE deadline to submit applications is **January 31st** which is earlier than some states so please be aware of the date! The application can be found on the NASCOE home page and is in a fillable format. Be sure to print the entire application as there is a good checklist of items that need to be submitted along with the application.

Entries should be submitted by the Jan. 31 deadline to: Tammy Pruin, 16316 190<sup>th</sup>, Mason City, IA 5040  
tammy.pruin@ia.usda.gov

Even though the school year is just getting started, you may to think ahead and begin planning your application!

# Iowa Legislative Report: National Convention Legislative Committee Report

In the National Legislative Committee meeting we were encouraged to read the transcripts from the testimony that was presented before the Agriculture Committee. The transcripts are available on the NASCOE web page.

The PAC promotion was a huge success! The Legislative team set a goal to double the number of bi-weekly allotments amounts by the National Convention as well as increase the number of allotments to 300. Both goals were attained and exceeded! All 200 gift cards have been distributed! We hope to continue the increase of allotments and move NASCOE to the top 5 in the Agriculture PACS!

The Legislative Area Chairs were asked to take a list of questions to their area meetings and report back with their answers. The answers were compiled and the responses are as follows:

- 1) What should be NASCOE's Farm Bill Priorities? FSA should be the primary point for all acreage reporting within USDA, Conservation Administration, and administering agency for any new dairy program, establish a permanent staffing ceiling and administer any program that affects producers.
- 2) How can we increase NAFEC participation? Send a letter from NASCOE on NAFEC's duties and service to producers to all county FSA offices. We strongly support NAFEC and wish to provide whatever support necessary to enhance their association's viability. We also felt that there is a need to educate CED's and county office staff on the importance of NAFEC.
- 3) How can we increase CAPWIZ participation? The areas suggested ideas such as: Face book, Text alerts, twitter and other social networking tools. Also, to create an effective communications tree.
- 4) Do you feel the PAC promotion was a success? All areas supported the current process of PAC promotion via visits to state, area and national meetings that included signup tables on site. Also, support was acknowledged for continuing the gift card promotion. The group felt that the power point presentation had been very effective.
- 5) What changes do you want to see on the Legislative Web Page? The group recommended inclusions to encourage daily visits to our web page was weather, commodity market reports, stock market reports and informational videos.
- 6) What do you feel should be NASCOE's Benefits Priorities? The group suggested self plus one health insurance coverage; CO/GS leave sharing and protection from increase health care taxation.
- 7) Do you support the Legislative Conference schedule of 2 days? The majority of the areas supported and expanded legislative conference with 2 full days. The primary reason was for better education of new attendees to the legislative conference.
- 8) Other Items Discussed: The group supported the need to move back to local leasing authority. The majority of the areas supported the release of PAC names to the state presidents. However, not all areas supported the release of the information due to strong opinions contrary to PAC and the insistence that they did not want to be solicited.

The Legislative committee requested to hold a full legislative conference in early 2011 at the direction of our Legislative consultant Bob Redding. The committee also requested to the executive board to continue to support travel to state, area and national meetings to support PAC education an enrollment. In addition, to support promotional ideas suggested by the legislative committee.

Iowa will be again asked to step up to the plate at the Legislative Conference, Fly Ins and through the use of CAP WIZ. If you have any questions or comments, please contact myself or Dee.

Tammy Eibey and Dee Lehn  
IASCOE Legislative Co Chairs

## ***NASCOE CONVENTION 2010***

On August 4<sup>th</sup> I climbed in a car with Dee Lehn and Judy Dameron heading for Hot Springs, Arkansas. We were going to the NASCOE convention! We arrived late Tuesday and spent Wednesday doing a little site-seeing on our own prior to the convention kicking off. Wednesday evening we attended a get together by the pool meeting old friends and making new friends (some with their families).

Thursday morning the meetings kicked off with the National Anthem, Color Guard and a prayer. Each year a “first-timers” contest is announced. Our very own Kevin Keegan (first time attendee) picked up his packet and was ready to meet as many people as possible and acquire their signature as proof; does Kevin really need to be encouraged to meet new people☺? The contest has a cash prize so many participants are quite serious about winning. After listening to several guests from DC (including FSA Administrator, Jonathan Coppess) NASCOE committee meetings were held in the afternoon. Each committee meets in a separate location with all areas in the United States represented. Each of the meetings had someone from Iowa in attendance. The purpose of these meetings is to bring any concerns and/or ideas to the National Committee chairperson. After this meeting, those in attendance go to their area meetings bringing anything discussed at the committee meetings to their area meeting. During the area meeting Jonathan Coppess visited with us answering any questions or concerns we have in regards to FSA. In the evening the scholarship auction was held with all proceeds going towards the scholarship program and concluded with a dance to a live band.

On Friday we heard from our NASCOE Legislative Consultant, Bob Redding in addition to hearing the bids for the 2012 convention (South Carolina and Idaho). These bids were presented with enthusiasm and information promoting that their location was the place to be in 2012. In the afternoon we were introduced to a panel of individuals from Washington willing to answer any question we might have for them. The questions ranged from leasing issues, our new activity reporting system, funding and IT development. This is OUR time to express concerns and/or frustrations to actual individuals who aren't in the county office and need our input. Area meetings and NASCOE committee meetings were again held in the afternoon. Friday night we were treated to a Southern Cookout and a dance with the theme “A Little on the Trashy Side”.

On Saturday we heard from other sister organizations, received the executive reports and selected the 2012 convention site; we're going to IDAHO! The meetings concluded at noon and we had some free time until the banquet. The banquet is a formal event where the national awards (Publicity, Scholarship, Distinguished Service etc) are presented to the recipients. A final dance concluded the evening as we said good-bye to old and new friends. Iowa should be proud of the number of individuals attending this convention to be sure that we, the county office employees, continue to be heard.

On Sunday Dee, Judy and myself climbed into the car heading back to Iowa; a 10+ hour drive on a very HOT day. Convention 2010 was a success and in 2011 it's TEXAS. Attend just one National Convention and you won't want to miss another!

Submitted by Cindy Pistek



A fountain of hot spring water.



A pool with the hot spring water in it, the water was so hot you couldn't hold your hand in it. It comes out of the ground this hot!

The healing waters of Hot Springs.



*Currently we have several “COT’s” on board in the state of Iowa. A COT is a County Office Trainee, an individual working towards becoming a County Executive Director. Each of these individuals are working hard towards their goal and looking forward to eventually having their own office. In this newsletter you will find introductions to the COTs currently on board. We all welcome them into the FSA family.*



My name is **Erin Myers** and I was raised on a farm in Floyd County, where along with my families’ grain operation; we also raised cattle and had a small pumpkin patch. Currently, I live in Hancock County with my husband, Jerry, and two son’s McCain, 4 1/2 and Truman, 1 1/2. My education started at NIACC with an AAS in Agriculture Business, I then transferred to Northwest Missouri University to focus on Conservation. Moving back to Iowa I finished my Bachelors Degree in Business at Hamilton Business College in Mason City. I worked for the NRCS as a district employee at Cerro Gordo and Hancock, and for the last 5 years I’ve been a CRP PT in Winnebago County. My COT experience has been incredible! I’ve enjoyed each and every training county, PT and CED. I’ve found that we have a wonderful staff at FSA. Everyone has such a dedication for our work, and a love to help our producers. I feel very lucky to work amongst such a great people.

My name is **Wendy Muir** and I am from West Des Moines. I grew up in Northwest Illinois (across the border from Clinton, IA) and moved to the Des Moines area to attend Drake University. Upon graduation, I worked for Youth For Understanding USA, a non-profit organization for high school exchange students, where I managed volunteers and placed exchange students into US host families. I then obtained my Masters degree in agricultural economics from Purdue University.



Before joining FSA, I completed a two year position with the US Census Bureau, where I managed the outreach program in Iowa for the 2010 Census. I have two “kids” (Wire Hair Fox Terriers), Scout and Wrigley, that I enjoy walking and spending time with. In my free time, I also enjoy volunteering for Kids Against Hunger and the Animal Rescue League of Iowa, as well as performing Scottish Highland dances at various events around Iowa. I am really enjoying my time and am gaining invaluable learning experiences in the COT program! I just completed a two week training assignment in Decatur County, where I had the opportunity to experience the farm practices of another culture. We spent a morning at an Amish produce auction, and it was really neat to see how the Amish people raise and market their produce. Little did I know how greatly farm practices vary between different cultures right here in Iowa!



My name is **Daniel Curry**, I am originally from Runnells, Iowa. I graduated from Southeast Polk High School, then attended Iowa State University and majored in Animal Science. I am married with two children. My wife's name is Kim and she is an elementary school teacher in Marshalltown. My daughter is 3 years old and her name is Lillie, and my son is 3 months old and his name is Benjamin. Prior to joining FSA, I spent four years in the active Army as a combat medic. I was assigned to the 1st brigade 25th Infantry division; I was part of a Stryker unit that spent a year in Iraq. So far the COT training has been going really well. There are a lot of things to learn, but I think the training counties are doing an excellent job training us COTs.



Hi, my name is **Justin Bahnsen**. I am originally from Charles City in northeast Iowa and currently live in Des Moines. I have 3 older brothers and 1 twin sister. I grew up in town, but travelled with my father to the farm as a child and now return in the fall to help with harvesting. I graduated from the University of Iowa in 2008 and am a avid Hawkeye fan. Previously I worked for Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. I have been in the COT program since February and am enjoying training. Meeting and getting to know everyone in my class and knowing we are all going through the program together is very reassuring. The thing I like most about training is getting to meet a new county office CED and staff every month to learn how they administer their programs. While starting in a new county almost every month is refreshing, it is always challenging to start learning a new program and to try and become proficient in that area in just a few weeks. The training has flown by thus far and I am happy to be a member of FSA.

**H. Curtis Goettsch**. Most recently I worked as a Program Technician in Clayton County, Iowa; working with DCP/ACRE, Compliance, HELC-WC, CRP Cost Share, ECP, and GPS. Before working in the FSA Office in Clayton County I worked as a Conservation District employee with NRCS for five years, four years working in the Boone and Greene Counties and one year in Bremer County. Most of this time was spent working with CRP and writing Conservation Plans.

I was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa and at age 13 my family moved to the state of Delaware. When I was 17 we moved back to Perry, Iowa, before moving to Charles City, Iowa a short time later, where I graduated High School in 1999. In 2003 I graduated from Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa; with my Bachelors of Science in Conservation Management. My wife Sara and I live in Elkader, IA with our little dog Rex. I'm very excited to start the COT program, so far it has been great, and look forward to meeting many of you over the next year.



My name is **Dustin Miller** and I am from Spencer, Iowa. I have been married to my wife Jennifer for 19 years and we have a 5 year old son Kaden. I served 4 years in the US Navy stationed at China Lake, CA. I graduated from the University of Iowa with a Bachelors degree in business. I worked as the inside sales manager with a hydraulic seal manufacturer.

COT training has been a great experience thus far and I have met a lot of wonderful people both inside (staff) and outside (producers) of the organization.

My name is **Anna (Hornbaker) Boecker**. I have worked for ASCS/FSA for 27 years and was the Admin District Trainer for 12 years. I am a member of IASCOE and am currently the copy-editor of this newsletter. I was raised on a farm in Van Buren County and have lived and worked on a farm most of my life. I have 2 daughters and 2 grand-daughters. And yes, I have a new name!!

I've always enjoyed working with both the FSA staff and producers and am very fortunate that I can continue to do so. I am learning new things all the time and am meeting new people across the state as well as renewing old friendships. I look forward to continuing this wonderful journey.





Hi! My name is **Martha Furlin**. I began the COT program in February after being a PT in Appanoose County for over 19 years. I did the conservation and compliance programs.

My husband Dan and I own a farm near Numa in Southern Iowa. We raise cattle, hay, corn and soybeans. We have two children. Anthony is 13 and Danielle is 11. They are in 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades at Seymour Community Schools.

So far in my COT training I have completed four program areas in three different counties. It's been a really good experience to see how all the different offices are operated. I'm enjoying meeting many new faces in the agency and learning from all of them.

**Patrick Derdzinski**. My family and I have lived in Greene Iowa for the past 18 years. My wife's name is Mary and we have four teenage daughters, Anna, Aurora, Maria and Isabel. Anna will be attending Luther College and the rest attend North Butler High School and Middle school. The girls are active in 4-H, Girl Scouts, music, and all have part-time jobs outside the home such as newspaper route, camp counselors, etc. Worked for ISU Extension as a county extension director for many years. I have worked for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, NRCS, Wisconsin Extension Service and private sector employment. I am a former Peace Corps Volunteer, managing vegetable crop production research and extension work in Ecuador for over 3 years. I have enjoyed learning the intricacies of the different FSA programs and using the different software. I enjoy meeting new people (both staff and farmers) in the different training counties. I thoroughly enjoyed the farm calls made with the FLM and FO during our FLP training. I am currently involved in conservation program training and learning how to find information in manuals. I enjoy gardening, hunting, fishing, golfing, canoeing, walking, and raising a few hogs.



My name is **Natalie Sugira**. I live in Cedar Falls with my husband, Pierre – Damien who is a faculty member at the University of Northern Iowa and four children – two girls and two boys, all high school and junior high ages. Before joining FSA, I worked for the Rebuild Iowa Office as a Community and Regional Recovery Liaison for the Northeast Iowa. Prior to that position, I was a state Outreach Coordinator for the One Campaign, an international non-profit Organization based in Washington DC with the mission to end global poverty. I am enjoying the COT training with the unique opportunity to train in different counties and get to know my Iowa and its hidden small town treasures. In my free time if any, I love gardening and spending time with my family. I also enjoy going to UNI's football games – Go Panthers!



Hello, my name is **Mary Roberts**. I grew up on a farm by Avoca and currently live on a farm near Albert City. My husband, Phil, and I have 3 children Paige, age 7; Alexis, age 5; and Jake, age 3. We have a row crop farming operation in Pocahontas and Buena Vista counties. I attended Iowa State University and have a degree in Animal Science. My career with USDA started in 2000 when I was a TO at the Pocahontas FSA. I worked there part time through spring of 2004 when I started as a district employee with the NRCS. In November 2004, I was fortunate to begin a career with the NRCS as a Soil Conservation Technician in Storm Lake. While working for the NRCS, I kept busy with EQIP and CSP along with survey and design of waterways, terraces, and sediment basins. It is exciting to be a COT and get back to my original career path. I'm enjoying meeting new people and learning more about the programs.

In the 6 months of training, I've met many great PTs and CEDs. My most memorable moment, so far, was working on RMA spotchecks with Dean Lines in Floyd County. The day we checked fields it was very muddy and there was water sitting in the ditches. I found out that running shoes don't double as mud boots, but when they are the only thing you have other than heels it works out just fine. Dean and I had many laughs that day! I've also enjoyed the nicknames I've picked up so far. I will remember my time at the training offices for years to come and hope to stay in touch with the friends I've made along the way. It has been a great experience learning the programs and meeting more of my FSA family.

Hi Everyone! My name is **Carolyn Leners** and I am currently training in the COT program. My home is in Lake View, IA which located in Sac County. My husband Bill and I have three children and we enjoy spending time with them in Iowa City. Go Hawkeyes!!



FSA has been my work family for 24 years and I have been working CRP for 21 of those years. Prior to entering the COT program I was CRP District Trainer. When I tell people that I love CRP they really look at me with a funny face and just think I'm ill. Hmmmmm.....can't imagine why?!

My class of COTs (Martha, Erin, Mary, Dustin & Justin) has been training since February 16<sup>th</sup>. I have to say that I have enjoyed my entire training experience and am now ready for the next level. One of the things I learned from traveling from county to county is that the farmers are the same. I can talk to farmers at the counter in any office and it still feels like I am in Sac County again. That was a pleasant surprise for me and I enjoyed meeting new producers each and every day.

One of the most embarrassing moments of my COT training happened while I was in Woodbury County. The CED, two PT's and myself attended the CRP meeting in Harlan. On the drive back to Sioux City I enjoyed the scenic views of the Loess Hills as the CED was in charge of the driving. We arrived in Onawa and Bryan (CED) suggested we have ice cream, which we did. As I walked out of Dairy Queen and opened the front passenger door I plopped my delicious chocolate ice cream cone right into the windshield on the INSIDE of the car! I was mortified and scurried to find tissues to clean up my mess while everyone else was dying of laughter. I wiped the chocolate off the windshield and life is good again, I mean, what else could possibly go wrong? Well, a couple of miles down the road the bottom of my ice cream cone broke and before I knew it the seatbelt, the front of my nice new blouse and my slacks had chocolate ice cream all over them! Man! Just stop the car and kick me out already!!! Here I am trying to make a good impression as a COT and all I can do is fight with a silly ice cream cone! Moral of the story: Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. Nothing is quite as bad as it may seem!!





## Christmas in August!

Yes you read it right, Christmas in August. My husband's family is about 80 people (siblings, nieces, nephews and on and on). Every year one of the "numerous 9" (Leonard has 8 siblings) as they call themselves hosts Christmas wherever they wish. Our household was the designated host this year and we are tired of fighting winter storms and only visiting for a couple of hours so we decided an entire weekend in the summer would be much better (?). There is a small lake near us that has 3 small cabins and we promptly rented all three. A couple of others had campers with the remaining attendees using tents! Oh my, what had we gotten ourselves into??? Our nephew Matt was ready with his camper and came on Thursday night with every lighted Christmas decoration he owned. Leonard's sister provided two campers so we were set with accommodations. On Friday the tents began arriving. Our son put up his 3 room tent, who needs 3 rooms in a tent? Leonard's brother Joe and his 6 kids used the extra camper, it wasn't HIS idea to camp out, no tent for him. It was fine for his kids, who wouldn't take on opportunity to sleep away from 6 kids ranging from Kindergarten to Senior in high school?

The next interesting guest was brother Paul who has 3 kids 4<sup>th</sup> grade and younger. Since they had no prior tenting experience they arrived close to dark and proceeded to put up a "new" tent for the first time. As Paul pounded in stakes, tied ropes and waited while a couple air beds inflated, we all managed to stay clear. Once the entire tent floor was covered with air beds, I asked Paul if he needed a "beverage", he said why not wiping the sweat off his face. I poured him a nice Bailey's on ice and he took a seat. The glow-sticks, conversation, camp-fire and rampant children kept us all awake until it was time for "bed". Between the bathroom being gross, the spiders, mosquitoes and giggling children we were very happy to be in a cabin with air conditioning. Yeah, I know it was OUR idea to camp, why were we in the cabin? Well, someone had to keep an eye on the 80 year old grandparents staying in the next cabin.

Saturday was Christmas dinner and the gift exchange complete with an inflatable Christmas tree and more food than you could eat (we literally could have fed half of camp ground). After dinner we were supposed to go swimming and boating. Mary (sister) took one look at the green slime on the lake and nixed that idea. Hubby took our boat out anyway, but those darn spark plugs must have been acting up again as it sputtered around the lake. Or maybe the thought of "many" children clamoring for a ride on the boat was just too much to bear! Guess the boat rides were off the table too. Two nephews took the canoe out for a spin and they actually returned dry, success on the lake! Grandma and Grandpa gave up and went home to their own bed that night so brother Paul pulled up his tent and took over the vacant cabin. Guess camping wasn't for him, I wonder if that tent will ever see the light of day again? Joe took his 6 home early; his hip went out and figured he wouldn't make the three hour drive unless he left around 9:00 pm (not sure how you put a wrench in your back when YOU weren't sleeping on the ground). Guess he wasn't so keen on camping and didn't believe that the best part was the campfire!

The remaining die-hards gathered around the fire our nephew (the Christmas decoration King) had started. The guy had a pick-up load of wood; gosh we hoped he didn't intend to burn it all! Matt kept the fire going and we all shared stories as several generations enjoyed each other's company. The small children made smore's making a sticky mess on them and whoever deserved a "kiss". All in all it was good time spent with family and the very best part....we don't host again for 8 years! I'm thinking by then our kids can figure out what to do with more than 80 people (probably 100 plus by then) without renting an entire hotel.

Enjoy your family, they all grow up and go away way too soon. Once the time is gone, it's gone. Hope your summer was truly grand and maybe next year YOU can celebrate Christmas in the summer. You already missed it for 2010!

Submitted by Cindy Pistek



## **Public Affairs and Outreach Specialist**

Since I have started this new position, I have been asked what my job entails. In a nutshell, I try to make sure everyone, including both rural and urban residents, knows about FSA and what programs we have available. I want everyone to see the positive things that our Agency does for farmers and agriculture.

If you can think of a way that FSA can be visible to the public, I try to provide the information or resources to make that happen. For example, our Agency can be seen in the paper, heard on the radio, can speak to organizations, or have a booth at a conference, a fair, or trade show, etc.

Twelve years ago or so, I was asked to take on the duty of outreach coordinator for Iowa FSA. This was a collateral duty (in addition to being the CED in Dallas County at the time) and was something new to our Agency. So, I began working with underserved groups, developing relationships and also conducted some targeted outreach activities. I have learned a lot by working with some of these groups and how FSA can best serve them; developing relationships and connections was vital. I worked with other government agencies, nonprofit groups, developed the outreach project, Women, Land, and Legacy, spoke at various meetings and conferences, and worked with the Iowa Women in Agriculture organization just to name a few things.

Now, years later, I have added public relations to the outreach role. Along with continuing to do the outreach activities, I write press releases and public service announcements for the state office, as well as ones where county office data can be entered. I work with other USDA agencies on public relations projects. I also continue to build relationships and partnerships with organizations to help get the information about FSA programs out to the public.

I prepare presentations for use at various conferences and meetings. I developed brochures and various types of media or information. Some of these will be made available to the county offices for their use. FSA also attends events that include the Iowa State Fair and Farm Progress Show. I work to make these, as well as other types of events possible.

In the coming months, I will begin developing a communications plan. This plan, which is a new requirement, will be a blueprint for delivering messages or information. It will give all levels of the agency information as to what action needs to be taken in different situations as it relates to communicating to the media, public etc.

New design standards for all types of communication are also being released in the near future. These standards mean new templates for documents (memos, letters, etc) will be developed.

As I develop new material, a listing of what is available to county offices will be added to SharePoint. I hope to continue to be able to provide resources for county offices that will make their jobs easier.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this information.

Beth Grabau



# MIDAS

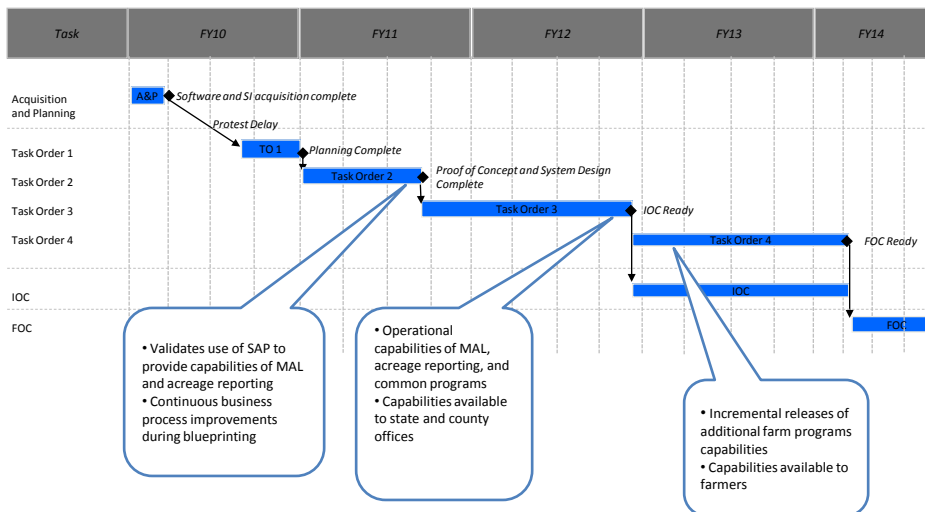
## Modernize and Innovate the Delivery of Agricultural Systems.

I attended the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual NASCOE Convention in Hot Springs, Arkansas on August 5-7. I was fortunate enough to set in on the Programs Committee Meetings. John Marquess from Texas is the National Chairperson for this committee and the first day of meetings, we were lucky enough to have members of the MIDAS team with us. Karl Keller, Laura Schlote, and Elizabeth Miller were all there to tell us about this new system. They had so much enthusiasm for the new system; you couldn't help but be excited too. The new system will be an off-the-shelf program called SAP that we will tweak to fit our needs. It will make our jobs easier and there will be less chance of error. For instance, under MIDAS, if you go into Arc Map and make a change to a field that either increases or decreases the acreage, it will automatically change the cropland in farm records and anything else that has to do with that farm.

Three teams were created to support the MIDAS program. The National Office brought in 12 employees from the State and County offices for a 2 year detail and they have over 258 years of FSA experience! Marketing Assistance Loans is lead by Laura Schlote and she has 4 team members. They are focusing on reducing overall lead time for processing a loan from application to payment processing, trying to reduce or combine the number of forms and reduce the number of improper payment findings. Common Land is lead by Elizabeth Miller and she has 5 team members. They are focusing on anything that has to do with the land; GIS, CLU, acreage reporting and farm records system. Common Processes is lead by Lisa Berry and she has 3 team members. They are focusing on the customer name and address information, entity information, fiduciary relationships and producer eligibility. The programs will be phased in one at a time. They are starting with the programs that are still on the System 36, so that we can eventually get rid of that dinosaur. Hopefully, in about 18 months they will be rolling out the Marketing Assistance Loans software. They also informed us, that sometime this fall; we would be getting a new web-based crop reporting system called Common Acreage Reporting System or CARS. I have included a time-line for MIDAS implementation.

Submitted by Judy Dameron

### MIDAS – Timeline of Task Orders



An underwater scene with vibrant blue and green coral, red and orange fish, and bubbles. The background is a light blue gradient. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

# **NASCOE 2011**

*August 11<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>*

**NASCOE is gearing-up to have  
a TEXAS SIZE BEACH PARTY!  
Mark your calendars now and  
start making plans to attend  
the NASCOE Convention in  
beautiful Corpus Christi, Texas.**



### FLOODING IN DELAWARE COUNTY!

July 24, 2010 RAIN! RAIN! RAIN!.. Too much rain leads to flooding. As Manchester prepared to be an overnight host for the 2010 RAGBRAI, the worst of worst could happen to a community...FLOODING! This was not ordinary flooding...It was record breaking levels in Manchester and this led to the Lake Delhi Dam breach about 9 miles South East of town. The pictures don't do justice to the devastation but here are a few pictures. More can be seen at <http://kmch.com/manchflooding2010/index.html>. Dyersville, Jones County, Jackson County all faced severe flooding with the Maquoketa River rising waters and dam breach.



During the flooding and Dam breach



Manchester after the flooding....



The remains of Turtle Creek boat access and the once beautiful Lake Delhi recreational area  
Photos by Kathy Kramer CED Dubuque County and Tammy Eibey, FLM Cedar (resident of Delaware Co)



Colfax Sale Barn



## RAGBRAI

Every summer bike enthusiasts from all over the world come to Iowa to join RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa). The "Register" is the Des Moines Register, one of Iowa's major newspapers who sponsors the event every July. The ride starts out with the rear tire in the Sioux River on the west and ends with the front tire in the Mississippi on the east. Each year the ride takes a different route across Iowa and this year the ride traveled the northern portion of the state. One of the stops was in Garner, home of the Hancock County FSA Office. Check out the photos of RAGBRAI 2010.

The bikers also passed through the Manchester area. Tammy Eibey hosted some fun for a few bikers at her location.

Submitted by Cindy Pistek



Someone didn't realize that a "ditch" wasn't something you parked in. This guy found that out the hard way when it took 2 wreckers to get his "support vehicle" out of the ditch

Our parking lot became "the place to stay". As you can see they moved in and took over. The tanks on top of the bus didn't hold water for the riders; I do believe it held something a little stronger!



Here they come, riding down the street. They get the funniest looks from everyone they meet. Hey, hey they're the bikers! Remember that Monkey's song?

Not all bikes are of the two-wheel version, check out this 3 wheeler!



## MORE RAGBRAI



Once parking their “buses” on our grass lot, they pulled out their chairs and did a little relaxing on our lawn.



Below is HWY 69 a major highway on the route. As you can see, it didn't matter that cars were waiting to pass on the highway. Between bikers and their support vehicles, regular traffic just had to wait.



One of our STO employees, Dennis Olson, joined the riders and managed to stop at several FSA Offices on the way.



The Eibey Cabin hosted Team Plain Vanilla the final night of RAGRBAI in Manchester. They enjoyed fishing, paddle boat rides and grilling on the fire pit! “SMORES” too!





Enjoying Fall with Family and Friends  
Submitted by Alan Kiewiet

It is hard to believe that with all this warm humid weather that fall is just around the corner. Soon the kids will be back in school, weeknights and weekends will be filled with trips to volleyball matches, cross country meets and football games. As the father of two little boys I now understand how time to relax and enjoy our family is hard to come by. We all enjoy getting away for the day and having a wonderful time with family. Many of these trips only take a day to do but the memories can last a life time. We all come from different parts of the state and many times we do not know what is available in or near this wonderful state for family and friends to enjoy. I just wanted to provide a few things that my family has been able to enjoy the last couple of years. I hope that everyone is able to enjoy this fall and many more with the ones they love.

Galena, IL - Many things going on during the fall season.  
<http://www.visitgalena.org/>

Waterloo, IA - National Cattle Congress - September 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>  
<http://www.nationalcattlecongress.com/nccfair/>

Amana Colonies- Oktoberfest – October 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>  
<http://www.festivalsinamana.com/oktoberfest.html>

Winterset, IA- Covered Bridge Festival – October 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>  
<http://madisoncounty.com/index.php?page=covered-bridge-festival>

Des Moines, IA - Blank Park Zoo - Open Daily 10:00 to 5:00 through September  
<http://www.blankparkzoo.com>  
Farmers Market In Des Moines - Saturdays 7:00 to Noon through October.  
<http://www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com/>

Throughout Iowa- Visit an Apple Orchard



### **Anna Boecker, District 9**

My favorite fall spot is Lacey Keosauqua State Park. The park has a lot of hills and you can overlook all the beautiful autumn colors in all the trees. A couple of spots also overlook the lake or the river - which just adds to the beauty. Great place to see and visit all year!

### **Rhonda Cooper enjoys these areas during fall in Union County- District 8**

#### Talmage Hill Park

With 36 acres of native timber, this area was acquired to preserve its natural beauty. A leisurely walk along the hiking trail and a watchful eye can usually find an abundance of wildlife as well as wildflowers in the spring. Located along the south side of Highway 34, 2 miles west of Thayer, this area offers a shelter house, restrooms and picnic facilities.

#### Talmage Hill Wildlife Area

This 210-acre area on the north side of Highway 34, 2 miles west of Thayer, is one of the County's most beautiful natural areas. It abounds with habitat diversity, from the pond, marsh and timbered areas to the upland game areas. It is used extensively by wildlife enthusiasts as well as for an outdoor classroom for environmental education.

#### Thayer Lake

Located 1 mile southwest of Thayer, this 10-acre lake was built by the railroad in the 1850's for water supply for steam engines. The 47 acre area includes excellent facilities for fishing as well as camping, hiking, and picnicking. Access is available via a rocky road parallel to Highway 34 just south of Thayer which leads to the entrance and a beautiful drive through pristine native timber. With two shelter houses, primitive camping and no electric hook-ups, this area receives considerable usage throughout the spring, summer and fall months. It is one of the oldest recreation areas in the county.

### **Rose Woerner – District 3**

Locals believe it's all about the journey, as evidenced by their annual treks to the Great River Road, a scenic drive from Lansing to Keokuk or points in-between. The entire ride is about 362 miles and takes about 6 hours, one-way. <http://www.iowagreatriverroad.com/>

If your preference is a stationary platform that affords a breathtaking view, try the Fenelon Elevator in Dubuque, the world's shortest, steepest railway at 296 feet in length. For a two dollar fee, you will be privy to the colors of fall, encompassing the Mississippi and three states. <http://www.dbq.com/fenplco/info.htm>

### **Barry Terhark – District 2**

I must admit I am not a big "leaves turning color" fan because it just depresses me and my attention really switches to picking corn rather than watching trees, but if I was to pick a nice little drive that should have fall color it would be the drive from Nora Springs to Rock Falls along the Shell Rock River.

For an enjoyable little walk during the fall a good choice is the Lime Creek Nature Center North of Mason City. Several types of trails exist to walk along that you could see a little leaf changing color.

### **Kelsey White – District 1**

Growing up in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado, fall was always my favorite time of year. The beauty and the bright vibrant colors of the aspen trees will always bring back fond memories. When fall comes around in Northwest Iowa it is a very similar beauty. Instead of the beauty of the aspen tree, we get to enjoy the beauty of the soybean leaves as they turn a bright gold. The rolling hills of Northwest Iowa along the Des Moines River can be breathtaking in the fall. The large Oak trees golden leaves, apple tree's full of ripe apples and the fields of corn and soybeans getting ready for another harvest. There is a sense of pride in every farmer's eyes as they run their combines through their crop. When people ask me if they miss the beauty of Colorado, I always answer the same, I am reminded of it every day here in Northwest Iowa.



*A NASCOE Friend Request is waiting for you*

by: Jessica Yuska

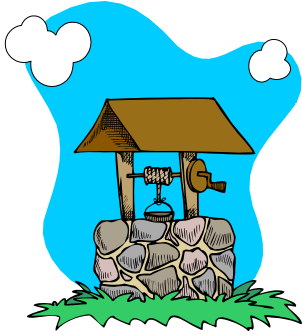
I can't believe it! I have worked for FSA now 10+ years. Even though I can't bring myself to think this way - I have become the older, more experienced PT. It's great that I have *some* of the answers and people come to me for advice, but WOW I still consider myself the NEW kid on the block! I am under 40 and everyone around me is counting down the years until retirement. And me, I have at least 25 more working years before I can even consider it. NASCOE knows its members are at different places in their lives and is looking for new ways to get information out.

Hopefully everyone visits the IASCOE and NASCOE websites. You may get email from your IASCOE representative now and then. Many of us have home computers, faster internet service, cell phones, and maybe do a little texting. We don't have many opportunities for face to face meetings, and those websites and email are great options. BUT is there another way to stay connected?

NASCOE is introducing another option, use social networking through Facebook. I think it is GREAT to get way to get news out fast! Through Facebook, you can take an invited peek into your friend's lives. I am not one that would be a very dedicated blogger, but can find the time to visit my Facebook page and catch up with friend - & I LOVE to see everyone's photos!

It is wonderful that NASCOE is making the initiative to inform its members through Facebook. So here's my personal invitation to you – log on to Facebook and make some new friends. Visit the NASCOE's site at [www.facebook.com/NASCOEnews](http://www.facebook.com/NASCOEnews). Recent posts include the committee minutes from the National Convention. Let's increase NASCOE News 'friends' number!





One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the donkey was old and the well needed to be closed anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

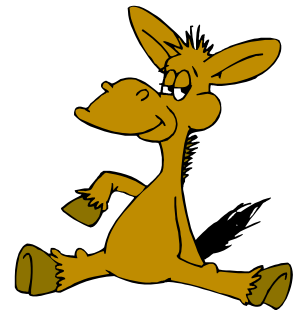
He asked all his neighbors to come over and help him. They each grabbed a shovel and began to toss dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement, he quieted down. A few shovels later, the farmer looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up.

As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off!

Remember life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up.

Remember these five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred - Forgive
2. Free your mind from worries - Most never happen
3. Live simply and appreciate what you have
4. Give more
5. Expect less







## RETIREMENTS

After many years of service to FSA, the following individuals have decided to retire and begin a new chapter in their life. We wish all of them well.

Donelle Kilburg - Jackson County  
Judy Rains - Jackson County  
Warren Schuler - Montgomery County  
Carolyn Hein - Lyon County  
Joan Hill - Bremer County

We have tried to include the names of all individuals who have retired. Our apologies if we have missed someone.



Even with all of the weather devastation this past year, the beauty in the sky can still be seen.  
Taken August 31, 2010.