



NASCOE NOW

Monthly Electronic Publication keeping Members Informed

June 2014

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SEE YOU IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OK for the 55th ANNUAL NASCOE CONVENTION!

August 12 to 17, 2014

Visit www.nascoe.org or www.okascoe.org for more info!

Marking One Year As Your President

By Mark VanHoose

I am in Chicago attending the NACS/NASE convention as I write this article and I addressed the assembly on June 29th. No tomatoes flew my way so it was a good session. As we approach our own NASCOE convention and reflect back I must admit it has been a challenging year. The budget for 2015 was a hurdle that we were able to overcome and it is a positive that we are getting additional staffing in many parts of the country. We know it isn't enough and you have been telling me that you cannot deliver this Farm Bill with the massive workload you face. We will continue to deliver your message. I believe the new national workload system being rolled out is positive for states. Although not everyone is happy with what we are hearing about it we have been pushing for a national formula and starting with something is at least a step in the right direction. NASCOE was not permitted to have input into the plan and it would have been difficult to make sure all areas needs were met. Hopefully the system will adapt and improve as we move forward. I think it is very important that state associations work with their SED to make sure all states are being staffed equally. It really will get more traction if SED's are pushing this issue. Please be involved but also cautious when considering changes to your state staffing formula. Let your area executive know if NASCOE needs to monitor this situation.

A big issue starting to rise to the top is the concern about space for new offices. The new space specifications do not provide adequate room for file cabinets, a break area, COC meeting room or adequate room to meet with producers. Management tells us that there is an opportunity to request a waiver of these requirements but I'm not sure your STO knows this. I think it is very important that your local FAC meet and come up with needed space and send a memorandum in requesting a waiver as needed. I'm not sure anyone is really sharing the new space requirements in the field as the current handbooks on space seem not to apply anymore. Much like the new Lexmark printers everything is being driven from the top down so we need to make sure we represent your concerns on how these decisions affect the county office. This is a disturbing trend that we continue to see and puts NASCOE in an unusually difficult position of trying to make change after the horse is out of the barn. On a positive note I will say that we have a number of good NASCOE people working on various task forces ranging from training development to receipts for service so we do appreciate the opportunity to input as much as possible.

We still have some states not permitting supervisors from nominating employees for 10 hour TOA's under paragraph 66D of 5-PM. With management concerned about employee morale I would not think this would be a problem but we continue to see this and we are working on rectifying this situation.

Some state are moving aggressively with CBS plans and forcing CEDs' to compete for jobs. With language in the 2015 budget expressing concern about changes to county office structure we have been working with management to move slowly and let attrition provide soft landings. That being said I am concerned with what we are seeing so far. I do appreciate those SED's that seem to very sensitive to the concerns of their employees as we go forward and rest assured we will keep Congress informed of planned changes.

I know you have much stress right now and I hope you can manage it all as we move forward. Know that NASCOE is representing your concerns and I ask you to keep us informed of your issues as they arise. I hope to see you at the national convention in Oklahoma!

NASCOE Update

June 30, 2014

Ceilings have been released to states and even if they aren't as high as we all feel they should be, to get the work done, they are higher than they were going to be. The proposed funding in Ag Appropriation bills probably had some effect on this. We all know there is more work to do than there is staff to get it done right now. Temporaries have been hired to help with the Livestock Disaster Programs, ECP, and other pressing areas of need. Even if temps aren't the best answer, as in many of our eyes, they are needed and appreciated. Management has said that there will probably be more temporaries available as the implementation of new farm bill programs get rolled out. We have always figured out how to deliver our programs to the best farmers and ranchers in the world, and we will again. A new workload tool was used to aid with establishing the new ceilings and providing states with information to help in determining staffing down to the county level. We would like to think that standardizing the calculations to determine staffing levels within a state and at the county level could be a good thing. Hopefully, the system takes into account the differences of administering the programs in different areas of the country. Even with all of this taking place recently, we still have offices that are booked into the fall with appointments due to Livestock Disaster Applications. Most offices are currently swamped with certification, which we need to do timely and well. In one of my own offices, we just had a producer come in and inform us that his crop insurance agent gave him aerial maps of his farms and told him he didn't need to go to FSA to certify, he could just fill in the maps and they would do it for him. The producer had already certified in the FSA office and knew that in the past, he needed to certify every acre in the FSA office to be eligible for various programs; he just wanted us to know. We don't want to lose acreage reporting.

NASCOE and NAFEC are very appreciative that County Committees can hold meetings every month if needed. This is a big positive as we can get back to letting COC's make valuable decisions using their personal knowledge of farming practices and our producers. Management has continued to hold conference calls with employee association's leadership to keep us updated on some of the current issues. Even if we don't get answers to all of our questions, we are able to at least make them aware of our concerns as we work hard to represent all of our membership.

I hope everyone has made their plans to attend the National Convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Association along with Mike Lee and his team have a tremendous event planned for all of us. It is always great to get together and socialize, but it is the best time to come and see how your association works for you. The National Convention is our annual business meeting, so please come be a part of the association that works for you.

In closing, I hope everyone enjoys their family and friends over the July 4th holiday. Please take time and remember all of those that gave so much to this country so that we can enjoy the freedoms we have.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Wes Daniels
NASCOE VP

Better Days Ahead?

Dennis Ray, MWA Exec

It seems like I could have started every article I have written for the NOW or the NASCOE Newsletter by commenting that the past few months have seemed like a rollercoaster ride. That certainly applies to the past few months starting with the high of the Farm Bill being passed to the low of the proposed FY-15 budget calling for a reduction of 815 FTE's. While challenges still remain, I would like to share a few things that make me cautiously optimistic.

State Executive Directors have received their new ceilings. After a few years of a hiring freeze being in place states are now able to advertise some permanent positions. While the process may be a little more complicated than in the past, adding permanent employees will provide some much needed relief to county offices. States are currently allowed to fill some of the understaffed positions with the expectation that they will be allowed to hire up to their ceilings by the end of the year. I would hope that the ability to hire up to the ceiling would happen sooner rather than later.

Another thing that encourages me is the addition of Key PT's. A few states have asked for and received authority to advertise for additional Key PT's. These states have fully embraced the Key PT position and see the benefits it provides. Key PT's can help fill voids left in state offices that have lost staff by being a contact and a resource for county offices. Key PT's can help train new employees or employees that have assumed new programs. If your state does not utilize the Key PT position I would encourage your state association talk to the STO about this valuable asset.

Another positive is that funding has been provided for regular County Committee meetings. A few states have been concerned about travel funds for COC meetings but for the most part COC's are meeting monthly. The Livestock Forage Program and Livestock Indemnity Program just reinforce the importance and value of the County Committee. I cannot fathom trying to administer these programs without the input of the COC. I would anticipate needing the COC just as much in other new Farm Bill programs.

As I mentioned earlier challenges remain but there are a few positives out there. I am looking forward to being able to meet with and discuss those remaining challenges with membership and management at the National Convention in Oklahoma City. I would encourage each of you to attend also. There is no better time to get involved than right now.

NASCOE Legislative Committee

June 2014

A few updates from your Legislative Committee:

- We have continued to follow the Appropriations process as both the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittees have approved their respective FY 2015 bills. These bills are now ready to be brought to the floor in both chambers. Just prior to June 18th, the House had started to discuss those bills with the expectation that the entire process would be completed in the near future. However, with the defeat of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, House Republican leadership shifted its focus on selecting a new majority leader. As a result, the House version was pulled from the floor, and it is unclear when it will return for debate.
- The salaries and expenses language in the House bill saw a change during debate prior to the bill getting pulled. An amendment was offered to remove \$50 million from FSA salary and expense to shift funds to ECP. After making contact with some influential managers of the bill, we learned that this original amendment would be defeated. However--the same group offering the \$50 million amendment came back and asked for \$10 million from FSA salary and expense to shift funds to ECP. This time, the bill managers agreed to the amendment. While it was disappointing to see these funds shift away from salaries--\$10 million is much easier to manage than \$ 50 million. Finally, there is no sign of opposition to office restructuring and staff level language in the House bill.
- On the Senate side, the Agriculture appropriations bill is traveling along in a minibus bill with the Commerce, Justice and Transportation appropriations. While there is no change in the language relating to office restructuring and staff levels, our salary and expenses number is higher than what the president requested so that is likely to draw some attention. We have no timeline for when this bill will reach the Senate floor for a vote. The new House leadership will vote soon on the new Majority leader and Whip. It is a private voting process.

A few other items of interest:

- Congressman Frank Lucas from Oklahoma has been selected as NASCOE's 2014 Legislator of the Year. During his time on the House Agriculture Committee, particularly as Chairman of the committee, Congressman Lucas has been a constant advocate for Farm Service Agency. We look forward to presenting this award to him in person during national convention in Oklahoma City, OK.
- We recently learned that OMB /DAFP made a visit a Pennsylvania county office a few weeks ago. The visit focused on the progress of MIDAS. The group was curious why MIDAS is not being used as the platform for the new farm bill programs, and asked why we continue to utilize 2 systems (Web Farm & MIDAS). We understand that the group seemed to be surprised at the lack of compatibility and interaction of our software programs. Reports were that the visit was beneficial, yet eye opening for the OMB/DAFO group.

Your legislative committee looks forward to seeing a many NASCOE members as possible in Oklahoma City this coming August.

--Your Legislative Committee



****Second Notice****

NASCOE SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED

Year in and year out it never ceases to amaze me with the generosity of our Members when it comes to donating incredible items for the NASCOE Scholarship program! Then, I am equally amazed at the eagerness of the bidders to not worry so much about the true cost of an item, rather they spend their hard earned dollars as they know this is for a wonder cause for our future leaders!

The NASCOE Convention is right around the corner, so time is of the essence! If you are planning on bringing your auction item to Oklahoma City, the folks at the registration table will help you out! If you would like to ship your item to Oklahoma City, please ship your items it to:

**Renaissance OKC Convention Center Hotel
Attn: Tom Oasen – NASCOE Scholarships
10 North Broadway Ave
Oklahoma City, OK 73102**

Please plan to have your item shipped to the hotel no earlier than August 1st or later than August 12th.

Following this page please find a page that you can print out and tell us about your spectacular item you are donating!

Thank you again for your donations! Along with the money that is raised at the scholarship auction, donations by Dillard Financial, JM Marketing, RASCOE, Funds donated from auctions held at Area Rallies, State Association and private individuals to us each year (which I cannot thank them enough for their generosity!) and commissions on Emblems sales, we raise enough money to cover \$11,000 per year in Scholarships! That is almost unheard of with an association that is 100% voluntary! Puts a smile on my face just thinking about it! You are all so wonderful!

Thank you again, and please remember to visit www.nascoeemblemsonline.com to check out the new items Era has added for our valued customers!

Tom Oasen, NASCOE ASE Chairperson (tom.oasen@charter.net)

NASCOE – 2014 SCHOLARSHIP AUCTION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
August 2014

DONATED ITEM INFORMATION

Item donated by: (Business or individual) _____

Item collected by: (State & Area) _____

Description of the item: (If handmade, please note by whom) _____

Value of the item: _____

PLEASE SUBMIT IN DUPLICATE WITH ANY ITEM!!!!!!!

Thank you so much for your generosity!

**NOTIFY YOUR AREA EXECUTIVE OF ANY CHANGES,
ADDITIONS, or DELETIONS ASAP! THANK YOU!**

**2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND/OR
NATIONAL CONVENTION DELEGATES**

ALABAMA	MARIE HEADLEY AND WILLIAM SHANE SEAY	03/30/14
ARIZONA	ARNIE SCHLITTENART	08/10/12
ARKANSAS	MARTY CONLEY AND NANCY CHLAPECKA	06/24/14
CALIFORNIA-HAWAII		07/17/13
COLORADO	KEVIN REEVES AND CHUCK HANAGAN	08/05/13
CONN-RHODE ISLAND	HOWARD ROOD AND BECKY PALMER	07/09/13
DELAWARE-MARYLAND	CAROLE HILL AND JAMIE MCCLAIN	06/18/14
FLORIDA	HUGH HUNTER AND BUBBA TOMLINSON	06/27/14
GEORGIA	MARCIA BAKER AND KAY WALKER	06/30/14
IDAHO	CHRISTY RANDALL AND MELISA CARTER	06/27/14
ILLINOIS	DAN PUCETTI AND CHARLENE NEUKOMM	06/27/14
INDIANA	DAWN HUMMEL AND SUZIE STRIETELMEIER	06/19/13
IOWA	CURT HOUK AND CURTIS GOETTSCHE	05/29/14
KANSAS	JOAN SANDERS AND JESSICA WESLEY	07/19/13
KENTUCKY	COY HIGDON AND MICKI CARTER	06/30/14
LOUISIANA	JOEL DUCOTE AND BRENDA HORNSBY	06/25/13
MAINE	SANDRA TRUSLOW	08/01/13
MASSACHUSETTS		07/17/13
MICHIGAN	BENITA MEEKHOOF AND WAYNE STICKLER	06/27/14
MINNESOTA	DARLENE JOHNSON AND NICKI MIRANOWSKI	06/04/14
MISSISSIPPI	LORIE HOLMES AND KEN BARRON	06/30/14
MISSOURI	SHERIA YANCEY AND ABBY INGLIS	06/27/14
MONTANA	TAMMY LAKE AND BILLY WAYNE DENISON	06/27/14
NEBRASKA	SHANNA WATERMAN AND	06/27/14
NEVADA		
NEW HAMPSHIRE		07/17/13
NEW JERSEY		07/17/13
NEW MEXICO	TERRY CATER AND THERESA WHITNEY	07/17/13
NEW YORK	DIANE BUTTON AND LORRI DANDIGNAC	06/30/14
NO CAROLINA	LORRAINE DILLARD AND NEIL BURNETTE	06/30/14
NO DAKOTA	JEAN SCHOENHARD AND	06/27/14
OHIO	AMY MORMAN AND LAURA ROGERS	05/28/14
OKLAHOMA	MIKE LEE AND JAY GOFF	07/17/13
OREGON	KEVIN MACINTYRE	06/27/14
PENNSYLVANIA	DODIE GARMAN AND RICK CSUTORAS	07/17/13
SO CAROLINA	RENEE BOYKIN AND DEBBIE DELORME	06/20/14
SO DAKOTA	JENNIFER CHAVEZ AND JANELLE ADRIAN	06/27/14
TENNESSEE	LANNY MORRIS AND LISA PARCHMAN	06/30/14
TEXAS	DARVIN COLLINS AND JOHN MARK KINNIBRUGH	06/27/13
UTAH	DALE FOWERS	07/18/13
VERMONT	LAWRENCE PARKER AND TRACY DERRY	07/09/13
VIRGINIA	LEE WOMACK AND KATIE ELSEA	06/30/14
WASHINGTON-ALASKA	BETTY SNELL	06/27/14
WEST VIRGINIA	ERIC MCCARTNEY AND MICHAEL BISER	07/09/13
WISCONSIN	DEB ELLINGSON AND KIM ICZKOWSKI	05/25/14
WYOMING	JENNIFER DUTTON AND DARRELL JONES	06/27/14

IMPORTANT - ATTENTION

State Associations please email Annette Hyman @ AHYMANA@aol.com your State Association Officers' and 2014 NASCOE Convention Delegates' names and home email addresses by **July 15th**.

This year the NASCOE Annual Report will be **emailed** and **not** sent on a CD by mail.

This new method will save a considerable amount of money. **PLEASE NOTE:**

This report will not be emailed to government addresses.

**Congratulations again to all
winners of the NASCOE Publicity Contest!
Hope to see you in Oklahoma City, OK!**

2014 Publicity Contest Winners:

Best Overall Newsletter: TX, Kristal Rater, Editor

Best Single Newsletter Issue: TX, Kristal Rater, Editor

Best Website: IA, www.tascoe.org, Kristal Rater, Webmaster

Best Feature Story, Human Interest:

"Navy Ship Homecoming" By Karen Leschper, TX

Best Feature Story, Humor:

"Agency Memories" by Barry Terhark, IA

**And a Big THANK YOU to all of this years participants and judges.
Your time committed to NASCOE Publicity is greatly appreciated.**

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**To all the State Publicity Chairs and Webmasters: I encourage you to enter your newsletters and websites in the publicity contest. The entry process has been simplified by allowing entries to be submitted to the judges by email. When working on your publications, you can go to the Contest Manual on the Nascoe website and get information on contest rules and regulations and you can also see what items the judges will be looking for in the publications and on the websites.**

**Thank you to all of you for what you do for your State Organizations!**

***Renee Boykin  
National Publicity Chair***