



NASCOE Newsletter

Featuring the Northeast Area

January 2015

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NASCOE TRIP TO WASHINGTON DELIVERS GOOD NEWS FOR MEMBERS

Mark VanHoose, President

Your Vice President and I just returned from Washington, DC. We were there to discuss your concerns with management and officially welcome our new Administrator Val Dolcini to his new role. Not only were we able to discuss your concerns but we were able to receive an update on how the new 2015 budget would affect the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The following are highlights from our trip:

- Management states that cash awards are a very strong possibility for Fiscal Year 2015. It is extremely important that we do a good job of performance evaluations at all levels. If you have concerns about this process for your state please let your area executive know.
- DAFO is currently planning to increase the number of Key Program Technicians to a level of one per district within a state. This is something NASCOE has been working on for some time now and very happy that management is taking this step.
- Another bonus of a good 2015 budget is management's plan to provide COT and FLOT positions above state ceilings to prevent state ceilings from getting robbed to supplement succession planning.
- Expect more temporary money to roll out soon if not already there. If you aren't embracing the use of temps you are missing a great opportunity to provide support in the office as we gear up for the farm bill. I know there are a number of candidates out there with skills and the opportunity to provide health insurance increases the quality of candidates.
- The fall reporting date for hay has continued to be a challenge for our county offices. We did see some movement on the part of DAFP to get more creative in providing options that may ease the burden on county offices. DAFP is putting a task force together to work on acreage reporting and NASCOE is very active in the process of adding members to this group.
- Continuing on the subject of acreage reporting I want to assure you that NASCOE is leaving no stone unturned as we monitor the acreage reporting project that allows producers multiple options to file a report (at FSA, with crop insurance, on line or other). Your leadership team understands that acreage reporting is the bedrock of all that we do at FSA and it is important that integrity in this process is maintained.

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- I know that some of you are frustrated with limitations placed upon your use of the GovDelivery tool. Unfortunately we have some employees not doing a good job of properly utilizing this tool and national notices have tried to correct this. My understanding is that a notice will be issued that requires county office input in the state newsletter that goes out each month. This will make sure the most important articles are featured. If you need to send more individual bulletins than allowed I would encourage you to work with your state PR person to be able to do that. Let's see how this plays out.
- Please be sure to review information from the Legislative Committee concerning the Fiscal Year 2015 budget. The budget for 2015 was very good for FSA and NASCOE appreciates that Congress recognized the need to fund FSA at a level that allows us to deliver the programs in this new Farm Bill.
- Vice President Wes Daniels has an article on Program Technician training and leadership opportunities so please be sure to read that as well. Providing more opportunities for professional development for Program Technicians is key to workplace satisfaction and the future of FSA.
- The Administrator is very concerned about employee satisfaction and has directed the formation of a task force to work on improving morale. NASCOE requested and was permitted two representatives on this task force to represent your concerns. We have appointed one Program Technician and one County Executive Director. I'll get those names to you soon.
- We have been waiting a long time but changes to the grievance system for CO employees is very close to making it into a handbook. Our hope is that those making the adverse decisions are removed from the process to make decisions more objective and fair.
- Once again it is time for the NAFEC membership drive. Please take time to review this information with your county committee and please join as an associate member. The county committee makes our agency unique and it is important that we support the county committee system. We also pushed for more face to face training for COC members so they can perform at a high level. It is always a good thing when COC members from across a district or state can gather and share concerns.
- One of the issues we discussed was our IT systems/network and the speed and quality of the product. Did you know that the administrators of our FSA IT systems fend off 250 to 300 hackers a month? Also it is very important that you submit a remedy ticket anytime there is a performance issue with our IT systems. This is what gets the attention of the USDA folks that monitor the system.

As you can read it was a very busy meeting day in our nation's capital. While we made progress on a number of issues we still have more to accomplish. I do appreciate management's willingness to meet and discuss those issues that are important to each of us. I hope that each of you have taken time to submit a negotiation item for the future as we will be formally sitting down with management as an executive committee in the spring. While I know these are busy times I want to encourage those of you in state association leadership to continue working with your SED improve your state working conditions and please share NASCOE information with your members. Thanks for all you do!





PROGRAM TECHNICIAN TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Wes Daniels, Vice President

During our visit to DC it was exciting to hear some positive news. Our President, Mark VanHoose has covered a lot of our visit in his article and asked me to share the news we heard on PT training and leadership opportunities.

Stephanie Sybil Brown with the Deputy Administrator for Management led a task force that focused on training needs for Program Technicians. Jenae Prescott of Idaho served on this task force as the NASCOE representative. The task force's mission was to evaluate the training needs for PT's and their work place concerns.

Suggestions include training for first year employees with the agency that would include new employee orientation. In addition to general training, advanced training options for GS & CO Program Technicians needs to be explored. This will unite the GS & CO cadre of Program Technicians by providing learning tools to enhance Program Technician skills and more uniform performance nationwide.

The task force's document states that, "Historically, FSA hires new Program Technicians who do not receive formalized training. As a result, there is no consistency in program delivery across the nation. FSA currently has 562 GS Program Technicians and 5141 CO Program Technicians with 45% eligible to retire within the next 5 years. It is important that we properly train all Program Technicians who have been with the agency less than 3 years and continue this initiative for all future Program Technicians. Succession Planning would be a means for FSA to continue effective performance through a structured training program. NASCOE proposes that the agency capitalize on the investment in new employees by harnessing the knowledge and expertise of its departing assets. Over the next five years it is anticipated that FSA will lose 45% of its CO and GS Program Technicians due to natural attrition. The Program Technicians retiring will have an average of 20 years' experience, with many of these departing having up to 38 years with the agency. This means that over the next 5 years FSA will lose roughly 51,327 years of experience. It is imperative that the agency utilize all necessary means to retain this invested knowledge."

NASCOE is excited about possibility of developing training and leadership opportunities for PT's. There have been continued discussions about PT's having to handle more programs with more complexity than ever before. NASCOE will be discussing during its pre-negotiation meeting in January reclassification and promotion possibilities for PT's as we move forward. We have also discussed with management the possibility of training to prepare eligible PTs for the COT program with minimal travel requirements where they could be eligible to apply for CED vacancies that are close to home.

Management discussed and is in the process of allowing states to offer Key PT positions up to the number of District Directors in a state. This should be a great opportunity for a number of qualified PTs to get upgraded to a grade 8, while using their expertise to help others in their state. NASCOE worked hard to get the Key PT position initiated and appreciates management testing and growing this concept.

NASCOE has also had discussions with management on the use of "Lead Program Technicians" in shared management situations. These numbers have increased recently but still need to improve. Management has shared that in a lot of cases these positions are not being requested to avoid creating issues between PT's in an office. NASCOE understands that many of our offices have multiple qualified PT's, but NASCOE also feels that if a PT is doing extra work, including some administrative duties due to the CED not being there on a daily basis, that the PT assuming those duties should be compensated accordingly. Right now Program Technicians have limited promotion potential in our agency. NASCOE and management are working diligently to develop ways to retain and promote employees and we all need to do our part to make these things happen.

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In closing, NASCOE is the voice for CO Program Technicians so I want to encourage you to share your concerns through your State Association or your NASCOE Area Executive. Your feedback, both negative and positive, is what drives our organization. I would encourage you to attend the upcoming NASCOE Rallies in your area. Attending an area rally is great way to see how NASCOE conducts business and to socialize with your peers from various places. Growing your network can make your job more rewarding.



NEA REPORT

Bo Epting, NEA Executive

It has been quite the year at FSA and I am honored to have served as the NEA Executive and look forward to the upcoming year. It has been a pleasure to work with Eric McCartney, NEA Alternate Executive as well as all of the State Leadership in the NEA. I have also been impressed by the work of all of my Area Chairs and Negotiation Consultant. I could not have gotten through this year without the support from each and every one of you.

There have been many issues arise over the past year from furloughs to staffing reductions to sequestration. NASCOE has been at the forefront of these and many other issues. While it is easy to focus on the negative, NASCOE has had many wins this year including returning to monthly COC meetings, getting temporaries on board and numerous advantages seen while working with the new Legislative Consultant and his team. Plus a new Farm Bill to roll out that keeps us all busy in the county office. It was important to me as NEA Executive to keep communication lines open during the past year. As I have said before, the NEA needs to increase, or at the very least maintain, membership not only the NEA, but the entire nation.

The NASCOE board has appreciated a great working relationship with the current FSA management and look forward to taking items to them in the upcoming year. This symbiotic relationship has proven to be a great asset for NASCOE and FSA management alike. States must also continue to communicate with their membership. Remind membership that they have a voice and engaging with NASCOE through their State Association is the best way for that voice to be heard. It is even important to stay in contact even when it seems as though there is no news to report.

We are sure to see many things happen this year and I welcome the opportunity to be able to serve in this capacity for all NASCOE members and especially those in the NEA. The NEA Rally will be held this year in Portland Maine, April 24-25 2015. It should be a good time and chance for all to voice concerns and issues to management.

Introducing NEA Alternate Executive

ERIC MCCARTNEY

Eric is a graduate of WVU with a degree in Agricultural Education. He taught Vo-Ag for 2 years prior to coming to ASCS/FSA in 1987. The first 27 years of his career, he worked in West Virginia and is now a CED in Garrett and Allegany Counties in Maryland. Eric has served 3 years as the WVASCOE President and Northeast Area Benefits Committee Chair and is now in his second year as Northeast Area Alternate Executive Committeeperson. He has 2 boys; Eric Jr. is 20 and Peter is 18.



2014 LEGISLATIVE YEAR IN REVIEW

Annette Hyman, NEA Legislative Chair

The NASCOE Legislative Committee kicked off the year with the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill that had occupied the majority of our legislative efforts in the previous year. Shortly after with the release of the President's budget proposal, we learned of the proposal to reduce FSA staffing by 815 FTE's, reduce the office footprint by 250 county offices, and reduce salaries and expenses by more than \$60 million. The Secretary of Agriculture then released the plan to restructure FSA with the CBS plan or the central branch satellite office plan at the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee budget hearing where NASCOE had representation present.

With the arrival of springtime, it was also the season of state conventions and area rallies. This was a great opportunity for membership to hear from NASCOE leadership, members of the legislative team, and in some cases members of Congress and FSA management. It was at this point that we began to learn more details of the CBS plan.

By early summer both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees had completed their work and brought forth spending bills that not only restored the proposed spending cuts of the administration, but also provided a slight increase in funding. The bipartisan bill was on track to move to the floor of both chambers for approval, but was abruptly pulled with the primary election defeat of House Majority leader Eric Cantor in June. This brought the entire appropriations process to a halt until the new majority leadership could be established.

Late summer always brings the excitement and energy of the NASCOE National Convention. At the Convention, the Legislative Committee ran a PAC promotion where we had great success increasing not only the number of PAC contributors, but also the level of contributions coming in. House Ag Committee Chairman Frank Lucas was presented the Legislator of the Year award for his work on the Farm Bill.

Early fall the Legislative Committee met at our annual organizational meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin at the site of the 2015 National Convention to set up the priorities for the coming year based on feedback from membership. The 2015 priorities include; returning leasing authority back to the COC, COC-GS supervision, growing the PAC and ensuring we are more efficient with PAC funds, growing our Grass Roots contact lists, and ensuring we are keeping an eye on employee benefits.

Currently the NASCOE Legislative Committee is on budget watch. What we were hoping would be a normal and timely appropriations process, was extended into late fall with a continuing resolution which then pushed the budget process into December due to midterm elections. We know our membership was watching this very closely, with last year's government shutdown fresh in our memory, so thankfully some 11th hour deal making secured enough votes to pass a funding bill that will take us through the 2015 fiscal year.

NAFEC MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Dear County Executive Directors:

Each of us will be holding COC election and organizational meetings during the months of December and January. We personally want to invite each of you to include information regarding the National Association of Farmer Elected Committee's (NAFEC) in your organizational meeting. The Deputy Administrator in Washington DC has approved providing this information to all COC's and it is currently included on the National DAFO website at: <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/fsatraining>

Click on the left side "County Committee Orientation Training". On the next page scroll down to the bottom under Additional Information "Who is NAFEC?" and "NAFEC Membership Form".

You are well within your legal authority to provide your committee this information on NAFEC membership and we would greatly encourage you to do so. Listed below are some of the things NAFEC has been doing for COC's and COF employees the past year.

1. Attended meetings in Washington D.C. with the Under Secretary of Agriculture, RMA Administrator, FSA Administrator and FSA Deputy Administrators and Staff
2. Attended meetings in Washington D.C. with Congressional and Senate Ag Committee Members
3. Worked with several SED's across the nation working on COF issues from Office Closures & Shared Management operations to Performance Issues
4. Instrumental in getting Late Fees waived until for many 2014 and 2015 crops
5. Instrumental in working with the FSA Management in re-establishing regular monthly COC meetings and assuring that funding is available in all states to hold these meetings.
6. Made recommendations to Congress, the Secretary of Agriculture, FSA and RMA regarding many Farm Bill Issues related to FSA.

While the list above shows some of the things NAFEC is doing for us, we know it is sometimes hard to communicate why we need to join. Listed below are a few talking points for you, your committee and your COF staff as to why NAFEC is important.

1. NAFEC is the greatest ally for CED's and PT's under the COF system of government.
2. The best way COC members can support their local staff is by joining NAFEC
3. NAFEC has the ear of Congress and the Administration
4. NAFEC has a lobbyist working in Washington D.C. on your behalf
5. NAFEC leadership is made up of COC members who are passionate about grassroots input
6. NAFEC membership includes a \$1,000 accidental life insurance policy from JM Marketing and the availability of many insurance products at group rates (health/major medical, dental, vision, life, cancer, critical illness, long term care, etc) you're COC members and their families may need. With health care such a huge issue, don't overlook how important these insurance products may be to some of your members who do not have the advantage of government insurance.

The rest is up to you and we would hope you will all consider passing along this information to your local committees. If we can be of assistance please don't hesitate to contact any of the committee members.



It's Go TIME!

Dan Smeal, NEA Programs Chair

What a year it's been!! Not only are we seeing a busy fall with all the trainings and new program signups, but outside of the FSA offices we're hearing about and seeing a corn crop for the ages. We have also had record setting beef prices and some very favorable Milk Margins here in the NEA. We all knew the 2012 corn prices were here to stay right??? (Sarcasm) FSA was no longer necessary, Right?? (More Sarcasm) Now as we look to 2014 Corn prices are nearly half of what they were a year ago, dairy margins are beginning to slide, and some states are uttering those dreaded three letters... LDP's!!!

While I am sure most of your NASCOE officers will be covering some of the highlight of the past Calendar Year I will be focusing on the NEA Programs side of NASCOE. This year we should finally say good bye to the wretched beast some call the 36 or AS 400. Of course, this good bye brings something new(ish). We just received MIDAS release 2.0 which we're told will work without a single hiccup. We will at last have one system of record for maintaining Producers name, address, and TIN. We are also anticipating new MPP software, new MAL software, and as well new software for ARC/PLC, which is already out. We're also now using different software for FSFL's.

So with all these new programs and software rolling out, now is the time to wipe the slate clean with Programs and Negotiation submissions. I would like to encourage you to submit any item, no matter how big or how small. We all know these new software deployments or programs will not be perfect, but together we can help to improve them and deliver better programs to our producers. I encourage each and every one of you to submit all of your items and concerns through the proper channels. Some of the fixes could be small and easy and could make life just a little bit easier for the entire agency. Remember that long before change agents, super users, and end users we had a group of employees speaking up for change through the one voice of NASCOE. It's time tested and guaranteed to work!

Happy New Year Y'all!

WORDS FROM LAP

Lawrence Parker, NEA Publicity Chair

Hello from the NEA publicity chair! My name is Lawrence Parker, Larry is good enough, LAP is how I sign off. I've been working at FSA for 16 years, having joined the agency as a second career, starting out as a misclassified intermittent employee. I had recently gotten out of farming and sold my ownership interest in what at the time was probably the largest exclusively "all natural" meat processing facility in the country. After a couple of months on the job, a full time permanent PT position opened up, I applied, and I have been on the staff of the Chittenden/Washington County FSA Office (Vermont) ever since. I joined NASCOE as soon as I became eligible, not after being told to sign a paper and just do it, but because I felt it was a worthwhile organization looking out for the best interests of its members and all CO employees. I first took an active role with VASCOE 8 years ago, and am completing my 5th year as president. I'm always looking for new opportunities to do something different, and when Bo asked me at the national convention down in North Carolina if I'd be willing to chair a committee, I said sure, as long as I didn't have wear a suit. I took over as publicity chair that fall, with the understanding that the duties mostly involved judging the annual newsletter and website publicity contest. It seemed to me to be an innocuous enough job; once a year judging other people's creative efforts while remaining in the background. Not anymore. Initiated by Renee Boykin and further developed by Kristal Rater, the hope is that area chairs will take a more active role in telling the many stories sitting out there that illustrate who FSA employees are and what they do. The NEA has been chosen the Guinea Pig in this effort. I believe our folks will eventually come through, and though I lack the RA-RA go fight win cheer leader gene, I will do my best to solicit the stories that highlight the humor, spirit and compassion that permeate the everyday lives of our FSA family.

*YOU could win roundtrip airfare to the
2015 NASCOE Convention in Milwaukee, WI!*

It's Easy...

Just submit an entry for the 2015 Publicity Contest!

Categories include:

Best Newsletter

Best Website

Best Feature Story: Human Interest

Best Feature Story: Humor

For more information, check out the Publicity Handbook at

<http://www.nascoe.org/Pages/Publicity.aspx>

CLIFFORD

Lawrence Parker, Chittenden/Washington County, VT

At least a couple of times a year, during performance evaluations where Cultural Transformation pops up, or at a Civil Rights Advisory Committee meeting discussing plans for Diversity Day, a story comes to mind;

In 1965, Clifford was a teenager, a young man of the Tohono O'ohdam Nation. His parents were itinerant farm laborers, working at a distant vegetable farm while Clifford and his seven younger brothers and sisters stayed with their grandmother. They all lived in a small, crowded, adobe hut, located on the Nation's reservation near Tuscan, Arizona, just a few hundred feet from the San Xavier del Bac Mission. Being the oldest of the family, Clifford felt responsible for the welfare of his siblings, especially the youngest children. Word came to Clifford that social workers for the US government were coming on the reservation to take custody of any of his siblings who were still infants; the determining factor was their ability to walk. Clifford's baby sister Matilda was only months old, and would be removed from the family. This made no sense; Matilda was a plump, happy baby, well cared for and loved. A cat and mouse game ensued, where Clifford would keep his horse saddled in the back yard, and a warning would be given any time the social workers came near. Clifford would grab Matilda, jump on his horse, and ride off into the surrounding wild lands, only returning once the coast was clear. This went on for some time, until finally the social workers arrived while the horse was not ready. Clifford scooped up Matilda and ran off through the village on foot; he was run down and his baby sister was taken from his arms. Matilda had become a pawn in the deliberate government program to remove young Indian children from their tribal environment, and assimilate them into white society. For over forty years Clifford looked for his sister, but was stonewalled at every turn; records were sealed, no information available. Clifford couldn't even find out if Matilda was alive. In a culture where family is everything, the unknown surrounding Matilda's very existence left a deep sadness that wouldn't go away.

For the next two and a half years after Matilda was removed from her brother's arms, she bounced around between various foster homes. No information is known about this period, except that she ended up at the hospital three times for malnutrition. In 1967 she was flown to the east coast and adopted by a white family, a university professor, his wife and three children. At 3 years old she was 21 inches tall and weighed 19 pounds. Her name was legally changed to Marna Lynn, yet her nickname Millie was kept to reduce the confusion for her. Within months she contracted pneumonia, and the family was informed by the doctor that it was unlikely she would survive. She did. Though mentally challenged (a result of the malnutrition?), she graduated from high school, got married, and maintains a part time job with a janitorial service. Millie is my sister.

Through the years we all encouraged Millie to look for her blood family, but she was happy where she was and with what she had. In 2005, Mom and Dad decided that it was a matter too important to be left unresolved, and bought plane tickets for the 3 of them to fly to Phoenix. For the better part of a week they trekked from one government office to another, traveling almost the entire state of Arizona for information. They had no luck, until during a second try at a courthouse in Tuscan, a sympathetic clerk whispered "I'm not supposed to do this, but your brother's name is Clifford. I don't know where he is, but if you ask at the water department, they might know." They wandered over to the water department and met with the manager. After hearing their story, he said of course he knew Clifford, he came by once a year to pay his water bill, and that if they waited a minute he would grab his coat and guide them to his house. He went out back, returned in just a moment, and said "Millie, look who just wandered in; this is your brother Clifford!" For Clifford it was a lifelong search completed, for Millie it was the beginning of discovering who she really was.

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I've been fortunate to visit Millie's family myself on a couple of occasions. As you walk through the front door of Clifford's home there is a prominent display of pictures of Millie, chronicling stages of her life that he missed; an adolescent growing up on a farm, her high-school graduation, a picture of her marriage, and a beautiful shot of Millie and our sister hugging. I've listened to stories around the dinner table of her brothers' and sisters' lives. Sadly, tragedy that is all too common for Native Americans has surrounded them: their parents died very shortly after Millie was taken, one of her sisters was murdered, stabbed by her husband. A brother committed suicide after spending time in jail, while another sister was found dead in a bath tub shortly after Millie was reunited with her family. This sister had sole custody of her two young children, and in an ironic twist, Clifford and his wife cannot legally adopt the kids because they are of Indian decent, with half of their blood from another tribe! There are happy stories too; an artistic sister was invited to display some of her weaving craft in the Smithsonian Institution, while Clifford has spent a lifetime involved with agriculture and has a teaching position at the local college located in the Tohono O'odham Nation. A write-up in the USDA BLOG high-lights a government funded program that he is involved with, <http://blogs.usda.gov/2011/11/14/a-vital-link-between-the-past-and-future-of-agriculture/#more-36735>

Clifford emphasizes native cultural practices in the raising of crops, encouraging young farmers to look to past methods as a template for growing environmentally friendly and more healthful food. One current project is the production of Mesquite flour for use in baking; Mesquite flour has been shown to reduce the effects of diabetes, rampant in the Nation's population. He has purchased a portable hammer mill to grind the Mesquite seeds, which are gleaned from the wild growing trees on the reservation. He is also involved with the governing of the tribe, an elder whose advice is often sought.

Millie keeps in telephone contact with Clifford and his family, but expense and distance has prevented another in-person reunion. There is still one more sister she has not met, but hopefully in time they'll be able to. Whenever I email with Clifford's wife, or have a chance to visit, they express their intensions to come to Vermont and not only visit Millie, but get a better understanding of the environment she grew up in and the people who raised her.

The point of this story? What we tried so hard to destroy we now celebrate and embrace. We're learning.

Hello everyone!

All of us in Wisconsin are so excited to welcome all of you to beautiful Milwaukee in August of 2015!

We are including a separate article in this edition of the NASCOE newsletter with hotel reservation information, registration information and to show off the brand new hotel, convention center and the tours and activities we will reward you with when you are here!

Our fundraising Chairperson has worked out a deal with Len Dudas Motors to offer a brand new 2015 Chevy Cruze or \$10,000 in cash to one lucky winner! What's the catch? ONLY 3,000 tickets will be sold!!!

A chance at a car valued at \$20,000 or taking the \$10,000 cash option – how much does a ticket cost? Just \$20! (Len Dudas Motors will make sure you can pick up your new car anywhere in the Country!)

We would love to have each FSA employee, State NASCOE Association and NASCOE/RASCOE Member from around the Country have the 1st opportunity to purchase a chance to win and help Wisconsin pull this off! Please remember to respect the ethics rules (cannot talk about, purchase, sell raffle tickets in a government facility – so please discuss this off site) Group sales are also welcome. Get the other partners in your building to join together to purchase some tickets – How cool would it be to win a car and have some fun selling it, or taking the \$10,000 and having a grand party for everyone in your building!

With your help and chance to win a new car, you can help Wisconsin out with our fund raising efforts for the 2015 convention! You do not need to be present to win, but we would love for you to be at the convention during the drawing so we can celebrate with you should you be the lucky winner!

Please contact Tom Oasen at oasen@charter.net, Jake Bourget at huntin4fish@yahoo.com or Jon Williams at jonwilliams321@hotmail.com to get your chance to win (we will enter your contact information on your tickets and send you the ticket stubs – super easy!) Hurry, as mentioned earlier, only 3,000 tickets will be sold!

Thank you so much for your support and we hope to hear from you soon!

Tom Oasen, 2015 NASCOE Convention Co-Chairperson

 <p>Happy Days are coming to Milwaukee! Come join the fun and buy a raffle ticket!</p> <p>TICKETS SOLD BY THE WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION</p> <p>\$20 PER TICKET!</p> 	<p>WIN ME!</p>  <p>POWERED BY <i>Len Dudas</i></p> <p>SUPPORT THE 2015 NATIONAL NASCOE CONVENTION</p> <p>COMING TO MILWAUKEE!!</p>	<p>CHOOSE FROM A 2015 CHEVY CRUZE OR SIMILAR MODEL OR \$10,000 cash!</p> <p>ONLY 3000 TICKETS SOLD!</p> <p>Approximate sticker price for car: \$20,000!</p>
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HAPPY DAYS ARE BREWING IN MILWAUKEE IN 2015!

Tom Oasen and Kim Iczkowski, 2015 NASCOE State Convention Co-Chairpersons

Wisconsin is cordially inviting you to the 2015 NASCOE convention in beautiful Milwaukee, Wisconsin August 12, 2015 through August 15, 2015.

You will be staying in Milwaukee's newest luxury hotel for less than a third of the price non-convention goers have to pay! The views are amazing and the rooms are spacious and tastefully decorated. The Potawatomi Hotel, Casino and Convention Center offers gaming, nightlife, multiple restaurants, and ample meeting rooms to conduct our NASCOE business, all under one roof!

An added benefit to the convention attendees is the hotel offers free parking, free shuttle service to and from the Milwaukee airport (General Mitchell – which offers fantastic prices for flights in and out of Milwaukee), and will also provide the free shuttle service to our guests that want to venture to the historic 3rd ward and other popular destinations for shopping, dining, nightlife, museums, and so much more! Please visit the NASCOE website (www.nascoe.org) under the "National Conventions" link to check out the links we have provided for the hotel and Visit Milwaukee. You may also book your room(s) now using the registration code listed on the WASCOE website.

We have fantastic tours planned for all of you on Wednesday, August 12, 2015.

The Farm Tour takes you Koepke Dairy Farms Inc, Growing Power and Serenity Farm of Wisconsin.

The Koepke's are five generations strong producing high quality milk, contented cows, and award winning land stewardship in the heart of Wisconsin. They also market their own cheese under the LaBelle label. Growing Power is Urban Agriculture's "Poster child" for the rest of the Country! From aquaculture, to multi-level vegetable crops being harvested all year, to the digester that creates energy, to the design of the roofs on the greenhouses to use all of the rain water collected, to the worms that feed the fish and fertilize the vegetables – nothing goes to waste! Lunch will be at Serenity Farm of Wisconsin. Laura and Paul Phelps own a CSA that they provide a variety of vegetable crops to their customers. Paul is also an artist that specializes in stain glass – you will be amazed at his creations as you enjoy your lunch and get to tour the farm.

The Wisconsin Industry tour boasts two national manufacturers that are known worldwide and home-based in Wisconsin – Case IH/New Holland in Racine WI, and Harley-Davidson in Milwaukee. Lunch will be served after the tour at CaseIH tour in the morning.

The CaseIH/New Holland tour starts you at the beginning of the assembly line and works through all of the steps and then you get to see the finished tractor pulling off the line. Lunch will be served in the Case IH education center before you head back to Milwaukee to tour the Harley-Davidson museum.

The guided tour at the fantastic Harley-Davidson museum starts in a footprint of the small garage the friends built their first motorcycle. You are then taken through history with your guide leading the way. After the guided tour, you are free to take a test drive on a real Harley-Davidson motorcycle which is on what looks like a treadmill – it was a real rush running through the gears!

Finally, Wisconsin is best known for one thing – you guessed it! BEER!!!

The third tour package is our Wisconsin Brewery Tour!

We'll start you off at the historic Pabst mansion (sorry! No free samples of beer on this tour). Here you will learn all about the Pabst family and how they brought the title, Beer City, USA to Milwaukee.

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Then you will head to Miller/Coors and see one of the largest breweries in the world – and yes, you will also get to sample along the way!

Lunch will be provided at Lakefront Brewery. Lakefront is a craft brewery that has many award winning brews you can sample. They still use the line to bottle the beer that was made famous with the glove on the bottle during the intro to the Laverne and Shirley show.

Finally we will change gears a bit and take you to the only distillery in Wisconsin – the Great Lakes Distillery. There you will learn the art of a world class distillery, and get to sample some of the finest spirits ever made!

Evening activities include our welcome to all of you on Wednesday evening with the taste of Milwaukee dinner followed by a sock hop – dress up in your favorite 50's outfits!

Thursday evening will be the NASCOE scholarship auction followed by non-stop fun provided by Lucille's Dueling Pianos!

Friday evening will be the awards banquet followed by an entertaining performance provided by the Red Hot Horn Dawgs!

The youth committee has each day packed with events for your children/grandchildren that will leave them good and tuckered out each evening! There are some fantastic events planned for the kids, including a trip to an indoor waterpark and an indoor campout/movie night! Other events include video games in real life, Milwaukee Public Museum, Discovery World, the Milwaukee Zoo, to name a few.

The complete registration form will be posted to the NASCOE and WASCOE web sites in early January.

The tours will book up quickly, so please complete your registration form early to ensure your spot on the tour of your choice!

If you have any questions or issues completing the registration form or booking your room, please contact Tom Oasen at oasen@charter.net or Deb Esselman at debessel@pcpros.net.

Happy New Year and we are looking forward to having you as our guests in Milwaukee in August of 2015!

