

The Iowa Association Of FSA
County Office Employees

IASCOE NEWS



March 2006

March 2006 IASCOE Newsletter

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Visit our website at www.iascoe.org

FROM THE DESK OF DERRYL MCLAREN, SED



As the spring of 2006 approaches, conditions appear normal. We are nearly halfway through the fiscal year, and we are just now getting a budget. We are facing another major program workload (CRP) with no additional funding. Oh, and GIS is consuming our daily tasks. Stop it! It would be so easy to be negative. As I look around, the conditions in Iowa look pretty good to me.

Just a few months ago, FSA Tomorrow consumed your thoughts and manifested your fears. Well, tomorrow is here. Last fall, the prospect of LDP's without TO's took our breath away. You can breathe now. Loan volumes were in a downward trend, but we ended the year on a high note. Early retirements and buy-outs had everyone speculating, calculators in hand. We weathered that storm with our employment ceilings for 2006 intact. Yes, the budget is austere as predicted, but payrolls are being met. The CRP sign-up and extensions may even have a silver lining by bringing us additional resources.

When times are uncertain, it becomes necessary to help yourself and better your lot. You did. You cooperated with each other in the counties and pitched-in where needed. We committed TO's at a critical time to survive the backlog of LDP's. We shared human resources before backfilling permanent positions, allowing us to assist additional counties in their staffing shortfalls. With the LDP workload looming, we didn't push the envelope on GIS. After all, discretion is the better part of valor. Congratulations to those counties that made the effort and succeeded! The remaining counties must meet the guidelines and finish before October 1. Period.

There are 7 months left in the year, plenty of time to accomplish our tasks. Our loan volumes are on the rise, and we need to continue the effort. The CRP extensions will tax us, but not consume us. After all, it is only REX, not T-Rex. Additional resources should be announced shortly to accomplish the CRP inspections, but don't be surprised if 2008-10 are added to the list. The yearly sign-up for DCP, planting certifications, and GIS will all be accomplished. Believe me, no one will be more relieved than me to have GIS done and behind us, so keep at it. On these things I ask you to focus, and I will deal with the other issues.

There are a number of issues that are intertwined through budget constraints and the aftermath of FSA Tomorrow. The SED's have been given the latitude to manage (move) salary dollars between accounts. We have also been assigned the task of developing a "Plan" for our respective states in light of existing resources. Employ more TO's at the expense of what? Hire PT's instead of CED's? More shared managements or consolidate offices? Use directed reassignments or consolidate? Hire COT's instead of PT's? Consolidate 1165 management units? The State Committee and I will be seeking your counsel in the weeks and months ahead to answer these questions and advance a Plan that represents the best interests of Iowa FSA. At first blush, Iowa looks pretty good to me, but proper attention and diligence will be given to the task.

It looks like we all have a job to do as we complete 2006. All I have ever asked of you is your best effort, and you have always given that and more. In Iowa, we call that normal.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Derryl McLaren". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Dee-liberations

By Dee Ann Lehn

IASCOE President / CED Keokuk County

The State Convention will soon be upon us and your directors have been working diligently to make sure this convention is a successful one. I am especially pleased with our line up of guest speakers. In addition to our SED and STC Chairperson, we are expecting John Chott from DAFO. Midwest Area Executive, Mark Van Hoose will also be present to bring us up-to-date on NASCOE's activities.



If you have never attended a state convention, I certainly encourage you to do so. A typical convention consists of committee meetings, a general session with guest speakers, a breakfast buffet, presentation of awards, the exchange of ideas and knowledge, developing new friendships and renewing old ones. Of course, we always take time to "let down" too. This year the Friday night entertainment will begin with a hospitality room (this is where we show those out-state guests some real down-home Iowa hospitality), a spin-off of "Saturday Night Live" followed by a dance. There should be a little something for everyone.

If you would like to become involved in the convention, please contact one of your directors. We can always use people to help with registration and door prizes or to be a part of the entertainment (talent not required)!

I hope to see an increase in attendance for this year's convention. We all have such busy lives now a days, but supporting the employees' organizations working for our benefits is not something to take lightly. The stronger our organizations are the stronger voice we have in WDC. The convention is an opportunity for you to participate in shaping the future of FSA. I read a quote the other day that I thought would apply to FSA and the changes we may be facing:

"The best way to predict the future is to create it"

See you in Johnston!

Dee



The Barn Quilt 'Flock of Geese' on the cover is one of many in Sac County. It is owned by Don & Joan Nehman of Lytton Iowa, parents of Jane Glasnapp - PT in Sac County. You can see the rest of the Sac County Barn Quilts at www.barnquilts.com



Cover photo taken by Brian Beach – IASCOE Webmaster/PT Sac County

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Take a Walk on the Wild Side!

Join us for the Iowa Convention March 31 & April 1

The joint 2006 IASCOE/IACS/IASE Convention will be held on March 31, 2006 and April 1, 2006 at the Stoney Creek Inn located in Johnston, Iowa. The Stoney Creek Inn is conveniently located just off I-80/35 and only a few miles from Des Moines. Numerous restaurants, shopping malls and other activities are just moments away.



The Stoney Creek Inn offers a cozy lodge atmosphere where you can experience the great Outdoors...Indoors!! Relax by the fireplace or take a dip in Iowa's only year round indoor-outdoor swim through pool.

Friday's activities will include committee meetings and a general session followed by the hospitality room, "LIVE FROM JOHNSTON, IOWA—IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT" show and a dance.

Saturday morning will include breakfast buffet, awards ceremony, raffle and Auction winners, continuation of the general session and a presentation by Scott Morrison, Financial Advisor specializing in financial strategies designed for federal employees.



Guest speakers for the event include: Assistant to the Deputy Administrator of Field Operations, John Chott; Iowa SED, Derryl McLaren; STC Chairperson, Merlin Plagge; Mid West Area Executive; Mark Van Hoose and Jim Mace of J& M Marketing.

Door Prizes will be awarded throughout the 2 day event.

For Reservations call: 1-800-659-2220 or 1-515-559-2008
Special Room Rate: \$70.00(plus tax) per night
(Tell 'em your attending the IASCOE Convention)
March 9, 2006—cut off date for special Room Rates



For more information, visit their website at [Stoney Creek Inn](#)

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2006 IASCOE/IACS/IASE Convention Agenda

Friday March 31, 2006

10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	IACS Meeting	Room: Pines
10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.	IASE Meeting	Room: Timberland
12:30 p.m.	Past Presidents & Retirees Luncheon	
10:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Registration	

IASCOE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Awards & Scholarships	Room: John Deere
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Membership	Room: Meadows
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Publicity	Room: Greene Acres
2:00 p.m. - 3:20 p.m.	Benefits & Legislative	Room: Pioneer

3:30 p.m. *General Assembly Convenes* Room: Pioneer

J M Marketing - James Mace

State Executive Director - Derryl McLaren

DAFO - John W. Chott Jr.

5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Opens Room: Greene Acres

7:00 p.m. FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE! Room: Northwoods

8:00 p.m. Dance Room: Northwoods

Saturday April 1, 2006

7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Breakfast Banquet Room: Pioneer

8:15 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. Awards Presentation Room: Pioneer

8:00 a.m. Registration Continues

9:00 a.m. *General Assembly Reconvenes* Room: Pioneer

- Welcome - Steve Kennedy -IASCOE Vice President
- Invocation - Alan Hilleman
- Presentation of Colors - Iowa National Guard
- Star Spangled Banner - Alexis Van Vleet
- Pledge Of Allegiance - James Magel - Davis County

9:30 a.m. Merlin Plagge - State Committee Chair

9:45 a.m. Mark Van Hoose - Mid West Area Exec.

10:00 a.m. Committee Reports

10:15 a.m. Jim Mace - J & M Marketing

10:30 a.m. Scott Morrison - Financial Advisor

12:00 Noon Raffle & Auction Winners

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IASCOE/IACS/IASE PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

2006 State Convention

NAME: _____

COUNTY: _____ POSITION: _____

NUMBER OF PERSONS ATTENDING: _____

Pre-registration & Breakfast Banquet: \$25.00 EA _____

Registration at Door and Breakfast Banquet: \$30.00 EA _____

Registration Only: \$20.00 EA _____

Breakfast Banquet Only \$12.50 EA _____

TOTAL: \$ _____

***Registration includes: Meeting Room rental, Hospitality Room, and DJ for dance.

Please check one of the following:

IASCOE Member _____

IASE Member _____

IACS Member _____

IASCOE Associate Member _____

Out of State Guest _____

Other _____

Mail completed form and payment to:

Judy Dameron
718 Mill ST
Wapello, IA 52653

All pre-registration forms should be received by March 24, 2006
PLEASE MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO IASCOE

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'Friday Night Live' Acts for the
2006 IASCOE Convention
Dance Friday March 30th

STO

National Public Radio
Mary Katherine Gallagher
Lisa and Todd
Hanz & Franz

John Bartenhagen & Cara Proper
As The Spartan Cheerleaders

Rose Woerner
As Roseanne Roseannadanna

John Bahnsen
As Pat

Guest Musician
Rex Witrock

Dee Lehn
Weekend Update

And the Winner is.....

**So what can a buck buy you now-a-days?
How about a chance to win a cash prize of \$25.00,
\$100.00 or even \$200.00!!!!**



Raffle Tickets are available from your IASCOE Directors.
Buy 1 ticket for \$1.00 or 6 tickets for \$5.00.
Drawing will be held at the IASCOE-IACS-IASE State
Convention on April 1, 2006. *(Need not be present to win)*

Door Prizes & Silent Auction Items will also
be available at the State Convention.

Again, this year, ***we are asking each County Office to
donate an item to be used for this purpose.***

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IASCOE DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

Stoney Creek Inn - Johnston, Iowa

January 27, 2006

Officers Present: President, Dee Ann Lehn; Vice President, Steve Kennedy and Secretary/Treasurer, Sue Beemer

Directors Present: Rosie Kahl, Cindy Pistek, John Bahnsen, Tammy Eibey, Judy Vos, John Landgraf, Connie Safley, Joni Birkhofer, Kathy White, Dan Wells, Sharon Dunfee, Joyce Frost, and Judy Dameron

Alternate Director: Kevin Keegan

Jeff Davis representing CED Director for District 1

President Dee Ann Lehn called the meeting to order at 7:15 P.M.

SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORT

Sue presented the minutes of the September's Directors' meeting. After review John Bahnsen moved and Connie Safley seconded the motion to accept the minutes as written. The motion carried by all directors present. The financial report was then presented for the directors' review. Rosie Kahl moved and Tammy Eibey seconded the financial report be accepted. Motion carried by all directors.

A thank you was read from Ruth Engelmann, one of the early bird winners.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS

The election results were as follows:

District 1

Program Technician Director – Glenda VonArb, Sioux Co.

Alternate PT Director – Nancy Heideman, Clay Co.

CED Director – Jeff Davis, Plymouth Co.

Alternate CED Director – Larry Lago, Dickinson Co.

District 2

Program Technician Director – Cindy Pistek, Hancock Co.

Alternate PT Director – Jeanine Diekhuis, Hancock Co.

CED Director – Steve Abbas, Franklin Co.

Alternate CED Director – John Bahnsen, Floyd Co.

District 3

Program Technician Director – Tammy Eibey, Delaware Co.

Alternate PT Director – Karen McNeil, Winneshiek Co.

CED Director – Cindy Mensen, Clayton Co.

Alternate CED Director – Kevin Keegan, Buchanan Co.

District 5

Program Technician Director – Chris Grieder, Polk Co.

Alternate PT Director – Teresa Heck, Polk Co.

CED Director – Steve Kennedy, Jasper Co.

Alternate CED Director – Bob Wegand, Grundy Co.

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District 7
Program Technician Director – Sue Beemer, Taylor Co.
Alternate PT Director – Cindy Bebout, Fremont Co.
CED Director – Dan Wells, Adair Co.
Alternate CED Director – Julie Hall, East Potawattamie Co.

After the election results, Tammy moved to destroy the ballots and John Bahnsen seconded. Motion carried by all directors.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Awards – Connie gave the report. She hasn't received any Distinguished Service Awards as of this date. The deadline is February 20th for the MWA. Also the Extra Mile Award can be given to a deserving IASCOE member and there is no judging for this award. Connie will send out an e-mail on Monday asking for sick leave hours. She has had several retiree awards the past several months. If any IASCOE member has a family member in the service, the serviceman can receive a certificate from NASCOE. To learn more about this visit the NASCOE website, www.NASCOE.org. Because Connie will no longer be the director representing district 5, we need a new director to assume the duties of the Awards Chairperson. If anyone would like to do this please contact Dee.

Scholarships –Cindy Pistek gave the report. She has received five scholarship applications so far but expects to receive more before the deadline. Cindy had some questions about the financial part of the application, but explained that we use the same application as the MWA and NASCOE.

Membership – Dan presented the membership report. He handed out the final membership map which reflects an 87.5% membership for the year. We talked about handing out membership packets to new members. Our membership cards are now automated which makes them much easier to distribute.

Publicity – Tammy gave the report. Tammy has submitted our newsletter for Best Overall Newsletter which requires 4 issues, the December issue for Best Single Issue and our website for NASCOE awards. Tammy and Brian do a terrific job concerning the newsletter and website. All the articles submitted by the membership help to make this a great success. Tammy would like to have articles for the next newsletter by February 24th. She would like to have the write up's for the legislative conference as soon as possible after returning from WDC. The newsletter will be out the first part of March.

Programs - Judy had nothing at this time.

Benefits – Kathy White presented the updates on benefits. The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 is supposed to give discounts on cell phone rates to federal employees and military personnel. You may encounter some difficulties in obtaining these discounts, so the best thing to do is contact your cell phone company and inquire about the discounts.

Legislative – Cindy was absent so Tammy gave an update on the legislative conference. The numbers have changed on CAPWIZ recently. If you have been signed up in the past you may want to make sure you are still receiving the notifications. The MWA has 33% of the national total participants in CAPWIZ. Tammy had a meeting in Las Vegas to work on the position papers that will be presented in WDC. There will be 56 people from the MWA going to WDC and they will make 155 contacts while they are there. Some of the topics that will be addressed on the position papers are budget, staffing and benefits.

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We discussed the Labor – Management meeting that was attended by the officers January 10, 2006 at the State Office.

The SED's should have received their budget and staff ceilings. NASCOE needs to be part of the new plan on office restructure because once WDC approves the plan it can't be changed.

There is a new task force assigned to look into PT reclassifications. There will not be an across the board upgrade for PT's nationwide, but there would be some PT's that could receive an increase in pay.

NAFEC is a very important organization when it comes to working for the good of FSA. Each county needs to encourage their committee members to belong to NAFEC. Dues for committee members are \$35.00 and associate members are \$20.00. All FSA employees can belong as associate members.

OLD BUSINESS

There was not any old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

We discussed the upcoming annual convention. We will have the director's meeting at 7:00 PM on March 30th and meet again Friday morning at 10:00 AM for election of officers and any other last minute business that needs to be taken care of. We will donate \$50.00 to Alexis Van Vleet for singing the national anthem. Pioneer will donate our goody bags and everyone needs to bring items to fill them. Joni has the raffle tickets ready. All directors need to bring snacks for the hospitality room. Joni and Connie will take care of the door prizes and silent auction items. Denise Dugan will be in charge of the emblem sales and have items from NASCOE for sale during the convention. Jeff, John and John will be in charge of the hospitality room.

OTHER ITEMS

Upcoming conventions:

- Illinois State Convention – The Chateau - Bloomington - March 24-25, 2006
- Indiana Convention – Indianapolis – March 31st
- Wisconsin Convention – Wintergreen Resort and Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells – April 21-22, 2006
- Michigan Convention – Doherty Hotel and Convention Center, Claire, - April 21-22, 2006
- MWA-NWA Rally – The Elms Resort and Spa, Excelsior Springs, MO - May 5-6, 2006
Iowa's delegates for the MWA Rally will be Rosie, Tammy and Steve.
- Minnesota Convention – Location TBA – July 21, 2006
- National Convention – Renaissance Cleveland Hotel, Cleveland, OH – August 9-12, 2006

ADJOURNMENT

Jeff Davis moved and Cindy Pistek seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed by all directors present. Dee Ann adjourned the meeting at 11:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted
Sue Beemer
Secretary

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YOUR NASCOE ON THE MOVE!

It has been a busy seven months since I became your Midwest Area Executive. The more time I spend in this job the more impressed I am with leadership at each level and especially the great work being done at the state level. We recently celebrated the end of FSA Tomorrow but there wasn't much time before we faced the restructuring issue again. We must continue to be watchful to make sure that NASCOE members receive fair treatment and producer service is maintained. Other issues continue to include lack of training in areas such as the 5-tier performance plan as well as general program training, directed reassignments, consolidation of payroll and administrative expense management and inadequate staffing. That's why we have NASCOE to make sure your voice is heard on the issues that affect your livelihood. We don't always win on every issue but NASCOE continues to be heard and changes do happen! Leadership just recently finished work on reviewing items you submitted for negotiation with management and we are working on preparing to sit down with management in May.

By the time you read this we will have returned from our legislative conference in Washington, DC where we presented your concerns on staffing and employee benefits. Your national president and vice president recently returned from meeting with FSA management to discuss immediate concerns and I see this as a recurring function to make sure your issues are heard. As I mentioned we will be meeting with management to negotiate concerns as well. I mention these items to remind you that NASCOE is always working for you! The new "NASCOE Now" is our e-newsletter that gives you breaking news to keep you up to date without waiting for the regular newsletter. Please take time to review this publication.

I look forward to attending the Iowa State Convention the end of March 2006. I am grateful that the new administrator is working to make sure she and/or her staff attends conventions to speak on issues and answer your questions. I want to encourage your attendance at the Midwest Area/Northwest Area Joint Rally at the Elms Resort and Spa in Excelsior Springs, Missouri May 5-6, 2006 (phone: 800-843-3567 for reservations). The national convention will be in Cleveland, Ohio this year so I want you to support the Midwest Area by attending this event as well August 9-12, 2006 (phone: 800-468-3571). Both meetings will feature a large number of speakers from Washington, DC and your own organization. It is our plan to have a retirement planning speaker at the joint area rally as well!

Again, thank you for your support and keep letting me know what issues are important to the great state of Iowa.

Sincerely,
Mark VanHoose
Midwest Area Executive
m_vanhoose@verizon.net

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2006 Legislative Conference

February 27 to March 2, 2006

By Tammy Eibey - MWA Legislative Chair, Iowa



On February 26th I flew with Trice Smith, NASCOE Legislative Co-Chair & CPT Benton County Iowa, to Washington D.C. to prepare for the Conference. We met that evening with NAFEC and several of their representatives and heard their concerns over the office closure plan in Alaska. A CED from Alaska was also present. Monday was spent getting all the packets for each area put together, the packets included the position papers and the talking points. Those Position Papers and Talking Points are also in this newsletter. I won't go into detail about the next few days since I recruited some of the Iowa delegation to write of their experiences. I have been very fortunate to have been asked first by Chris Hollis, former area Exec and then by Mark VanHoose, current MWA Exec, to serve as the MWA Legislative Chairperson. I have met several people and made friends that I would never have had the opportunity to make if not for serving



NASCOE. You need to remember that all those serving as NASCOE Officers, Area Execs, Committee Chairs and all the way down to state directors believe in NASCOE and the mission of supporting FSA CO employees as well as being able to provide service to our American Farmer! The Legislative Conference was attended by over 175 FSA employees from all areas of the Nation. Remember this time was taken as annual leave and the only compensation would be the travel and room. (most by the state organizations). Please read the other articles by the attendees as to their impression and experiences during the week.

Membership is very important. Please remember that.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Eibey

MWA Legislative Chairperson / IASCOE District Director

My family and friends tease me that I only prepare recipes that are 5 ingredients or less. This is true because I don't like to cook. But I did find this one and it is excellent. Try it and then tell me what you think!!!!

Cherry Jell-O Dessert

6 oz cherry Jell-O

21 oz. can cherry pie filling

1 1/2 c. boiling water

10 oz. lemon lime soda

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water. Add pie filling and blend until consistent. Add soda and this mixture will fizz. Mix thoroughly. Chill. Cut into squares and serve with a dab of whipped cream.

Lisa Forburger – PT Kossuth County FSA

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Window of Opportunity

Jolene Fetcher (CED, Page County) once told me that every FSA employee should attend a NASCOE National Convention and a NASCOE Legislative Conference because it is at these events where one sees the true purpose and value of NASCOE. Having had the privilege of participating in both during the past year, I hardily agree.

I just returned from the 2006 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, and I am still trying to formulate my thoughts of our time there. The General Session included our Administrator, Teresa Lasseter, and Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns. To have both of these individuals speak to the membership was very special.



Ms. Lasseter is new to the Administrator's position, but hardly new to FSA. She remarked how she began her career with "ASCS" in a county in Georgia as a TF and then became a permanent employee as a PA (Program Assistant – now Program Technician). Later she obtained the CED job, then a stint as a COR, and finally as a SED. So there is no doubt that she knows what goes on in a county office (Sadly, this has not always been the case). As she spoke, I found her to be down to earth and interested in ideas from all stakeholders who are impacted by the decisions she must make (Again, something that has not been the case in the past).

Also new to the job is Secretary Johanns. He also seemed interested in listening to input from all sources. It is readily apparent that he is proud of his Iowa / Nebraska ties. I am cautiously hopeful that he realizes the value of the service we provide to American Agriculture. I am also somewhat optimistic that both he and Administrator Lasseter understand that a plan created in Washington, DC, alone is destined for failure.



Later in the week we traveled to "The Hill", where we visited with Iowa's five House representatives and our two Senators. Our group felt that we were well received by each congressman and/or their staff and that our time spent was beneficial. Ironically, I think the controversy generated by the "FSA Tomorrow" plan helped our cause by bringing attention to some of the issues / problems facing FSA.

I left WDC with a positive attitude knowing that we had achieved some of our objectives. Don't get me wrong. **FSA continues to face some serious challenges.** Changes are in store for our agency, but I feel that we have a unique "window of opportunity" to affect those changes.

Lastly, I hope to see you all at the 2006 IASCOE Convention on March 31 – April 1 in Johnston (Des Moines). The facilities at the Stoney Creek Inn are great and there are a lot of entertainment activities available in the surrounding area. Hope to see you there!!!!

Steve Kennedy
IASCOE Vice President / CED Jasper County

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Legislative Conference Report

By Jeff Davis – CED Plymouth County

Hello All,

We made it and I believe that it was a success. I am talking about the Legislative Conference in Washington DC. We started off the conference on Tuesday morning in a general session. Our NASCOE President, Dan Root started off the conference with some opening remarks. The next person on the



schedule was the Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns and due to a slight schedule problem he was going to be late and our second speaker was gracious enough to get the meeting underway. Our FSA Administrator, Teresa Lasseter, started her talk by telling where she came from, meaning what her background is. She started off as a TO with ASCS and moved to a permanent position and other positions in ASCS and FSA. She later became the SED for the state of Georgia and she is now our Administrator and it is my feeling that she will do a great job because she knows what it's like to be out here where the rubber meets the road. Of course when she was about half way done with what she wanted to tell us her boss showed up and she graciously gave way to his busy schedule. It was inspirational to know that the Secretary of Agriculture was born and raised in Iowa.

He has an optimistic outlook for the future of agriculture and knows that we will have a place in that future. It was the first time that anyone can remember that the Secretary of Agriculture has attended and/or spoke to the NASCOE Legislative Conference. After Mr. Johanns was finished Ms. Lasseter finished with her remarks.

We were very lucky and had two very powerful persons that gave us their prospective on what is going to happen with FSA.

Then we discussed what was to be conveyed as we made our visits on the Hill. We broke out into the Midwest area in the afternoon and discussed further what we should be saying and how it should be said.



Topics to be discussed while visiting with Senators/Representatives and/or their aides are as follows:

- We went into each office with one basic topic and it is my belief that the one main request was an excellent idea. That is not to say that other topics were not discussed. For all of the visits for Iowa Representatives the hot topic was “Budget and Staffing”. FSA is currently staffed and budgeted at about 79% of the workload as we process. That is to say that we are understaffed by 21%. We have a need for staff of 11,120 persons in accordance with the workload and are currently staffed at 8775 employees. We asked that they fund us and have a baseline staffing (we asked that the baseline staffing be set at 9,500 permanent CO employees and 1,500 temporary employees to secure FSA infrastructure and program delivery) with additional funding for any additional allowances for additional programs that come up beyond the normal programs that are around every year.
 - With the high priority being placed on the expansion and enhancement of automation technology, USDA budget shortfalls for Information Technology Initiative have been met by transferring funds from Salaries and Expenses accounts to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to service and expand the Informational Technology (IT) needs of the agency as governed by the Freedom of E-File Act of 2000. For FY 2005 \$65,000,000 was appropriated by congress for IT initiatives. An additional \$101,000,000 to support the IT Initiatives was taken out of salary and expenses accounts of FSA in that same year. This transfer of monies has created a shortfall of funds for the administrative operations in the County Office. If Congress would fund the IT end without making FSA take money out of Salary and Expenses accounts it would easily allow the CO to staff another 1,500 employees. This would allow us to bring our current staffing from 8,775 (current staffing) to 10,275 and this would raise our staffing levels to over 92%. This is more than we are asking for because we are asking to be baseline staffed at 9,500 permanent with 1,500 Temporary staff.

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- There should be something to be said about funds appropriated for salary and expenses should be used for the delivery of farm programs as intended in the 2002 Farm Bill.
 - During the development of the 2007 Farm Bill, Congress will have the opportunity to create a long-term, reliable, budget system for the Farm Service Agency. This will assure the Agency will be accountable to the needs of the customers and taxpayers they are mandated to serve.
- We also thanked the Congressman and Senators that jumped on board when FSA Tomorrow was rolled out at the end of last year. NASCOE is in support of language included in the Fiscal Year 2006 Agricultural Appropriations bill that stated “ in that no funds made available by this Act may be used to pay the salaries or expense of any officer or employee of the Department or Agriculture to close any local or county office of the Farm Service Agency unless the Secretary of Agriculture, not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary proposed the closure, holds a public meeting about the proposed closure in the county in which the local or county office is located, and after the public meeting but not later than 120 days before the date on which the secretary approves the closure, notifies the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the members of Congress from the State in which the local or county office is located of the proposed closure.”
 - NASCOE supports Congress's long standing intent that office closures and relocations should occur based on a rigorous analysis to ensure actions are cost-effective and will better serve the public.

On Wednesday morning it was off to our visits. The Iowa delegation had seven visits to make. We met with either the Congressman/Senator and/or their Aides. We had to split into groups because of the times that conflicted for visitations. The Iowa delegation made visits to the following:

Senator Harkin's Office
 Congressman Boswell's Office
 Congressman Leach's Office
 Congressman King's Office

Senator Grassley's Office
 Congressman Latham's Office
 Congressman Nussle's Office

We split up to go to all of the Congressman's offices and then all met up to attend the meetings with the Senators together. All of the meeting seemed to be productive and they knew who we were when we walked in the door. That is different than it used to be. We used to take a portion of the valuable time we had on the visit explaining who we were. Now, since they knew who we were it was nice that we could get right down to the point at hand and let them know why we were there. I really believe that we were well accepted and they listened. Only time will tell about how much they were listening and we have to know that the job is not over yet.

It was a good representation of Iowa at the Legislative Conference. We had eight representatives from Iowa and we are very luck to have representation from this state on the Midwest Legislative group. Trice Smith and Tammy Eibey do a great job representing Iowa, the Midwest and NASCOE. They are both very knowledgeable and work very hard for all of us and with little or no compensation for their time. As I heard a number of times, they are passionate for NASCOE and what it stands for.

The IASCOE representatives that went out to Washington DC as representatives of IASCOE were Dee Lehn (President) Steve Kennedy (Vice-President), Judy Dameron (Director), Joni Birkhofer (Director), Cindy Pistek (Director), Jeff Davis (Director).

Everyone needs to keep in touch with their local Congressman and Senator. It can be a letter or a visit at a meeting when they are in you area. Make sure that they know who you are. The biggest thing is you need to go on your own time. Take a couple of hours of annual leave and it may be the most prosperous couple of hours you ever use.



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NASCOE Legislative Conference Report

By Judy Dameron – PT Louisa County & IASCOE Director District #9

When the e-mail came from our IASCOE president, Dee Ann Lehn, looking for volunteers to attend the 2006 Legislative Conference in Washington DC, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. First of all, I am very uncomfortable with flying. I prefer to drive somewhere, so I am able to stop and put my feet on the ground, whenever necessary.



Dee, Joni Birkhofer, Cindy Pistek, and I left Cedar Rapids airport at 8:30 a.m. on February 27, on what would be an adventure. We were to meet up with Steve Kennedy and Jeff Davis in DC; however, they never waited at the airport for us. We arrived at Reagan International about 1:00 p.m. Steve Morrison from Missouri met us at the airport and escorted us to the Washington Plaza hotel. After getting checked in and unpacking our suitcases, we decided to venture out and see the White House. Upon returning to the hotel, there was a meeting of the minds from all of the attendees nationwide. Saw some familiar faces and met some new ones.

Program Technicians and CED's from all over the country, all with the same agenda.

Tuesday was a filled day of information on how we were to address the congressman on our issue. In the morning, we were honored to have our FSA Administrator, Teresa Lasseter and the Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns address us. Mr. Johanns said that two-thirds of America's farmers do not receive any government subsidies. He also said that ninety-two percent of the subsidies go to program crops and that specialty crop subsidies almost equal that of program crops. Russell Middleton, the Minority Consultant for Agriculture Committee informed us that the farm bill will probably have an extension of one, two or maybe even three years. Tuesday evening we all gathered once again and the topic of discussion was a possible murder on the 8th floor. Apparently, there was a body found in one of the rooms and the medical examiner plus lots of police had taken over that floor. Some of our NASCOE friends were staying on that floor and were asked if they had heard anything the night before. Needless to say, that changed my attitude. Joni and I were on the 6th floor!!

Wednesday was our day to hit the hill. The House and Senate buildings were only a metro ride away. We met with each of our congressmen about our main issue; budget and staffing. We need a permanent employee baseline to ensure program delivery will be completed in a timely and efficient manner. Salary and Expense funding should not be used for IT. The Presidents 2007 USDA budget is 3 billion dollars below 2006. They all knew who FSA was and appreciated what we do. Our NASCOE leadership has obviously done a great job keeping them informed. On our way back to the hotel, there was this nauseous odor that got worse the closer we got. Come to find out the construction crew that was working out front of our hotel, hit a gas line!! They had the HazMat team and the fire department there. One lit cigarette would have blown us all away. Wednesday evening we all gathered one last time to discuss how the contacts went. Of course, the topic of the murder came up again. Someone had asked the front desk what really happened. They said a drug overdose. Yeah, right. Do you think they were going to tell us that a murder happened on the 8th floor?!?! It took them over 24 hours to remove the body. I still think it was a murder.

Thursday was our day to enjoy the sites, as our plane wasn't scheduled to leave until 4:00 p.m. so Joni and I went to the USDA building and got a tour from an employee, Laura Schlote that I had met through my SCOAPING in Kansas City. We did arrive safely back in Cedar Rapids that evening, despite a lot of wind turbulence.

I will close by saying, that I am proud to be a FSA employee, and an IASCOE director. We have a great NASCOE leadership and they represent all their members very well. I want to thank Dee for giving me the opportunity to represent you. If you ever get an e-mail asking you to volunteer for a Legislative Conference, I would recommend putting your name in the hat. It was an experience that I wish all members could have. See you all at the IASCOE Convention on March 31!!

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2006 Legislative Conference Report

By Cindy Pistek – PT Hancock County

On Monday, February 27th, I had the great opportunity of attending our 2006 Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. What an awesome experience!!! We arrived in DC on Monday around 12:00pm and once we finally arrived at the hotel, we were greeted by Tammy Eibey and Trice Smith who had already been busy since Sunday preparing for the meetings. After checking in at the hotel we went to lunch, already we were meeting other NASCOE members from all over the United States as we sat down to sandwiches and fries!!

Tuesday morning our work began as Dee Lehn and I went to Senator Harkin's breakfast, an event he hosts once weekly to constituents visiting DC. We were able to have a brief visit with the Senator as well as his Ag aide while we enjoyed pastries and juice. The morning session was already in full swing at the hotel, so Dee and I hailed a cab (another new experience for an Iowan) and buzzed back to the hotel just in time to listen to the Secretary of Agriculture and our new administrator, Teresa Lassiter address our group.



Their speeches were encouraging and they demonstrated an honest appreciation for the tasks we have at hand. We were very fortunate to have both of these individuals speak at the conference. I understand that this has not been the case for many years. I certainly enjoyed the opportunity to hear from our leadership and felt that we have good solid people in those positions. Ms. Lassiter graciously answered questions from the group, honestly admitting when she didn't have the answer.

On Tuesday afternoon we broke out into our areas to get the "meat" of our information. During this time we were able to question Mark VanHoose and Tammy Eibey about anything we were unsure of as we took our "cause" to the hill. This year we only had one main thrust "budget and staffing". Our goal on Wednesday was to inform each legislator that we would like to have a baseline level of employees so that we are ready to handle all programs as they are implemented, without the need to request funds on an annual basis. Of course, we had to be ready to answer any other topics they might wish to discuss, so the pressure was on!!

Wednesday morning we were ready for our appointments with many of our legislators. We had to divide up into two groups in order to see the Representatives, but all 7 of us were able to visit with Senator Harkin's aide and Senator Grassley. All visits went well and they seemed to understand our concerns in regards to budget and staffing. We impressed upon them that we understand technology is here and we are willing to progress with it, but we reminded them that not all farmers are ready to jump on that train!! The farmers we serve want to be sure they can see and visit with a county office employee if they choose--they seemed to be well aware of this after "FSA Tomorrow" hit the fan!!! We understand that change is in our future, let's just make sure it's a carefully thought out process. After MANY miles (I'm sure it had to be) of walking we headed back to the hotel, to get a little more relaxed. Eighteen of us, from several different states, hopped into cabs and went to a seafood buffet for dinner. What a wonderful evening sharing our day of experiences AND sharing some great SEAFOOD!!

Thursday we were able to do a little site seeing as we waited for our flight-time. We walked many more miles (yes, I'm sure it was miles) looking at the monuments and getting rained on!! I believe that I experienced almost every method of transportation during this trip--- car, plane, metro and WALKING!! We never hopped on a bus, but we were tempted. If you ever have an opportunity to visit our capitol in this capacity, DO IT!! The feeling you get as you participate in our democratic process is like none other, especially as we view other countries and their difficulties.

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FARM SERVICE AGENCY 2007 BASELINE STAFFING AND FUNDING

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) is a customer-driven agency with a diverse and multi-talented workforce, dedicated to achieving an economically and environmentally sound future for 65 million rural Americans by administering 51 programs designed to meet the demands of a diversified agricultural landscape.

As Congress begins to address the new fiscal year appropriations, the National Association of FSA County Office Employees (NASCOE) encourages Congress to provide FSA county offices with funding that will fully support the continuation of all current activities associated with the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. We also request that Congress provide additional funding associated with the administration of any future Ad Hoc programs.

High priority has been placed on the expansion and enhancement of automation technology. U.S. Department of Agriculture budget shortfalls for Information Technology Initiatives have been met by transferring funds from the FSA Salaries and Expense Accounts to the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) to service and expand the Information Technology (IT) needs of the Agency as governed by the Freedom to E-File Act 2000. For FY 2005, \$65 million was appropriated by Congress for IT initiatives. An additional \$101 million to support the IT initiatives of the Agency was transferred from the Salary and Expense accounts of FSA in that same fiscal year. This transfer of monies has created a shortfall of funds for the administrative operations of County Offices. FSA is currently reviewing a plan to help meet the shortfall in IT needs of the Agency.

NASCOE is concerned that the current and future budget shortfalls could create serious delays in program rollout, lead to inadequate program oversight, and inhibit timely distribution of benefits to eligible program participants.

- NASCOE supports establishment of a permanent employee baseline to ensure program delivery will be completed in the most timely and efficient manner. The most current Farm Service Agency workload analysis indicates a need of 11,120 County Office (CO referred to as Non-Federal in USDA budget request) Employees to carry out program activities that they administer. FSA CO employees are currently working at a staff ceiling of 8775. NASCOE requests a baseline staffing level of 9500 Permanent County Office employees and 1500 Temporary employees to secure FSA infrastructure and program delivery.
- The FY 2007 agricultural appropriations process presents an opportunity for Congress to assure that funds appropriated for FSA staffing and offices will be used to deliver farm programs as intended in the 2002 Farm Bill.
- During the development of the 2007 Farm Bill, Congress will have the opportunity to create a long-term, reliable, budgeting system for the Farm Service Agency. This will assure the Agency will be accountable to the needs of the customers and taxpayers it is mandated to serve.
- NASCOE also supports language included in the Fiscal Year 2006 Agricultural Appropriations bill stating, “in that no funds made available by this Act may be used to pay the salaries or expense of any officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to close any local or county office of the Farm Service Agency unless the Secretary of Agriculture, not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary proposed the closure, holds a public meeting about the proposed closure in the county in which the local or county office is located, and after the public meeting but not later than 120 days before the date on which the Secretary approves the closure, notifies the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, and the members of Congress from the State in which the local or county office is located of the proposed closure.”
- NASCOE supports Congress’s long-standing intent that office closures and relocations should occur based on a rigorous analysis to ensure actions are cost-effective and will better serve the public.

FSA is the primary Agency for the administrative delivery of the major farm assistance programs. A reliable long-term office structure and adequately staffed workforce are essential elements to the success of our nation’s major farm policy.

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Talking Points ---FSA Budget and Staffing Paper

- Staffing levels continue to be reduced while outlays from U.S. farm programs are at an all time high. From 1993 to 2001 FSA staffing levels decreased by nearly 40%. Since that time Staffing levels have stayed around the 2001 level using Temporary Employees to help in busy times. FSA jobs have become increasingly technical therefore the need for a talented and diverse workforce is vital. Future budgets must allow for the hiring and recruitment of permanent employees to maintain the long term stability of the Agency.
- Our current system of workload is used by the Administration to request appropriate Salary and Expenses for the agency. The system used by the Agency to measure work completed can be very accurate, but formulas and estimates applied by the Agency has proven to show some inequities. The use of 3 years data (2 years actual and one year estimate) can be misleading and show inequities between CO/GS staffing needs. NASCOE feels that using 3 years of actual workload would be a truer picture of our staffing needs and what the Administration should be requesting from Congress.
- The ultimate goal of the FSA structural review is the modernization of the agency by upgrading equipment, improving service to our clientele and provide training for FSA employees. Will OMB provide the agency the opportunity to maintain any derived savings? For the review plan to be successful NASCOE feel that FSA must reinvest any savings in fully staffing the remaining county offices.
- NASCOE continues to support the Service Center Concept "One Stop Shop" We do not support the elimination of the Service Centers that now provide the most convenient service possible. Should not all USDA agencies be under the same review?
- NASCOE supports the IT initiatives of the Agency and providing producers the opportunity to use these types of service options. We also understand that they must become more "user" friendly before our clientele will feel comfortable in their usage. The idea that the average producer uses a laptop from his pickup in the field to transact his business is the exception not the rule. E-LDP filing by producers is still minimal. A January 27, 2006 filing report indicates that only 16,462 of the total 1,232,761 LDP's filed were producer submitted by the E-File process. This is just slightly more than 1%. The county office staff must be maintained to service our clientele. The most recent LAP program was delivered by use of a Web based system which was put into place before it was ready to be implemented. Problems existed within the program that caused many applicants to be paid "late payment interest" at the expense of the taxpayer.
- The Agency has spent \$500M to date in developing Web Based Applications. Many of the Web Based operations have and continue to experience major problems and the Agency estimates that it will take \$400-\$500 million dollars in the next 3 years to transfer the remainder of our programs to the Web. We support congress in requesting to see the benefits of the initiatives before any new money is appropriated.
- Salary and Expense funding should not be used for IT. We do not believe that this is the intent of Congress.
- The 2007 Presidents budget indicates a decrease in expenditures by \$3B. This comes from the assumption that there will be no emergency funding or emergency supplemental funds needed. We find that history does not support this assumption. Presidential and Secretarial Disasters have been declared in 16 years since 1988.

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TALKING POINTS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The 109th Congress of the United States attempted passage of several pieces of legislation supported by NASCOE and RASCOE. NASCOE and RASCOE applaud those Congressional Representatives supporting this legislation. It is hoped Congress will, at a minimum, address the inequities described below;

- ❖ **Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.** This provision greatly reduces the Social Security benefit of a retired or disabled worker receiving an annuity based on his/her own earnings. The formula for calculating a federal employee's retirement under this provision reduces our annuity by as much as 60%. Our employees earning income from sources subject to social security deserve to have their benefits calculated the same as someone earning all their income from social security covered sources. This provision should be repealed to make federal employment comparable to the private sector.
- ❖ **Government Pension Offset.** This provision affects government retirees collecting a government annuity based on their own work and social security benefits based on their spouse's work record. The law requires two-thirds of the government annuity be offset on whatever social security benefit would be paid as a spouse of a social security covered worker. Many workers receive retirement benefits from sources other than social security, yet this provision unfairly targets government employees. Action to make federal employees comparable to the private sector must include repealing Government Pension Offset.

NASCOE and RASCOE express appreciation to members of the 109th Congress who have introduced or voiced support via co-sponsorship of legislation to correct the discrepancies described above. All Members of Congress are encouraged to join in this effort of "fairness."

- ❖ **Cost of Living Adjustments.** Cost of living (COLA) adjustments for employees and retirees should be maintained and increased in the same general amount received in the private sector. Congress must grant and improve these adjustments for its employees and retirees to maintain a quality workforce. The 1990 Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act was designed to equalize pay between federal and non-federal workers within 10-years. According to the American Federation of Government Employees' website www.afge.org, the average pay for FSA employees lags 8 to 12% behind comparable jobs in the private sector. Congress needs to assure federal salaries continue to attract a quality workforce.

An article by Karen Rutzick, from www.govexec.com cites the tools used by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) to retain high quality workers. Higher pay, higher contributions toward health insurance, subsidized vision and dental coverage, additional retirement savings accounts with matching agency contributions, agency match to TSP for CSRS employees and special accounts for "life cycle" needs are part of FDIC's compensation package. Glen Bjorklund, the agency's deputy director in administration, attributes the above average compensation package to a need to retain a high quality workforce and to the requirement that pay and benefits must be negotiated with an employee union.

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- ❖ **Health Insurance.** NASCOE and RASCOE support several changes to the health insurance programs offered our employees. Increasing the government contribution would assist in alleviating some of the salary discrepancies, now in effect, between government employees and the private sector. Current and former employees are experiencing a decrease in their purchasing power as health insurance premiums continue to increase by 10% each year since 1998.

Many employees in the private sector receive remuneration for declining participation in health insurance programs. Federal employees given this option may opt to be covered under other programs with possible cost savings to the government. Employees choosing not to participate in a government sponsored health plan should receive monetary compensation.

The age of discontinuing health benefits for dependents should be raised from 22 to 25. In many cases, students are unable to complete their studies by age 22 and they are dropped from the employee's health plan. As a non-wage earner, this creates a hardship for the employee's family.

NASCOE and RASCOE support revisions to the law, which allow retirees to use pre-tax dollars to pay health costs. This will help our retirees maintain a portion of the COLA Congress gives them each year. We also support dental and vision coverage, which is affordable. We believe the health benefits afforded FDIC employees should be made available to USDA employees. Our workforce assures a stable food supply for the Nation. Is this task any less critical than that of FDIC? We need to assure retention of the capable workforce within FSA by providing health benefits similar to those provided FDIC employees.

- ❖ **Retirement.** Federal County Office Employees dedicate their career to serving the Agricultural Community with a promise of certain retirement benefits. Congress must assure employees that their retirement benefits will be calculated using the high three salary years. Many federal employees would be very disappointed if Congress made a change in the retirement formula at this time.
- ❖ **Leave.** Federal Employees covered under the Federal Employee Retirement System (those hired since 1/1984) should be rewarded for conserving their sick leave. Civil Service Retirement allows retirees to credit unused sick leave to their years of service. FERS employees should be afforded the same opportunity. NASCOE and RASCOE support a General Accounting Office (GAO) study to determine how this loss of benefit affects the usage of sick leave among federal employees.

Congress has provided employees with some very useful tools to protect employees suffering from a catastrophic illness. Fellow employees can donate unused annual leave to needy individuals if they are in the same employee system (CO vs. GS.) We support removal of the requirement for the employees to be from the same employee system. We also support removal of the limitation that donated leave be annual leave. Many employees fully utilize their annual leave but would consider donations if it was sick leave. This would help those in need and would encourage FERS employees to conserve sick leave for those truly in need.

- ❖ **Liability Protection.** Congress must act to revise 7 CFR Subtitle A to include former USDA employees. Current employees have the benefit of OGC representation and the Freedom of Information Act. Former employees should be afforded this same protection for acts taken while working for USDA.

NASCOE and RASCOE ask that Congress consider ways to make federal employment more comparable to the private sector. We believe enactment of legislation to address the above issues will allow USDA to continue providing the high quality of service the farm community has become accustomed to, and to continue to attract high quality employees in the future.



RASCOE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FSA COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED ASCS-FSA COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES

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EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

The 109th Congress of the United States attempted passage of several pieces of legislation supported by NASCOE and RASCOE. NASCOE and RASCOE applaud those Congressional Representatives supporting this legislation. It is hoped Congress will, at a minimum, address the inequities described below;

- ❖ **Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.** The formula for calculating a federal employee's retirement under this provision reduces the earned annuity by as much as 60%. HR 147 and SB 619 address this inequity.
- ❖ **Government Pension Offset.** The law requires two-thirds of a government annuity be offset from a spousal social security benefit. HR 147 and SB619 correct this situation.
- ❖ **Retirement.** Federal County Office Employees dedicate their career to serving the Agricultural Community with a promise of certain retirement benefits. Many federal employees would be very disappointed if Congress made a change in the retirement formula at this time.
- ❖ **Cost of Living Adjustments.** The 1990 Federal Employee Pay Comparability Act was designed to equalize pay between federal and non-federal workers within 10-years. The average pay for FSA employees lags 8 to 12% behind comparable jobs in the private sector. Congress needs to act to correct this disparity.
- ❖ **Health Insurance.** NASCOE and RASCOE support several changes to the health insurance programs offered our employees. Items of concern include; premiums continue to rise approximately 10% each year, non-participants should receive monetary compensation, the age of discontinuing coverage for dependents should be raised from 22 to 25, the law should allow participants to use pre-tax dollars to pay health costs, and we support the availability of affordable dental and vision coverage. HR 994 and HR 3751 address our last 2 concerns.
- ❖ **Leave.** Federal Employees covered under the Federal Employee Retirement System (those hired since 1/1984) should be rewarded for conserving their sick leave. We support removal of the requirement that GS and CO employees be from the same employee system to utilize donated leave. Finally donated leave should not be limited to annual leave.
- ❖ **Liability Protection.** Congress must act to revise 7 CFR Subtitle A to include former USDA employees.

NASCOE and RASCOE ask that Congress consider ways to make federal employment more comparable to the private sector. We believe enactment of legislation to address the above issues will allow USDA to continue providing the high quality of service the farm community has become accustomed to, and to continue to attract high quality employees in the future.

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IACS News

By Dave Hoaglund

Here are some excerpts from the 2006 Zone B Meeting,
held in Lincoln, NE on February 10-11, 2006.

Brian Wolford-Nebraska FSA SED- Gave welcoming remarks.

Michael Yost-Associate Administrator- FSA must make do with the strained resources we have available. FSA is one of the most respected agencies in government. Each SED will be asked for ideas on how to best use and structure the resources in each state. New Farm Bill – to be driven by budget, affected by WTO, Conservation, Renewable energy

Steven Connelly-Deputy Administrator for Field Operations- Resources will continue to be limited so must use wisely. SED's will be asked to form a review committee to establish what structure is needed to best deliver the service to the customer. This "plan" will then be submitted to DAFO for review. If changes are proposed there will be public hearings and a process to follow including congressional notification.

Will be reviewing State Office Staffing Levels. Mr. Connelly is convinced that FSA employees are the best civil servants in government.

Carolyn Cooksie-Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs- Gear up for changes that may be coming ahead. President's proposed FY 2007 budget plans similar loan \$\$\$ to FY 2006.

Fund usage D-OL up 24% over last year (will run out of money)

D-FO – always use what we get

IA – will use all, as we always do

BF – up 18% over last year

SDA – up 5% over last year

For FY 2007 it is proposed that FSA must fully fund subsidized part of the loan program such as Interest Assistance. This may require an increase in the guaranteed loan fee by .5%-1.0% per loan. Also under consideration is charging an additional .5%-.75% fee, per year on Line of Credits. If this happens must be done by 10/0/06 (start of new FY).

Lolla Smith-Chief Performance Management, Benefits and Awards Branch, Human Resources Division- Discussed the 5 tier Performance Management System.

Kathy Williams-Chief Operations Section, Kansas City Human Resources Office- Works with classification and staffing.

Karen Campbell-Program Reporting Branch- She discussed some of the reports they send out and how many.

John Nassif-Chief, Farm Loan Programs Applications- FLPIDS is the main automation project they are working on.

FSA moving away from FOCUS to BRIO as better efficiency at lower cost.

The balance of the meeting was committee work on their respective resolutions, committee reports and state reports.

The NACS National Convention will be held June 19-21, 2006 in Arlington, TX
The 2007 Zone B Meeting will be in Kansas City.

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“Make new friends, but keep the old, one is SILVER and the other GOLD”

IASE NEWS UPDATE

by Sandralee Scott, President

Judy Rains and Sandralee Scott recently attended the 2006 Zone B meeting in Lincoln, NE February 9 – 11, 2006 for NACS-RD/FSA and NASP and NASE. This was the largest Zone B meeting in quite some time with over 200 members from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Missouri, South Dakota and Texas. A lot of enthusiasm filled the convention center. New and old friendships were found. Nebraska did an outstanding job as the host state.

The program included the following speakers:

Michael Yost, Associate Administrator

Steve Connelly, Dept Administrator for Field Operations

Carolyn Cooksie, Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs

Lolla Smith, Chief, Performance Mgmt, Benefits & Awards Branch, Human Resources Div

Kathy Williams, Chief, Operations Section, Kansas City Human Resources Office

Karen Campbell, Program Reporting Branch, Finance Office

John Nassif, Chief, Farm Loan Programs Applications

The major issues discussed included the budget, the best delivery service to customers, some program changes, everything going WEB, performance management changes, USA staffing with automated features, centralized transactions and reports, using BRIO in lieu of FOCUS, Farm Loan Program Initiatives, FLPIDS – Reports, GLS, PLAS, and much more. There was a panel of speakers with a questions and answer session.

NASE members have been reviewing and commenting on the drafts of forms that will be updated in the near future. We thanked Washington for the membership involvement.

Weekly updates concerning all programs areas and field operations are sent to all NASE members. Special thanks to our NASE President, Bobbi McKinney, for all her efforts.

There were many resolutions read and voted on at the NASE meeting. It was discussed about the possibility of having a Resolution Coordinator to handle resolutions.

The next 2007 Zone B meeting will be in Kansas City, Missouri. The Texas Associations will host the 2006 National Convention to be held in Arlington in June.

Contribute To The Next IASCOE Newsletter

If you have any stories, photos, jokes, quotes, or information that you would like to include in the next IASCOE Newsletter, send them to Tammy Eibey at tammy.eibey@ia.usda.gov.

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STATE/ AREA/ NATIONAL CONVENTION LISTINGS FOR 2006

- March 24-25** **Illinois Convention**
The Chateau
Bloomington, Illinois
Ph: 1-866-690-4006
- March 31** **Indiana Convention**
Indianapolis, Indiana
- March 31-April 1** **Iowa Convention**
Stoney Creek Inn
Johnston, Iowa (near Des Moines)
Ph: 1-800-659-2220 or 1-515-559-2008
- April 21-22** **Wisconsin Convention**
Wintergreen Resort & Convention Center
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
Ph: 1-800-648-4765
- April 21-22** **Michigan Convention**
Doherty Hotel and Convention Center
Claire, Michigan
Ph: 1-800-525-4115
- May 5-6** **MWA-NWA Rally**
The Elms Resort and Spa
401 Regent Street
Excelsior Springs, MO 64024
Ph: 1-800-843-3567
- July 20-21** **Minnesota Convention**
Holiday Inn & Hotel Suites
Owatonna, Minnesota
Ph: 1-800-470-3431
- August 9-12** **National Convention**
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel
24 Public Square
Cleveland, OH 44113
Ph: 1-800-468-3571



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See Something New
travelcleveland.com

Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Cleveland

*Cleveland Kicks
in
2006:*



Attractions



Entertainment



Restaurants



Transportation



Maps

**CLEVELAND WELCOMES...
NASCOE Annual Convention**

National Association of Farm Service Agency
County Office Employees
Renaissance Cleveland Hotel
August 9 - 12, 2006

Where there is serious business, there is serious fun. What better place to find both than in Cleveland? From first-class museums, trendy restaurants and stylish shopping, to famed sports teams and red-hot nightlife... **Cleveland has it all!**

**Don't miss these Cleveland events
while you're in town!**

August 2 - 6, 2006

East 185th Street Festival - East 185th Street

August 4 - 5, 2006

Vintage Ohio Wine Festival - Lake Metroparks FarmPark

August 8-13, 2006

Cleveland Indians Major League Baseball
vs. LA Angels and Kansas City Royals - Jacobs Field

**PLUS, SEE WHAT EVENTS THE CONVENTION HAS
PLANNED!**

Renaissance Hotel

The character, style and history of Cleveland

Rates for NASCOE

\$96 for single guest room

\$106 for a double guest room

\$116 for a single suite

TEL: 800.468.3571

24 Public Square

Cleveland, OH 44113

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2006

Illinois Annual Convention



The Chateau

1601 Jumer Drive
 Bloomington, IL 61704-0902
 (309) 662-2020

<http://www.chateauhotel.biz>

\$69 per Night Single/Double
 (Rates good thru March 3rd)

For Reservations call 1-866-690-4006

Convention Schedule **Tentative**

Friday March 24 2006

More activities on Friday!

10:00 am Director's Meeting (members invited)
 12:00 Noon Registration
 1:00 pm Guest Speaker
 5:00 pm Hospitality Room Opens
 8:00 pm Dance/ Game Night

Saturday March 25 2006

8:30 am Saturday Session Convenes
 12:30 pm Awards Luncheon
 2:00 pm Anticipated Adjournment

PRE-REGISTRATION

		# of People		Total
Name: _____	Convention Registration	_____	x \$ 3.00	\$ _____
Guest: _____	Friday: Dance/Game Night	_____	x \$ 5.00	\$ _____
State: _____	Saturday: Luncheon	_____	x \$17.00	\$ _____
County: _____	Grand Total:			\$ _____

I am a member of:

- IASCOE IACS IAPEC RASCOE _____ State Assoc. Guest

Please detach and return to Charlene Neukomm, 1513 E 750 North Road, Cissna Park, IL 60924. Make checks payable to IASCOE. *All registrations received or postmarked by March 10th, 2006 will be eligible for a \$25 drawing.*

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Wisconsin Association of FSA County Employees 2006 WASCOE Convention

April 21 & 22 2006

Wintergreen Resort & Convention Center - Wisconsin Dells, WI 53965

www.wintergreen-resort.com

Friday Itinerary

- Golf and Other Possible Activities in the Wisconsin Dells Area
- WASCOE Director's Meeting – 4:00 PM
- Hospitality Room – 5:00 – 7:00 PM
- WASCOE Awards Banquet and Scholarship Auction 7:30 PM -?
- Cash Raffle Drawing

Saturday Itinerary

- Registration 8:00 – 8:30 AM
- WASCOE General Session 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
- Speakers to be determined

A block of rooms will be reserved under WASCOE until April 6th

Standard Rooms are \$69, Whirlpool Suites are \$79 plus tax

Rooms can be reserved for a second night at the same rate

Call 1-800-648-4765 for Reservations

Pre-Register by April 6th and be eligible for \$25 Early Bird Drawing

Final Day to Register for Banquet is April 15th

WASCOE Convention Registration Form

Name: _____

County Office: _____ Phone Number: _____

Number Attending Convention _____

Registration Fee: \$5 per person X _____ = _____

Number Attending Banquet: _____ X \$20.00 = _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE = \$ _____

Make Checks Payable to WASCOE

Mail to: Marion Koca

220 LaCrosse St

Mauston, WI 53948

Phone: (608) 847-7221

FAX: (608) 847-5879

Please fax me a map!! # _____

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!! SEE YOU THERE!!!

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NASCOE State Affiliate Websites

Alabama	www.alascoe.netfirms.com
California/Hawaii	http://webpages.charter.net/eaglescouter/chascoe/home
Colorado	www.cascoe.org
Connecticut/Rhode Island	www.geocities.com/CRASCOE2004
Florida	www.geocities.com/ag4all/FASCOE.html
Georgia	www.gascoe.org
Idaho	www.geocities.com/iascoe
Illinois	www.svonline.net/%7Eiascoe
Indiana	www.geocities.com/iascoepage
Iowa	www.iascoe.org
Kansas	www.kascoe.org
Michigan	http://mascoe.tripod.com
Minnesota	http://members.tripod.com/mnascoe
Missouri	www.mascoe.org
Nebraska	www.geocities.com/nebrascoe
New York	www.nyascoe.org
North Dakota	www.geocities.com/ndascoe
Ohio	www.oascoe.org
Tennessee	www.tascoe.com
Texas	www.tascoe.org
West Virginia	www.wvascoe.com
Wisconsin	www.wiwascoe.org

Area Websites

Northeast Area	www.geocities.com/nearea2002
Northwest Area	www.geocities.com/nw_area/index.html

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MEET THE NEW CED *Tammy Pruin – CED Sioux County*

Hello from the great Northwest! My name is Tammy Pruin and I am the new CED here in Sioux County. I “officially” started in Orange City on Jan.8th after spending a year in COT training. Orange City is a lovely Dutch community, very clean and friendly. The Tulip Festival in May is one of our largest events!



My career with the agency began in 1986 as a Program Technician in Cerro Gordo County, Iowa. I headed north in 1997, tripping across the border to Freeborn Co, Minnesota. When the opportunity came to join the COT program here in Iowa, I was thrilled! I enjoyed the COT program tremendously as I was able to spend time in some great training counties.

My husband and I have five children. Jen and her husband Peter live in Ohio and are expecting a new baby in September. Daughter Krista and her husband Eric live in Ankeny and are the parents of two adorable little girls. We have twin sons – Mark and his wife Missy live in Ankeny and have one daughter. Matt and his wife Maggie live near Mason City and they have a daughter also with another one on the way in September. My youngest daughter Kendra is attending NIACC this year and is still living at home. So “Grandma” has four little granddaughters to spoil and two more on the way!

One of my favorite hobbies (next to spoiling my grandchildren) is raising and showing Belgian draft horses. While primarily a breeding operation, we do attend several shows each year. I am an “expert” at horsehair, having braided more manes and tails than I care to count. If you have attended any of the state fairs or larger county fairs you may have seen me doing a little driving as well!

Thanks to IASCOE for providing me the opportunity to greet all of you!

-----IASCOE-----

THANK YOU!

I want to thank everyone for the cards, thoughts, and prayers. Jane and I cannot tell you how much these have meant to us. I will not make this years IASCOE Convention, but plan on being there next year. Thanks again for all your support.

Ron Mauser - CED Blackhawk County

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NO SHIRT, NO SHOES.....NO PROBLEM!!
FOR RICH KLEPPE
RETIRING CED FROM CEDAR COUNTY



THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY HELD A RETIREMENT OPEN HOUSE FOR RICHARD KLEPPE FROM 1 TO 4 P.M. THURSDAY JANUARY 5TH, 2006 AT THE USDA SERVICE CENTER IN TIPTION, IOWA.

RICH HELD THIS POSITION AT CEDAR COUNTY FOR 9 YEARS. HE WAS PREVIOUSLY THE CED IN KEOKUK COUNTY IN SIGOURNEY FOR 9 YEARS ALSO.

MANY WELL WISHERS ATTENDED THE CELEBRATION AND WISHED HIM THE BEST AND HAPPY SAILING INTO HIS GOLDEN YEARS.

CONGRATULATIONS RICH FROM ALL OF THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY. AND YES, WE ALL WISH WE WERE JOINING YOU IN YOUR JOURNEY OF FINDING OUT IT'S ALWAYS,.... 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE!!



An Irish Blessing

The month of March brings many special events: Girl's Basketball, Boy's Basketball, NCAA Basketball tourney, and don't forget the 2006 IASCOE Convention (March 31)!!!

The name March Madness seems fitting. Being of Irish descent, one of my favorite days of the year is March 17th -- St. Patrick's Day!!! And so I thought it would only be befitting to give you this little Irish Blessing:

May those who love us, love us,
And may those who don't love us,
May God turn their hearts.
And if He doesn't turn their hearts,
May He turn their ankles,
So that we will know them by their limping!!!

Happy St. Patrick's Day!!!!

Steve Kennedy
IASCOE Vice President / CED Jasper County

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News from Greene County

What would the Holiday Season be without the sharing of gifts with those deserving. Who more deserving than our troops serving in Iraq? The Greene County FSA and NRCS joined together to collect items which we sent to SFC John H Wills and his buddies. We had lots of fun gathering food items, crossword puzzles, toiletries and other items from the National Guard wish list on the web. Three boxes weighing 51 pounds were shipped.



We received a Thank you from John and were surprised to learn some of their favorite items were the popcorn, hot chocolate and cool mints. He said it all went fast and was greatly appreciated.

We also learned John had worked with the NRCS in Spirit Lake as a State Employee about 6 years ago – small world. Maybe some of you know John.

So as we sit warm and cozy in our homes we encourage you to think of our men and women serving our Country and fighting for the freedoms we each enjoy. Sharing in this way is the least we can do.

Employees of Greene County



HOWARD COUNTY CONSERVATION WEBSITE

The Howard County Conservation Board recently published a website. The website has information regarding the various conservation areas in the county along with public fishing and hunting areas. It lists the parks and upcoming events at Prairie's Edge Nature Center.

Please feel free to visit: <http://howcocon.home.rconnect.com/hccb/AboutUs.html>



The website was designed by Shari Chesmore, HCCB AmeriCorps Naturalist and former employee at Howard County NRCS Office.

If other counties have the same type of website for the Conservation Board, please share with us.

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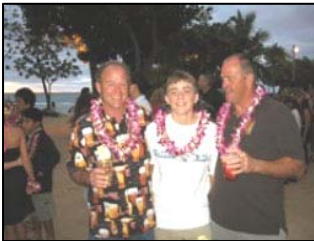
Paradise, that is how I would describe a recent trip to Hawaii.

Something that we have talked about doing for years finally became reality on December 10, 2005. We surprised the kids on Ced's birthday, November 18, by putting the airline tickets on each of their supper plates. I have never seen such big bright eyes! We were going to Hawaii. We had lots to do before the big day especially with Christmas in a little over a month away.



The Monday before we left we arranged suitcases in the living room and began packing. Our stay would be for 2 weeks so we tried to only pack the things we needed. We ended up with 7 suitcases, which barely fit in the car!!!! Good thing we had to leave Dollar at home or he would have had to ride on the hood! In reality we only needed half of one suitcase because the weather was so warm, sweatshirts, jeans, and shoes were never worn.

We left early on Saturday morning and headed to Minneapolis. The weather had been very, very cold and we lived through sub zero temperatures most of that week. We boarded our plane at 11:30 and left within the hour. Seven hours later we landed in Honolulu. This was the first time the kids had ever flown and it had been quite a few years for Mom and Dad too. I thought the flight went very well, but everyone else thought it was very long. I took along plenty of things to do so that helped me occupy my time. I can't remember the last time that I was able to sit for seven hours without doing chores!



We were greeted with fresh flower lei's and kisses. The temperature was 85 and we were instantly warm from sunshine and humidity. We left our coats in the car back in Minneapolis and we quickly peeled off the jeans, shoes and socks. Then it was much better. We did stick out like a sore thumb with all of our white skin. We did not last too long the first day because we had a four hour time change that we were battling.

Points of interest the first week included Pearl Harbor, Arizona Memorial, USS Missouri Battleship, Dole Plantation, North Shore, Waikiki Beach, Diamond Head National Park, and the Navy and Marine Corps bases. The weather was beautiful with sunshine and daytime temps around 82 and nights around 68. We thought that was perfect. It did not take long to get the summer tan back. Saturday night we attended a Luau and everyone had a great time.



The second week we spent relaxing on the beach for most of each day. Activities included boogie boarding, surfing, snorkeling, and swimming. We found lots of shopping opportunity and loved the Swap Meet that was in the Football Stadium where hundreds of vendors meet similar to a Flea Market.

By the time we boarded that airplane, homeward bound, we were golden brown. This time we kept shorts and sandals on, and prayed for seasonably warm weather back home. Our prayers were answered because it was 32 degrees when we landed seven hours later in Minneapolis on the morning of December 23rd. The flight home went well but most of us had little sleep. The plane was completely full with Christmas only 2 days away. We left at 6:30 p.m. but then again we had that four-hour time change adjustment. We quickly put on pants, sweatshirts, socks and shoes and I am so glad that we did not have to face subzero temperatures or I think I would have died.

I will definitely go back as soon as this trip is paid. Next time I am going to pick a different Island and some day I will have them all explored. It was such a good time and I hope that someday you will take the time to discover the beauty of Hawaii.

Submitted by Lisa Forburger, PT Kossuth County

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The Worlds Largest Popcorn Ball !!!

Recognized By Guinness Book of World Records

Produced At Noble Popcorn Plant In Sac City, Iowa

Date: June 12, 2004

Weight: 3,100 Pounds

Popcorn Used: 910 Pounds

Sugar Used: 1,500 Pounds

Corn Syrup Used: 690 Pounds

Circumference: 23 Feet

Height: 7 Feet

Time: 7 Hours 13 Minutes

Number Of Workers: 49



Workers included 44 volunteers and
5 Noble Popcorn staff members.

Patty Judge, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, was on hand
to certify that all the ingredients used were edible.

The Iowa D.O.T. had two officers present to conduct
the official weighing of the popcorn ball.

The process was video taped. The tape and all required
documents were sent to the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

The purpose of this gigantic undertaking was to help
promote Sac City's Sesquicentennial, July 1-4, 2005.

The popcorn ball & giant Coke can are on permanent display in its own display
shed by the Sac City Museum and can be seen from your car on Highway 20.



Patty Judge, Iowa Secretary of
Agriculture, helped in making the
popcorn ball



Noble Popcorn plant manager, Dan
Martin, stands beside the
finished popcorn ball

See more at www.pionet.net/~setd/popcorn-ball.html

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[Noble Popcorn Plant in Sac City](#) sent several cartons of flavored popcorn to some very thankful troops in Iraq. Below are two emails sent to Dan Martin, plant manager, from one of them.

From: Karri Roman
Sent: Wednesday, November 16, 2005
To: Dan Martin
Subject: THANK YOU

Dear Dan and Staff,
We want to sincerely thank you for the HUGE box of popcorn. We received it 2 days ago and we are still sharing it with troops that work here in the hospital and those that need care. Your generosity has wowed over 75 American troops so far and we still have lots to share! It really means a lot to us that people back at home show support with such gestures. Once available we would love to send more pictures your way.

Your kindness will never be forgotten!

We all wish you and your families a Happy Thanksgiving!

Capt Karri Roman and all the staff at the Balad Air Force Theater Hospital, Iraq



From: Karri Roman
Sent: Thursday, December 08, 2005
To: Dan Martin
Subject: Pictures of thanks

Dan and Staff,
Once again, all the staff and patients at the Air Force Theater Hospital, Balad, Iraq wish to thank you for the generous gift of popcorn you sent. We are still enjoying what little is left! Your kindness is so appreciated!

We wanted to send off a couple pictures for you to see!

Happy Holiday's and Merry Christmas to all of you!

Capt Karri Roman

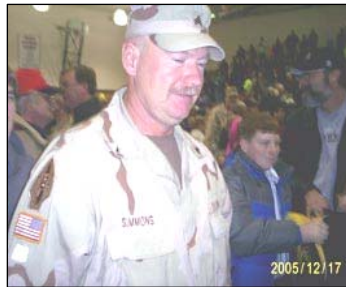
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Man's Best Friend—A Soldier's Story

Submitted by Dee Ann Lehn, IASCOE President & Keokuk County CED

December 2005 in Fairfield was a special time of happy unions with family and friends as the 224th Engineering Battalion returned home after a year of deployment in Iraq. The high school gym was filled to overflowing and the National Guard Band played as the town awaited the arrival of the troops.

The battalion filed into the gym precisely on time and was greeted by the roar of the crowd. As soon as the commanding officer said the yelled out the word "Dismissed", family, friends, co-workers and neighbors bounded from their seats and gathered around the troops searching for that special soldier. My special soldier is Sergeant Timothy K. Simmons, my brother a.k.a "Big Sarge" to the men who served with him. He stood in the circle of family, hugging his wife, Lori and looking so tired, a weariness of months of hard living and stressful times etched on his face.



At home, waiting for the arrival of her master was Tim's beloved old dog, Ringo. Ringo is a Siberian husky that Tim raised from a pup. The pair had been constant companions for 11 years. She suffers from arthritis in her back hips and sometimes, her old legs will just give out and age has taken its toll in other ways. Tim left for Iraq thinking he would never see his old friend again—he didn't think she would survive another year.

Tim was home on leave the end of April for two weeks. The time, of course, went by far too quickly and Mom, Lori and I were soon on our way back to the airport to see our soldier off once again. The airport scene was heart wrenching with parents, siblings and small children clinging to the soldiers just before they boarded the flight that would take them back to war. I remember Tim turning as he neared the plane and with a wave of his hand and a shadow of smile, he disappeared onto the aircraft.

Tim's absence seemed to be too much for the old dog to bear this time though and she actually lied

down under the front porch one afternoon after Tim left in April and seemed to be preparing to die. One of the local veterinarians, Dr. Miller, came out to the house and stayed with the dog for several hours giving her medicine and encouragement and Ringo survived.

Ringo wandered off in October and could not be found anywhere. The family drove up and down the roads calling her name to no avail and after a couple of days of searching, Lori's heart sank as she composed an e-mail to Tim to let him know his faithful friend had disappeared. Considering Ringo's condition, we never thought she would be physically able to survive nights out in the cold without food or water but out of the blue on the third day, here's she comes down the road, hungry and dehydrated but in relatively good shape. As Tim's tour of duty drew to a end, we thought we had succeeded in keeping Ringo alive and going but a week before Tim's arrival, Ringo's rear legs gave out once again but once again, Dr. Miller was able to nurse her back to health.

Reunited with family and his faithful friend, Tim is beginning to settle back into life in this part of the world. He stays pretty close to home when he is not on the job as a deputy sheriff. He doesn't talk much about what went on in Iraq and still seems to carry some of that weariness with him. His lungs still bear some of the dust and sand from that desolate country although it's apparently not uncommon for the soldiers to cough for several months after coming home. But with each day, he becomes more like the Tim we knew before he went off to war.

Our family can rest easier at night now that our soldier is home. Ringo can rest her head on her master's knee but let's not forget the troops that are still over in Iraq. Keep them in your hearts and let's hope they all come home soon.



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Popcorn Cake

Melt
3 T butter
10 oz marshmallows - jet puffed

Pour over 3 qts popcorn

Add
1 c jellybeans
1 c gumdrops - eat green ones.
1 c peanuts
1 c M&Ms
1 c Rice Crispies



Put in buttered angel food cake pan. Use cold water on hands when patting it in the pan.

Lisa Forburger – PT Kossuth County



Things are going really good with www.thenascoestore.com As of the end of February, the sales since July 1, 2005, has been around \$20,000. There have been 245 orders placed during that period, and 213 new people registered on the site. We are really pleased with the progress of the store. NASCOE receives a percentage of all sales placed online at the store.

We are continuing the sale on our famous Lee Brand 50/50 sweatshirt; we still have shirts available in all sizes, but maybe not in all colors. The regular price is \$19.00, which is a bargain, but we reduced the shirts to \$15.20 before the holidays; and now the shirts are \$14.00 each. We will discontinue this sale once we sell most of the stock that we have on the shelves. We cannot guarantee that we have the color shirt you order in the size you need; so, for this price, we will substitute a color that we have available. Some of the colors (Denim, English Rose, Primrose Yellow, and Royal Blue) will be discontinued when stock is gone. There are two new colors - Black and Navy

Go to www.thenascoestore.com. Order one, two, or more of these sweatshirts while they're on sale.

We are adding some new pre-Spring items. Look for our new Tote Bag; a new Windshirt; Ladies Long Sleeve Polo; and regular Tee Shirts that are garment dyed. These items should be available at the store now. Ladies, the long sleeve polo is so soft and just right for Spring (not too heavy). In April, watch for our Spring Things 2006! products.



ITEM #:3019
Unisex Sweatshirts

We'll watch for your orders!

Era Jarrard

BEJs Advertising

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Life In America - 100 Years Ago

My husband brought this home and I thought it was very interesting reading and wanted to share it.

- THE YEAR 1905 -

This will boggle your mind, I know it did mine!!
The year is 1905. One hundred years ago! What a difference a century makes! Here are some of the U.S. statistics for the Year 1905:

The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.

Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.

A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

Alabama, Mississippi, Iowa and Tennessee were each more heavily populated than California.

With a mere 1.4 million people, California was only the 21st most populous state in the Union.

The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower!

The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour.

A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000 per year, a dentist \$2500 per year, a veterinarian between \$1500 and \$4000 per year, and a mechanical engineer about \$5000 per year.

More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.

Ninety percent of all U.S. doctors had no college education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."

Sugar cost four cents a pound.

Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen.

Coffee was fifteen cents a pound.

Most women only washed their hair once a month, and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.

Five leading causes of death in the U.S. were:

1. Pneumonia and influenza
2. Tuberculosis
3. Diarrhea
4. Heart disease
5. Stroke

The American flag had 45 stars. Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.

The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was only 30!!!

Crossword puzzles, canned beer, and iced tea hadn't been invented yet.

There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.

Two out of every 10 U.S. adults couldn't read or write, (Not sure we have improved on this one.)

Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the local corner drugstores! Back then pharmacist said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health." (Shocking!)

Eighteen percent of households in the U.S. had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.

There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.

With the technology we have today try to imagine what it may be like in another 100 years. It staggers the mind.

*Submitted by Sue Beemer
IASCOE Secretary/Treasurer & PT Taylor Co.*

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THE PERILS OF POLLY P.T.

PART SEVENTEEN

Written By Roseanne Woerner, COT Wapello County

Created by Dee Lehn, CED Keokuk County

Visit our website at
www.iascoe.org for the
entire story of
["The Perils of Polly PT"](#)

INTRODUCING TESSA STARR

It starts with an unassuming email to my best friend and co-worker Holly Gable. *Did you catch Tessa's outfit today?*

I type the words ...and frantically so because it's almost eight o'clock, which is my official start time. These emails that Holly and I exchange are akin to passing notes in school and totally discouraged by Tessa Starr, my boss. I hit the send button and in 35 seconds, I have a reply.

Holly is the fastest typist in the whole, wide world, plus she always tags her message on the email that I send her, which contributes to her speediness. (Not to take anything away from her flying fingers though because she does type really fast)

I know. Holly writes. *I almost fell on the floor laughing when she walked in this morning wearing that short, tight skirt. If I had knees that knobby, they would never see the light of day. I don't understand why the woman can't dress her age.*

We manage three more exchanges and then it's time to get to work. Plus, we have run out of catty things to say about Tessa, who, judging by her recent switch in clothing style, yearns to be thirty years younger and accomplishes that special goal by dressing like a teenager. Yesterday, for example, she wore a low-cut top, which was a nasty sight. There is an age when human body parts should be concealed, camouflaged, and otherwise disguised and I have to say that Tessa might have reached her limit for flashing flesh at least ten years ago.

Just before break time, Holly sends another message that is tagged on to our previous exchange. This time it's a joke, the kind where I have to scroll down to read the whole thing.

Hi, it says. Some people have personality. Some people have looks. You're lucky because you have both. I scroll down some more. *Don't be flattered,* it continues on. *Someone sent this to me. I just wanted you to read it.*

The phone rings as I scan the joke a second time and all the while, my inner self is laughing pretty hard. The guy on the phone is a producer who wants to know why his CRP contract acres have decreased. I stop scrolling and try to explain the whole GIS thing, but he just doesn't get it. He doesn't understand GIS. He swears he didn't receive his letter of explanation or his revised map with new measurements. I'm running him through our process again when Betty Stabler leans over my cubicle.

"Hey," she whispers. "Send me that joke that Holly just sent you."

I nod okay. I click my contact list as I tell the producer that I'm going to get his file. I set the receiver in the cradle and because I can multi-task like nobody's business, I click Betty's name as I rise out of my chair. I completely forget about the message at the end of the joke as I push the hold button. Otherwise, I would do a quick cut and paste before I pass it along. I hunker over my desk as I hit send and voila, the message is gone. BUT, in that nanosecond of time, before the message completely disappears from my screen, I note that I totally missed Betty's name and clicked the next name on my list instead, Tessa Starr.

I react with a dizzy spell. The room whirs and I feel like I'm in the middle of a bad dream where I'm slugging through every movement and motion. Tessa's computer blares out Ode To Joy, which is her email notification sound. She turns around and I watch her mouse move. All the while, the phone line continues to blink. Tessa clicks a couple of times. I know she's opening my email. I just know she is. I see her brand new puffed-up lips form a smile. She's reading the first part of the message. Her smile broadens. She's scrolling down and down and then her smile fades. Her head jerks up and she glares at me. Uh-oh. I'm in big trouble...again.

to be continued...

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