



RASCOE Summer 2018 Newsletter

President's Report Jim Iverson, President

I would like to use this forum to invite you to attend this year's NASCOE/RASCOE annual convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The convention theme is "Welcome to Sioux Falls, the Heart of America." While I would certainly agree that we are the "Heart of America", I would further extend that metaphor to say that every county FSA office is also the "Heart of America" as we devote our careers to provide support to our nation's food and fiber producers. It seems fitting that we celebrate that in South Dakota this August. In the past South Dakota has hosted conventions in Rapid City and the Black Hills. We think you will find Sioux Falls just as interesting and enjoyable for very different reasons. The greater Sioux Falls region is a national leader on many fronts, particularly agriculture research and related industries. The tours planned by our SDASCOE team will highlight some of those things including the world's largest Ethanol company, the EROS data center, and research done at our land grant university SDSU. I want to recognize co-chairs Becky Zlrpel and Joel Foster for putting together what promises to be a unique and interesting set of experiences for you. You are going to love spending Friday night at our beautiful Falls Park and enjoy a rejuvenated downtown area with award winning restaurants, shops, and an outdoor art gallery that spans several blocks. You aren't going to want to miss any of this.



On the business side of things I will say that it appears any congressional action on the GPO/WEP will not happen this year. Our good friend, David Senter, has kept an eye on this and will let us know if there are any changes on the horizon. I feel we need to put a better effort toward taking the cost of health care as a pre-tax item. Nothing happens quickly so this will be an ongoing effort.

A sincere thanks to all of our membership for your support of me and our organization. I have tried to work with those who have the best of intentions for our membership and considered it a privilege to be able to serve as your President. Our RASCOE goals are not easy to accomplish, but the job is made easier by the efforts of everyone.

Vice President's Report Chad Hart, Vice President

What a short summer this has been, at least for me. I have traveled to 4 different states this year competing in chuck wagon cooking contests. So far no one has run us out of town. I went to a felt hat making school and what an experience, I had no idea how many steps there were nor what took place to make a hat. I also found some time to catch a few fish in mountain streams.

I am looking forward to the hospitality of South Dakota, it looks like they have a great time planned for us.

This year RASCOE has created a web site, thank you to Mary Behm. At least one of our Board attended most area rallies. I have to say I really enjoyed the Southwest Area rally held here in Colorado, although Kentucky seemed to remove me of any extra funds I had via horse races. Joyce Logdson tried to steer me to the right horses and it worked until I consumed some fine Lexington Kentucky refreshments. After that I thought every horse looked like a winner.

During both rallies it was mentioned that there is a provision for retired ASCS/FSA employees to become employed again as temporary part time employees and the earnings would not affect their annuity. It took some digging and what I found is that if there is an announcement of a position open, then you apply. If hired yes it seems to be true, the earnings will not affect your annuity. We have created or re-created some up to date position papers for pretax health issue and Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision. I have been told by several in the political arena that we may never see much change in the GPO/WEP although we have stirred to pot on the health insurance tax issue. I feel we are gaining.

Now for each of you, what would you like RASCOE to be doing for you? Hard to be your representative without input from our membership. Please send me an email with your thoughts, swarascoe@gmail.com



DAVID SENTER

There's been more talk than action pertaining to retirement issues for the past few months. The increasing Federal Deficient now has Members of Congress saying that the only way to deal with it is with cuts to entitlement spending. Yes, entitlement is the name they now use instead of retirement programs which you pay into and earn for all the years you worked for the Federal Government. The good news is this is an election year so don't expect to see Congress

pass anything major, but it does paint a target on issues that a new Congress might attempt. RASCOE must be engaged to make sure that elected officials know that you will not quietly sit back and let them take away benefits you earned. Union's have been a big target this year mainly through Executive Orders which has severely weakened many of the public-sector Unions.

It has been a great year and I have enjoyed working with RASCOE's Leadership team. Joan and I are looking forward to seeing everyone in South Dakota soon, safe travels.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES 2017 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Thursday, August 3, 2017, Embassy Suites Hotel, St. Charles, MO

The annual meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by President Jim Iverson. Invocation was given by RASCOE Treasurer, Cindy Hall. Jim welcomed everyone to the Twenty Third Annual Meeting. Jim recognized Gene Vognild for never missing a RASCOE or NASCOE meeting over the years, stating Gene is an inspiration to all ASCS/FSA employees and retirees alike. Thursday roll call was 38.

President Jim Iverson called for the reading of the minutes. Secretary Micki Linehan stated that the 2016 unapproved minutes were included in the 2016 Fall Newsletter, in the 2017 Summer Newsletter and also in our Annual Report. Lynda Steichen motioned to waive the reading and approve the 2016 minutes as printed in the Annual Report. The motion to waive the reading of the minutes was seconded by Gene Vognild. Motion Carried.

President's Report – Jim Iverson stated that it's been a good year. Even though we have seen nothing positive happening with the Social Security Fairness Act bills, we have been carefully watching new concerns centered on health care issues and retirement pension issues. Jim also commended Cindy Hall, RASCOE Treasurer, for making arrangements for RASCOE officers and committee chairs to hold monthly meetings via teleconference. This service is free of charge. The conference calls have been invaluable in providing us the opportunity to have meaningful conversations about issues of concern. One of the things we have discussed is to send information and important documents to our membership via email. If we can improve our communication with our membership, our organization can become healthier and more effective in our lobbying efforts. Jim asked everyone to please keep their email addresses current so they can receive our email blast updates. And also, email him with any important issues that would be beneficial to share with the membership and he will review them and if approved, pass it on to Micki Linehan to send out in an email blast.

Vice -President/Legislative Report – Chad Hart talked about how he had worked during the past year on a RASCOE Officer & Chair Guidelines/Responsibilities document, emailing it to present and past Board members for review and comments. This document is in our Annual Report booklet. Chad asked everyone to take a look at it and he welcomed any comments in relationship to its' content. Chad said that one of the issues he pursued after being elected VP was the OPM issue regarding not considering temporary time some of us have on record as non-qualifying for retirement. OPM had found that COF employees were not eligible to buy back their time served as temporary employees prior to 1985 due to the fact that ASCS/FSA employees are considered County Office Employees. The result was that some retiree's annuity was being adjusted downward and some were no longer eligible to be retired. With NASCOE and RASCOE working together to research the issue and get our legislative consultants involved, the matter was resolved with language put in place to ensure it will not surface again. Without intervention from NASCOE and RASCOE some retirees would have had annuities adjusted or worse. Officers and Chairs have been sending out email blasts to membership at no additional cost. This is very beneficial to ensure vital legislative information is provided to members in a timely manner. Chad asked David Senter to periodically send out informational updates, as issues transpire, to the Board so we can pass information on to members. The Board reviews them and sends them out accordingly. Chad asked the members present if they wanted to see reports in the form of email blasts from David Senter monthly or do we want to have updates more often. Chad talked about contacting WIFE (Women in Farm Economics) President asking if they would partner with us since we have similar goals. She asked him to send him information on RASCOE but she thought they would be very interested. Also Chad is trying to recreate our relationship with NARFE (National Association of Retired Federal Employees) in order to make our Association stronger. He feels partnerships will help all retirees, since strength is in numbers. Chad also thanks each of the RASCOE members that have made that extra effort to keep in touch with your Congressional Representatives. Chad talked about RASCOE being represented at each of the 5 area rallies, presenting the newly created video with overwhelming positive response. Chad said one of the things that is making your Officers and Chairs more productive is our monthly conference calls. We share information and ideas monthly that have enabled us to be a stronger more informed leadership.

Secretary/Publicity Report – Micki Linehan talked about what a busy and productive year this past year has been for RASCOE. As you all have heard from our President and Vice President, our monthly calls have been productive, positive and effective. Communicating each month with ideas, updates and deadlines has kept us on track and connected us in a way that we wouldn't have had otherwise. Micki said that as Secretary, her busiest time is two or three weeks prior to our Annual Meeting gathering reports from all of the Officers/Chairs, organizing and updating other documents that need to be in Annual Report and getting that information to the printer. Micki thanked all of those who sent her articles and updates to put in our newsletter, and encouraged everyone to continue to do so.

Treasurer/Membership Report – Cindy Hall said we ended 2016 with \$16,415.35 and 2017 with \$15,855.59. So essentially we lost \$559.76. That number is a minor difference because we spent slightly over \$10,000 for our RASCOE video, which we decided was necessary to get the word out about our organization. From the reports we've heard from those who have seen it, it was well worth it. We also lost about 80 members from 2015-16 to 2016-17. We also purchased a new laptop and printer and still managed to maintain our balance. Cindy acknowledged that we made some sacrifices this past year in not sending an officer to every rally to save money. However, most rallies were attended by someone who shared our message. We also shared the video at these rallies. As Treasurer, Cindy said she often gets notes with dues checks thanking her for everything the officers do for RASCOE. We are just the visible part of the membership. Each of the several layers of membership is just as important as the next. We have many, many members that have contributed for many years to this organization so we can do the work we are elected to do. Cindy has been working on a method of thanking those members for their faithful contributions. She is putting together a list of everyone who has been a member for 10 or more years and 5 or more years. She handed out a list of these members. Cindy recognized 9 states that have had membership increases. Those states are Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. The highest increase with 120% was Alabama, so the traveling trophy for the most increase in membership goes to Alabama.

Benefits Chairman Report – Ben Bosshart reported that this past year finally produced the "long thought about, long talked about" RASCOE video. This endeavor was intended to provide a firsthand account from members of RASCOE telling their story of how membership benefits them and how it can benefit all. Many folks have attended rallies and viewed the video. It will also be posted on the RASCOE website. Ben reminded us to be vigilant regarding current scams. Some of the examples included the caller asking "Can you hear me?". If we respond in almost any way it can result in giving a scammer access to information they're seeking. In addition, there's the "IRS Calling" or some other federal agency supposedly contacting you for information that no federal agency would request by phone. Ben advised us all to stay alert and be aware of these kinds of calls. Ben said that he placed an article in our fall newsletter addressing some of the questions folks had regarding the interaction between the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program and Medicare. A summary concluded that if you retain your FEHB insurance and subscribed to both

Medicare Parts A & B, you would be in a pretty good place in terms of your health care coverage. That's why it's so important to pay attention to what Congress is considering or doing regarding Medicare and FEHB program. Another thing Ben wanted to make sure everyone knew was that the "National Parks" card is now available for \$10 for senior citizens. Later this year it is proposed to increase to \$80.

Cindy Hall asked the members present if anyone was willing to help with our website updating. Ben Bosshart said that currently it is difficult to navigate to the RASCOE link on the NASCOE website. Mary Behm volunteered to create a website dedicated to RASCOE. She will let the members know what the website address is.

2017 Audit Committee Report – Lynda Streichen and Cindy Mengershauser were appointed by Jim Iverson to the 2017 Audit Committee. Lynda reported to the members that the audit report revealed no discrepancies.

President Jim Iverson entertained the motion to approve the reports as presented by the President, Vice-President/Legislative Chair, Secretary/Publicity Chair, Treasurer/Membership Chair and Audit Report. Barbara Jackson made a motion to approve reports as read. Mike Schryer seconded. Motion carried.

President Jim Iverson asked the members present if anyone had an introduction of changes in our constitution or bylaws. There were no changes introduced.

Gene Vognild asked if retired GS State Office Employees are eligible to hold office. Chad Hart referred to the By-Laws in the Annual Report booklet, stating that according to Article II – Membership, ANY ASCS/FSA retiree who is a member in good standing of his or her affiliated State Association shall be a member of this association upon payment of the national dues by the affiliated state. Members reviewed the language in Article II and agreed that any ASCS/FSA retiree that is in membership good standing is eligible to hold office so there should be no reason to amend the By-Laws to clarify.

New Business – President Jim Iverson told members in attendance that prior to the RASCOE meeting, Board members met with J.M. Marketing and Dillard's independently to review proposals from both. Vice President Chad Hart explained to the members what each proposal was. J.M. Marketing representative Ty Christensen stated that they will continue to provide RASCOE retirees the same benefits that they have in the past. These benefits include permanent life insurance, critical-illness insurance, cancer insurance, intensive-care-unit insurance, accident-medical insurance, long-term-care insurance, Medicare supplement insurance and health insurance. They present RASCOE with a \$500 check each year for this opportunity to provide members these services. Teresa Dillard, President of Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc., presented a proposal document requesting to be the retirement and benefit provider for RASCOE. Teresa provided a draft proposal for all of the members present to review and discuss. The proposal states Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc. will donate \$1,000 per year to RASCOE for the opportunity to provide certain retirement financial products to members. They will not be offering the same benefits to RASCOE as J.M. Marketing on their proposal. Even though their company does have similar benefits to offer. After much discussion both pro and con, Chad stated that this is just a proposal and that both Teresa Dillard and Ty Christensen will be at our meeting tomorrow to answer questions anyone may have.

President Jim Iverson called for "willingness to serve announcements" for the offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Jim Iverson, SD, announced willingness to serve as President
Chad Hart, CO, announced willingness to serve as Vice-President
Micki Linehan, ID, announced willingness to serve as Secretary
Cindy Hall, NE, announced willingness to serve as Treasurer

President Jim Iverson reminded everyone that tomorrow, Aug 4th, there will be a luncheon at noon and then pictures following. Our meeting will reconvene after our group picture. Thursday session was recessed and will resume Friday after the luncheon.

Friday, August 4, 2017, Embassy Suites Hotel, St. Charles, MO.

Vice President Chad Hart called the meeting to order at 12:45.
Roll call was 38.

Cindy Hall showed the RASCOE promotional video to the members that were present. Chad Hart recognized Ben Bosshart for all of his hard work on the video. Ben stated that at the present time the video isn't up on our website, however he is confident it will be soon. Ben will meet with NASCOE webmaster to get the video placed on our link on the NASCOE website. Larry Olson asked if we planned to send our video to State Offices for sharing. Jim Iverson said when we get the video on our website, people can download it for viewing at State Conventions.

Chad Hart talked about the 22-P.M. Amendment regarding the addition of the RASCOE Association that represents the retired ASCS/FSA employees nationally, therefore allowing the inclusion of a RASCOE membership brochure to be part of the potential retiring employee retirement package. Sheryl Blakely reminded us that not all State Offices are open to adding RASCOE information in retirement packets. Sheryl also suggested that we try to get a member in each state to communicate with their State Office on RASCOE's behalf.

Vice President Chad Hart asked for authorization and approval for the RASCOE Executive Board to attend the NASCOE organizational Meeting and any pre-negotiation meetings. Barbara Jackson made a motion to approve RASCOE Executive Board attendance to these meetings. Rebecca Frost seconded the motion. Motion carried. Vice-President Chad Hart asked for a motion to renew the Legislative Consultant Agreement with KSC Strategies, who furnish services to RASCOE in the area of government relations. Tim Gray made a motion to approve our agreement with KSC Strategies for the 2017-2018 contract year. Chuck Land seconded. Motion carried.

RASCOE's benefits agreement with J.M. Marketing is automatically renewed for successive terms of one year each January 1 through December 31, unless any party gives the other parties written notice of its desire not to renew the Agreement at least ninety (90) days prior to expiration of the initial term.

Vice President Chad Hart called for discussion on the draft proposal submitted to RASCOE by Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc. After some discussion, Larry Olson moved to have an Executive Committee meet to discuss the pros and cons of the Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc. proposal, and what if any impact it will have on our J.M. Marketing agreement. Becky Zirpel seconded the motion. Motion carried. President Jim Iverson stated that the Executive Committee needs to review all documents and proposals and make a presentation, with a definition of Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc. and J.M. Marketing proposals to the membership at our next Annual Meeting in 2018.

President Jim Iverson entertained a motion to approve the Constitution and By-Laws, Executive Policies and Travel Policies as published in our Annual Report. Larry Olson made a motion to approve. Sheryl Blakely seconded. Motion carried.

Cindy Hall made a motion not to adjust the amount of our dues. We increased our dues July 1, 2016 by \$5 for both members and associate members, and there seems to be no need to make any additional adjustments at this time. Cindy Mengershauser made a motion to retain the existing due amounts. Rodger Switzell seconded. Motion carried.

John Chott – National FSA Administration, spoke to the members briefly about the 22-P.M.

Amendment update. He said that Chad Hart had asked him to come to our meeting and reassure RASCOE that the amendment was actually moving forward. John said that the new amendment was being printed as we speak and would be distributed soon. Larry Olson asked John if the State Offices would be allowed to provide RASCOE with a list of retirees. John said that each state is different, but that it is a privacy issue with individuals that retire. However, he encouraged all states to include our RASCOE brochure in individual retirement packets. Cindy Hall asked John if she could get a list of Administrative Officers in each State Office. So she could communicate directly with them. John said that could happen.

Craig Turner – NAFEC, thanked everyone for their service to producers of our country, and talked about the importance of the ASCS/FSA County Committee delivery system. Craig said that as a producer that deals with six different counties, it means a lot to have people in those offices that are friendly, efficient, professional and caring. Craig said NAFEC has great connections with the local politicians in each state to keep the needs and concerns of FSA and local farmers in the forefront. Craig talked about how he appreciates all that we do as retirees and encouraged everyone to support NAFEC by joining and being members at a cost of \$20 a year.

David Senter – KSC Strategies Legislative Consultant, gave his report. David said it's been a good year working with the RASCOE leadership team. David talked about the American Agriculture Movement of the 70's and that he is currently working with them with the farm bill fight. He also talked about how Washington was intending on cutting \$900 billion from Medicaid. That was shot down, and now they are looking at retiree benefits. They talked about several different ways to accomplish this cut including going from a three-year average to a five-year average when calculating benefits, eliminating the FERS annuity supplemental payments, reducing COLA by 50% for CSRS retirees and eliminating it for FERS retirees. Currently there are over a hundred members of Congress that have signed letters opposing these cuts. However, we never know what goes on behind closed doors. David said RASCOE's legislative priorities continue to be reintroducing HR1205& S915 that provide full repeal of both WEP and GPO. President Jim Iverson commended David on what a great job he did setting up meetings with key people when Jim went to WDC for legislative conferences.

NARFE – Craig Pettibone, President of Chapter 112, St Louis Area, started out by explaining what NARFE is. It's a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to protecting earned pay, retirement and health care benefits of federal employees, retirees and their survivors, advocating in support of its members before OPM, Congress and the White House. Craig said NARFE's legislative program is advanced in Congress by a team of registered lobbyist and backed by an informed network of grass-roots activists in every state and Congressional district. They work with Hill staff and members of Congress to defend earned pay and benefits. Craig talked about the many ways that NARFE keeps members informed of any changes that might occur in their pay and benefits. Craig asked that everyone interested to take a look at the NARFE legislative actions on www.narfe.org. If you would like to contact Craig, his email is cpettibone@verizon.net. His phone number is 314-698-2890.

Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc. – Teresa Dillard talked about their benefit proposal, saying that what they are proposing doesn't affect any agreement anyone may have with J.M. Marketing. Dillard's want to be RASCOE's retirement benefit provider. Teresa answered questions from members concerning some of the wording in the DFS proposal. She said that this is a working document at this stage, that this is only the first proposal. They will negotiate changes with RASCOE on an ongoing basis. This proposal, in part, states DFS shall donate RASCOE \$1,000 per year, shall be the exclusive provider to RASCOE of retirement education and annuity products and shall provide an informative article for each edition of the RASCOE newsletter. This Agreement shall be for a term of four (4) years. If funding is eliminated and RASCOE or DFS ceases to exist, this agreement shall be deemed terminated as the date of said occurrence. Teresa said they will all be available for questions and discussions during the convention. Vice-President Chad Hart thanked Teresa for her presentation and said our RASCOE executive committee will review the proposal over the next few months.

J.M. Marketing – Ty Christensen presented RASCOE with a \$500 check. Ty talked about the Cancer Policy reminding members that they have up to 5 years to submit invoices for their annual wellness benefit. Ty had to leave the convention early due to an illness in his family, but assured members that Cathy Denison will be here for the rest of the day if anyone has any questions. Ty asked members to contact him if they have any questions or concerns at tchristenson@jaminsuredirect.com or call him at 800-330-6223 or 877-523-0176.

The 2017 Spirit of RASCOE Award was presented by Lynda Steichen and Ben Bosshart. This year's recipient is Mike Schryer. He was nominated by Sharon Limbaugh.

President Jim Iverson appointed Chuck Land and Lynda Steichen to the 2018 Audit Committee.

President Jim Iverson appointed Ben Bosshart and Lynda Steichen to the 2018 Spirit of RASCOE Award Committee.

President Jim Iverson called for nominations to begin the election of RASCOE Executive Board.

Office of the President – Gene Vognild nominated Jim Iverson. Mike Schryer moved nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot. Laura Howell seconded. Motion carried.

Office of Vice-President – Larry Olson nominated Chad Hart. Chuck Land moved nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot. Leon Edlund seconded. Motion carried.

Office of Secretary – Lynda Steichen nominated Micki Linehan. Becky Zirpel moved nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot. Joyce Lodgson seconded. Motion carried.

Office of Treasurer – Cindy Mengenhauser nominated Cindy Hall. Larry Olson moved nominations cease and cast a unanimous ballot. Ben Bosshart seconded. Motion carried.

President Jim Iverson appointed the following Committee Chairs:

Legislative Chair – Chad Hart
Publicity Chair – Micki Linehan
Membership Chair – Cindy Hall

The Memorial video was shown by Cindy Hall. It was a beautiful presentation with names and pictures of deceased members shown as music played in the background.

Ben Bosshart made a motion to adjourn the 2017 Annual Meeting. Rodger Switzell seconded. Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

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