



# NASCOE NOW

Monthly Electronic Publication keeping Members Informed

**August 2014**

Thank You  
OKASCOE for hosting  
a Great Convention!

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# CRANKING UP FOR THE HOME STRETCH

**By Mark VanHoose, President**

It's finally football season and I am excited for this time of year. Add to that we just completed a great national convention in Oklahoma City and fall is right around the corner so I am energized to start another NASCOE year. Vice President Wes Daniels has an article on all that NASCOE accomplished this past year so when someone asks you what our association has done for them lately print that off and discuss with them. But we cannot rest as we still have a number of issues to work on. So let's get started:

- I must admit I am perplexed at the approach to dealing with the huge livestock sign up in our Western states. Why aren't we hiring re-employed annuitants in these overworked counties? I think we could even get Midwest and Southeast retirees rehired to send that way. We have suggested this as an association numerous times but for some reason the option isn't on the table.
- Continuing to discuss our overworked members toward the pacific I want to encourage management to issue a notice that lets our people know they will be able to carry over their unused leave so it will not be lost. I know the mindset is to hold off but please take this opportunity to show employees some appreciation for their hard work.
- You probably have heard by now that acreage reporting in MIDAS has been scrapped and management is working on new software that both crop insurance and FSA employees will use and give producers /ranchers the option where they want to report. At this time I am not seeing local FSA employees involved in the process. I also do not see producers involved in the process either. I see SED's and upper management types working on it. My big fear is the that they will go the way of crop insurance and only require producers to report their crop totals instead of field by field. Can you imagine trying to deal with programs like LIP (when looking at previous years) and NAP without field data to review?
- As you know Administrator Juan Garcia is retiring and it was an honor to present him a plaque in appreciation of serve to FSA from NASCOE. On Saturday he stopped by our last day of convention and had kind things to say about NASCOE and he encouraged every CO employee to be a member. We wish you the very best in your retirement Mr. Administrator. And remember you promised us you would release the workload formula/results to employees very soon.
- Which brings us to our new administrator Val Dolcini from California, I have had a number of conversations with Val before he was appointed and I came away impressed. He is very personable and seems willing to consider all sides. That being said each Administrator has his marching orders from above to carry out and I hope we can be on the same page as much as possible. NASCOE congratulates you Val and wishes you the very best as you lead our agency.

With the new dairy program launching, changes to FSFL and training on the horizon for ARC/PLC it will be a very busy fall. I expect Wes and I will be heading to Washington soon to share your concerns and to work for more wins. Let's get busy!

# NASCOE Now

## Vice President Report

### August 29, 2014

It was great seeing everybody in OKC. As crazy as everything has been the past year, I am even more convince that NASCOE is important and is making a difference. I personally want to thank each of you for all of your hard work and effort. I also have able to witness firsthand the time and thought that NASCOE President Mark VanHoose puts into the decision making in an effort to get it right. As you know some of the issues we have faced this year are:

- Furlough
- sequestration
- farm bill
- staff reductions
- leasing issues
- Central, Branch, Satellite (CBS) office restructuring
- development of a workload tool
- IT issues
- MIDAS

There have also been some positive occurrences:

- regular COC meetings
- ag Approps funding S&E's at a higher level than the proposed president's budget
- work of the NASCOE Legislative Consultant
- hiring freeze lifted
- ceilings staying the same or going up
- temporaries available
- a few permanent employees hired nationwide
- 1% COLA
- TOA given back
- employee associations having representation on task force
- NASCOE operating in the black and our net worth is increasing

These are just some of the issues and some of the positive changes that have happened in the last year. NASCOE has made a difference. I would like to take this time and thank all the Executive Committee Members. I would especially like to recognize those that are stepping down for whatever reason. It has been a pleasure to serve with each one of you, and your passion and contributions have been deeply appreciated. Annette Hyman – Secretary, Kevin Wooten - Co-Legislative Chair, Kevin Dale – NAFEC Chair, Patricia Sorensen – Programs Chair, Stephanie Bradley- Fryer – Membership Chair, Renee Boykin – Publicity Chair, and Tom Oasen - AS&E Chair.

I would also like to wish our Administrator, Juan Garcia the best for him and his family as he starts a new chapter in his life, retirement. As we all know, like many of us, ASCS/FSA has played a major role in Juan's life. I really appreciated his comments the last day of the convention about the importance of being a member of NASCOE and the job NASCOE does. I will wrap up with a big thank-you to our friends in Oklahoma, Mike Lee and Jay Goff and all of the folks with the Oklahoma Association that made the convention a great success.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Wes Daniels  
NASCOE VP

# Legislative Update

There is no more better time to highlight the importance of the NASCOE Political Action Committee (PAC) than during an election year. For those members of Congress attempting to retain their positions, and those candidates attempting to gain office, this is the perfect opportunity to grab their ear and ensure they know the importance of the work FSA employees do and the impact we have on the agricultural economy.

Just over a year ago, we, as an agency, were facing steep staffing reductions, the end of the farm bill with a cloud of uncertainty hanging over us concerning our future role in the new farm programs, and the impending government shutdown.

In a little under 6 months' time, this all changed for the better. The government shut down came and went, there was a new Farm Bill passed with what appears to be a good deal of workload, and most recently, the appropriations sub committees moved forward appropriations bills that position us in a much better place to administer those new programs, despite the administration's further attempt to reduce salary and expense funds. All of these successes came to fruition with the help of grass roots efforts from NASCOE members all across the country, and the doors that were opened with our NASCOE PAC.

Without the PAC, congressional members have no real reason to listen to our concerns. Because campaign funds are so vital for members of the legislature to retain their jobs, not only do they listen to us, but often times they take action on our requests to keep us coming back to the table with our open check book. Like it or not, this is the reality of how things get done in Washington, D.C., and until someone decides to change that, we either have to play along or get left behind. The one important thing that everyone must remember is that every effort that NASCOE puts in place, including our PAC tool, aligns with NASCOE's mission to represent our FSA County Office Employees and to protect our jobs and benefits. So in reality, NASCOE's PAC is better defined as insurance for our employees' jobs and benefits.

A few weeks ago, at the National convention in Oklahoma City, NASCOE ran a PAC promotion that rewarded the state with the highest percent increase enrolment in the PAC. The award had to be shared due to a tie, but a big "THANK YOU!" to North Carolina and South Dakota for stepping up to the plate and knocking it out of the park! But, the real winner is NASCOE and the membership. This promotion yielded 21 new enrollments and 24 contribution increases for a total contribution increase of \$3,942.00 per year! This is a huge show of support in helping support the NASCOE PAC that has been a proven tool that provides a plan of insurance for your jobs and benefits!

With upcoming Farm Bill training sessions are scheduled, every state will have prime opportunities to meet face-to-face with our employees. We strongly encourage each state's leadership to hold PAC promotions in your respective states to further promote NASCOE membership and PAC enrollment. With nearly 400 newly-hired FSA employees coming onboard (a direct result of NASCOE's hard work), please make sure that someone take the time and opportunity to talk with these new employees about what NASCOE and NASCOE's PAC are, and how we must support both to protect our jobs and benefits. We also urge you to take these opportunities, as well as opportunities at your state conventions, local fairs, district congressional meetings, and meetings with other farm organization partners to continue to build our local grassroots network with our congressional members.

To enroll in the NASCOE PAC, simply follow the instructions on the attached PAC enrollment form.

## NASCOE PAC DONOR INFORMATION FORM

I want to support NASCOE PAC! This will confirm that I have directed the NATIONAL FINANCE CENTER to deduct from my salary each pay period \$\_\_\_\_.00\_\_\_\_ for a contribution to NASCOE PAC. I have made the allotment directly through the NATIONAL FINANCE CENTER's web-site (<https://www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/>).

**PLEASE COMPLETE** - Federal law requires the collection and reporting of the following information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_ USDA-FSA \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address\* \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*PLEASE ALSO SUPPLY THE FOLLOWING:*

Home Phone\* (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail\* (non-government) \_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_ (last 4 only)

(Your home address and telephone and a personal e-mail have been requested, because federal law prohibits engaging in political activity in government buildings, using government resources or on government time.)

### **PLEASE READ AND SIGN BELOW:**

Contributions to NASCOE PAC are limited in total to \$5,000 per calendar year. NASCOE PAC uses the voluntary contributions it receives to make political contributions to candidates, parties and other political organizations. NASCOE members may refuse to contribute to NASCOE PAC without fear of any reprisal. Any suggested contribution amounts or levels are merely offered for guidance and convenience. NASCOE members are free to contribute more or less than these amounts. The amount a NASCOE member contributes or a refusal to contribute, will not benefit or disadvantage that person. Contributions to NASCOE PAC are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to NASCOE PAC must be made with personal funds, and may not be reimbursed, expensed or otherwise paid by another person. Contributions from corporations (including PCs) are prohibited, as are contributions from foreign nationals, other than those made by persons who are lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the U.S. (i.e., "green card" holders). NASCOE members may discontinue their payments to NASCOE PAC or may adjust the amount of their allotment at any time by contacting the National Finance Center. I have read and understand the aforementioned:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **RETURN THIS FORM TO:**

**Donny Green**  
3940 Nashville Hwy.  
Dowelltown, TN. 37059

[Chief300@dtccom.net](mailto:Chief300@dtccom.net)

**Your Office Phone Number for Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: 615-464-7176

### **WILL BE FORWARDED TO:**

**NASCOE PAC**  
**Hunter Moorehead**  
1156 15<sup>th</sup>. St. NW, Suite 329  
Washington, D.C. 20005

### IMPORTANT

Please notate here if you have personally entered your financial allotment in Employee Personal Page (<https://www.nfc.usda.gov/epps/>): \_\_\_yes\_\_\_ no (I would like someone to call me and assist with entry)

## **NASCOE MIDWEST AREA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEPERSON**

Greetings from the great state of Iowa. My name is Curt Houk; I am currently a CED in Poweshiek County Iowa located in Southeast region of the state. I grew up on a family farm near Blakesburg in Southeast Iowa where I still farm with my dad and my grandfather. My wife and I purchased our own farm in 2010 that is located a quarter mile from where I was raised. We have been married for 10 years and have three beautiful daughters. My wife and I own and operate a 120 head cow/calf operation in which we raise registered Angus cattle and sell seed stock. I obtained a B.S. degree from Iowa State University in Agricultural Education with a minor in Animal Science. My career started with the federal government working for NRCS as a Soil Conservationist where I remained for five years. At that point I applied for the COT program and have been employed with FSA for 7 years and know without a doubt that I have found my home and plan on retiring from this agency. Those plans for retirement, so far down the road, are a big part of what have lead me to this point.

I have been an NASCOE/IASCOE member since my first day of employment with FSA. Early in my FSA career, I made the choice after attending my first state convention that this is an organization that I needed to get involved with to help secure the certainty of not only my future but of all the members future with the agency. Early on, I was selected to represent the Midwest area on a NASCOE task force in which we were charged with developing new methods in which to gain and retain membership. I also have had the privilege of attending two National Legislative Conferences in Washington D.C. After attending all those events, it became very apparent to me that many people were working harder for my job security, benefits and future than I was. It was at that point that I felt compelled to serve in whatever manner I could to help the association and its membership. After just one year of service on the Iowa state board, I was elected as President of IASCOE.

I am proud of the job we do. Proud to serve the people we serve. How does it get any better than the County Committee System in government? "Grass Roots" is a popular term on Capitol Hill; it doesn't get any closer than locally lead FSA offices. I am very passionate about and truly believe in the COC system and will do everything I can possibly do to maintain its integrity.

I have made many friends and many contacts with the great people of NASCOE. I look forward to meeting you and honor the opportunity to serve you on the NASCOE Board. I feel that Chris Hare and I make an excellent team. I look forward to serving as MWA Exec this upcoming year but need your help. When discussing issues at board meetings, it is important to me that I am expressing the desires or concerns of the area and not just my personal opinions. Please stay in touch and let me know your issues and concerns.

Sincerely,  
Curt M. Houk

# **NASCOE MIDWEST AREA ALTERNATE EXECUTIVE Christopher Hare**

Greetings from western Indiana! My name is Christopher Hare, and I am the County Executive Director for the Covington Service Center located in Fountain County, Indiana. Covington is located in west central Indiana. I was raised in rural Armada, Michigan. I have been surrounded by agriculture my whole life. Growing up I have had exposure to beef, dairy, fruit and vegetable, and grain operations.

I started with Farm Service Agency in 2003 as a Program Technician in the Putnam/Hendricks County Office. After 1 year I was accepted into the County Operations Trainee (COT) Program. I served one year as a COT. In 2005, I was hired as the County Executive Director in Jasper County, Indiana. In 2006, I transferred to the Fountain County where I still serve today. I have been detailed to 5 shared managements. I have had the opportunity to lead or participate in local, state, and national trainings. My most recent feat is being Indiana's Super User for MIDAS.

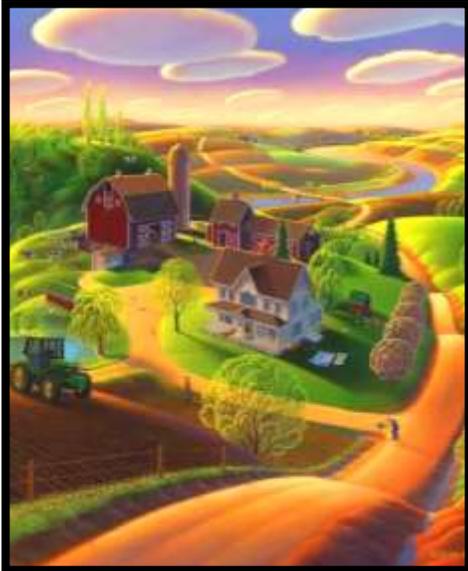
I joined IASCOE when I started with the agency and have held many different positions including Vice-President over the years. My current role is a Director for District 1 and Indiana's Webmaster. However, my involvement in NASCOE didn't start until I attended my first convention in Rapid City, South Dakota in 2005. One week there and I was hooked. Since then I have only missed 1 convention. I served on the NASCOE Task Force in 2011. NASCOE is home and the members are family.

The knowledge I have gained from FSA and NASCOE is tremendous. I have made many great contacts throughout every state and in Washington D.C. I also know that FSA employees are facing a great deal of uncertainty. I understand how important NASCOE is to the employees of this agency. I recognize the importance in our "grass roots" County Committee System. I know from my own experience, PT's and CED's are where the rubber meets the road.

I look forward to working with Curt Houk, Midwest Area Executive to serving our area's members.

Sincerely,  
Christopher Hare

## **PICTURE INFORMATION**



If you liked the picture on the front of the NASCOE Spring Newsletter, I have found the artist or more accurate, the artist found me!

The artist name is Robin Moline.

She sends the following links for information on this artwork and others.

This particular piece of artwork is part of a series that was originally done for the John Deere Pavilion permanent mural in Moline Illinois <http://www.lib.niu.edu/1998/ic980810.html>

For your information, the artwork can be purchased as a giclee print at the below link. <http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/robin-moline.html?tab=artworkgalleries&artworkgalleryid=73236>

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**Congratulations to Kristal Rater from Texas on joining the Nascoe team as Publicity Chair! Also, congrats to all new Chairs and Execs!**

**Pictures from the 2014 Nascoe Convention will be coming soon. If you ordered a CD of all the pictures taken at the Convention, it should be arriving no later than 30 days after the Convention.**

***Renee Boykin***  
**Past Publicity Chair**