

Midwest Area Rally Notes

Thursday April 14, 2016

8:00am Curt Houk- Mid West Area Exec welcomed us all to the rally.

Dennis Ray, National VP gave the invocation.

FFA Officers presented the colors and led us all in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Deb Esselman, National Secretary led us in the National Anthem.

Julia Wickard, Indiana SED gave a great Welcome speech. She highlighted numerous things regarding there great state of Indiana. She gave much praise to the COF employees. She also gave a talk about what public serve means to me with public service week coming up May 1-7. Service before self, integrity-to do what is right when no one is watching, excellence-always striving to do better.

Deb Essleman gave a presentation honoring our veterans. I do not think there was a dry eye in the house when it was complete. It reminded all of us that there are men and women and their families giving of themselves for our safety and freedom each day.

9:00am – Chris Beyerhelm, Associate Admin for Operations & Management WDC, spoke on the following points

- Encouraged everyone to read 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- Approximately 1600 COF's dialed in for the Town Hall Meeting
- Good work being done with others on the Work Force Engagement
- He gave the definition of Workforce Engagement-Good Work Done Well With Others
 - "I want FSA to be the best place to work"
 - Good work and good job goes both ways. Don't just wait for someone to tell you that you have done a good job, tell someone that they have done a good job. We should be telling people up the chain of command. Tell your boss they do a good job, it goes both ways.
- We are getting results from the Work Force Engagement Survey
- Find out what your States plan is
- This year county office will be included with everyone else so there will only be some who will get to take the survey but everyone who gets the survey needs to respond.
- Hiring
 - We were below staffing by 1000 and now we are below by 300
 - 16 months ago it took 126 days for the hire process from when the 52 is started
 - Now we are looking at about 52 days
 - Working on creating an express lane for PT's
- Budget
 - We are working with a \$1.6 Billion budget
 - \$1 Billion is in salaries
 - \$20 Million for travel and COF expenses
 - \$350 Million for IT
 - We work 3 years at a time when working on the budget
 - 2017 budget looks better than the 2016 budget does

- While participating in the Commodity Classic we had 1000 people come through the booth and not one complaint regarding the implementation of the new Farm Bill.
- If Congress is willing to maintain or talking about an increase, that means they believe in what you are doing so this looks good for FSA going forward.
- He said goals for budget were to spend all the funds we were given and to get the allotments out sooner.
- Workload Study-ARS
 - ARS-workload workforce model report will be out this summer
 - Needs some tweaks
 - Creating a task force
 - Analytics down to the county level
 - FSA Budget Audit was in good shape
 - CCC Budget Audit had a disclaimer – which means Not Good, the auditors are wanting COF's to send records to verify funds spent. WDC is trying to explain that it isn't that simple. More information to be provided later.
- IT
 - We have a new CIO in WDC and he has made commitments to get things better
 - Service Level Agreements which tell what services we expect and help finding the problems
 - Don't stop sending in tickets
 - Teams of Budget, Program and IT is something that they are striving for in the future
 - MITRE report is a 3rd party review of IT
 - Commitment Made
 - ✓ Handbooks will be updated and all employees will get the time table on when the handbooks will be out New!
 - Bridges to Opportunity will be the portal to all things FSA
 - Good customer service
 - Get the producer what they need
 - Library's will already be set up for information to be given out
 - Management Training has been scheduled for 900 managers this year
 - Phase 2 for RFS (Farm Programs will really come on board with this phase)
 - 250,000 RFS taken so far this CY
 - Do it – as it has been written in the Law
 - Workload counting – they can see what and how many we are servicing
- WDC
 - Need good folks to work at that level
 - They are concerned that the next leadership teams will not have any COF experience
 - Fellowship is a new program coming
 - Come to WDC and work 30-90 days and introduce yourself to work in DC and how things work
 - People in WDC do care and want to get it right
 - Fellowship workers can see that and take it back to the field level

- Awards
 - We will continue to do COF awards
 - Administrator Awards
 - ✓ Notice to come out soon
 - ✓ Last year we had 150 from FSA – We encourage nominations – Lets recognize people who have done a good job
 - ✓ There will be a State Competition
 - ✓ Then to a Regional Competition
 - ✓ Then onto a Nation Competition
 - ✓ There will be different categories or groupings to nominate in
- Websites
 - Get them updated
 - States keep your websites updated. Will help with this. Some cut and paste.
- MPS
 - It is going to get better
- Records Retention
 - It has been lifted-good news
 - 700 Million cubic feet to get shredded nationwide - bad news
 - Another notice will be coming with instructions on how to handle your records
 - There is potential to have contracts for Mobile Shred Teams

10:00am – Wes Daniels, President of NASCOE, spoke on the following points

- A letter will be out soon regarding ACRSI
- Missouri leads the country in Key PT's – Great job Missouri
- IT, Staffing, and temp hours are the biggest complaints we are getting right now
- IT
 - We are working closely with WDC
 - Negotiating for better
 - They are willing to work with NASCOE
 - The new CIO is going to give a time table to fix issues – Will not be over night but dedicated to getting things fixed
- Staffing
 - We know there are staffing needs
 - \$17.5 Million to keep the temps we have on board
 - NASCOE is working hard to keep them
 - We know it is a major issue
 - Workload future enhancement for the COF
 - It is important that the SED manages the state for staffing
 - Key PT's Nationwide is 100
 - ✓ All states need to get on board with the Key PT program
 - Shared Management
 - ✓ COC should always agree
 - ✓ CED drive time should be a factor
 - ✓ Producers still getting serviced should be a factor
 - ✓ A new notice is coming with more information
 - Leadership Training

- Should include how the COC works
 - ✓ Still COF's that are not having COC meetings at all
 - ✓ We should be using the COC the proper way
 - All NASCOE members should be a PAC member
- 10:30am – Brad Pfaff, Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs WDC, spoke on the following topics
- It is most important that we get the handbooks updated
 - We recognize the frustration of not being able to find information when you need it
 - IB, emails, and what not – all needs to be in one location – The Handbooks!
- 10:55am – Brent Orr, Program Manager WDC, spoke on the following topics
- ARC/PLC as of today
 - 43% enrollment Nationwide
 - 39% enrollment for Missouri
 - \$5.2 Billion in payments for 2014
- 11:15am – Curt Houk, MWA Exec and Chris Hare, MWA Alt Exec, spoke on the following topics
- Big talk of COC and membership of NAFEC – all your COC's should be members
 - Again, pointed out that state Associations and COC's should know from the STO's that a shared management may happen
 - A lot of time it is not a software problem – it is a network issue
 - All procedure should be kept in the handbooks and they should be kept current
 - PT and CED promotions
 - When you ask for more money you may get less employees
 - COC meetings should be happening every month
 - Everyone should be a PAC contributor
- 11:45am – Dennis Ray, NASCOE Vice President, spoke on the following topics
- We should be promoting our COC's and NAFEC
 - There are major benefits from both to the COF
 - Negotiations
 - 1 hour of Attorney at NASCOE's expense (work related)
 - We need to work to increase membership
 - Communications
 - Working with a FB pages
 - We need feedback from the people
- 1:00om – Q & A session with WDC guests and NASCOE Exec Committee Members
- Q: Landlord unresponsive to the COF and GSA communications?
- A: Chris is going to handle personally. COF should forward him all the information they have.
- Q: When will when know when we need to stop taking CRP offers?
- A: Cont. has had a huge enrollment this FY already.
- A: We will be communicating soon with the STO sections regarding where we will be going with CRP.
- A: Cont. has raised eyebrows in WDC with the amounts of acres that are being enrolled.
- A: Still no date as to where we are with acreage and directions that the states should go.
- A: There will be a large announcement in 2 to 3 weeks.

Q: Dates for approving ARC/PLC?

A: Really close to opening it up for counties to start approving.

A: Trying to make things simple.

A: Everything is contingent on the Sequestration.

A: One date will be able to be used for all approvals to be made. Will be like a bulk approval option.

Q: Workload – COF getting credit for doing work for another COF?

A: They understand it is important but not sure how to fix it.

Q: CLPS functional and a Lump Sum Repayment option that works?

A: One of the items that is being worked on.

Q: AS400 Disposal?

A: It is tied with Records retention and they will be scheduled to be picked up.

A: There are still 60-70 that are still turned on and we will not dispose of until they are all turned off.

Q: CP42 seed costs are going up dramatically?

A: Direction is forth coming.

Q: Training for Loss Adjusters for ELAP, TAP and NAP?

A: We know it needs to happen but it is a budget problem.

Q: Pay banding CED's – CED manages 2 PT's and other CED manages 4 and they are paid the same Grade 12 wage?

A: Our pay system is from the 1960-1070's which is part of the problem.

A: Congress will probably not take on the Civil Service Pay Reform.

A: Reclassification and Pay is always looked at.

A: Does not see a serious movement on this matter.

Q: Maxed out Grade and Step for PT's who have been with Agency for a long time?

A: No answers, other than you may have to move forward and move up.

Q: Buyback for Temps time after 1989?

A: NO, OPM will not change this.

A: It is written in the law.

2:00pm – Jackson Jones, NASCOE Legislative Chair, spoke on the Stepping Stones to NASCOE

- Membership – 77% right now and is totally voluntary
- NAFEC associational member
- Building Relationships – Get to know your congressmen's staffer. They should know who FSA is. Then move up to the congressmen. We need to make FSA's presence known.
- Appropriations Process – Leg. Is the #1 priority
 - 2016 there was a \$12 Million reduction slated and at the last minutes they added it back in.
 - Currently we are looking at a \$7 Million increase (won't be much help but it will not hurt)
- NASCOE PAC – funds that are sympathetic to FSA and we steer those funds to the AG Committees
- Membership Engaged and Excited
 - Leadership needs to be trained
 - There is a Leadership and a Legislative Conf. coming up

- Registrations are to the State Presidents
 - Has to have a 1st timer go to get the full steepen from NASCOE
 - People – Get engaged and we are Family
- 2:30pm – Mary Roberts, MWA NAFEC Chain, spoke on the following points
- FSA County Committee Website has good information
 - Has a Power Point and Video for COC's to view
 - NAFEC costs \$.50/week or a \$1/pay period
- 3:00pm – Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc., spoke on the following points
- Young people should do Roth IRA's
 - New cost to Term to 100 Life insurance
 - Get rid of your option B coverage (page 3 and 4 of the handout)
 - There is a new Hybrid Annuity

Friday, April 15, 2016

Curt Houk, MWA Executive, spoke on these points

- ACRSI
 - Producer now has 3 options to make his crop report
 - From home through the planters and a program they have to “purchase”
 - ✓ There is a waypoint everytime a seed goes into the ground. Has to be translated to USDA language. Draws out a line around your waypoints and then you have a field. Producer logs in at home with Level 2 access and makes his crop report
 - With their crop insurance agent
 - ✓ Agent takes the report and they load it and it will go to a clearing house and then come over to CARS.
 - With FSA like they always have
 - ✓ Still looks like CARS but has 2 additional fields to load. You may have an ACRSI worklist and when you choose that and there are validation messages and those go to an error report. We will have to fix those errors.
 - ✓ If FSA pulls a report from producer reporting or crop insurance reporting and it is not correct it has to be fixed. FSA's reports should still be reported in the same manner as always. If the report is not fixable and needs to just be redone, politely tell the producer and do not lay blame. Producer will figure out what is going on.
 - It is IMPORTANT that we maintain GREAT customer Service and FSA will then maintain Acreage Reporting. Because of the relationships we have made over the years with our producers we will show our producers that Crop Reporting is best with us.
 - Farm+ is a huge asset for nationwide customer service.
 - COF can log into Farm + and print the producers maps and take crop reports for any county with the nationwide customer service option in CARS

- Hoping that GEO-Spatial will be able to be integrated through CARS and or Farm +.

Q: What happens when the CLU doesn't match between crop insurance and FSA?

A: It is a huge concern but there are no answers.

Q: When will ACRSI be functional?

A: There is no timeline yet but it is coming.

A: It is a concern but we cannot quit striving to move forward for fear that IT cannot handle it.

Curt Houk and Mid West Area Awards Chairman, Kathy Balbaugh gave out the area awards for service to community to David Baird, Ohio, service to NASCOE to Tom Oasen from Wisconsin, and service to FSA to John Bahnsen, Iowa. They both commented that they hope we all have many more nominations this year because we have excellent people in our office and we need to nominate them.

The SED's from all the Mid West Area states did a Q & A. We do not have good notes on this because we were getting ready for our presentation.

Missouri gave the presentation for the 2017 National Convention in St. Charles, MO. Historically Awesome. See you in MO in August of 2017.

Iowa gave their presentation to come to Cedar Rapids, IA August 3-6. It sounds very exciting and we hope everyone plans to attend.

Each state president gave a report of what was going on in their state and their state concerns.

MWA Committee Reports

Awards

- Simplifying the process for 2017 in hopes to promote more nominees

Benefits

- Always looking for discounts
 - Dillards (financial)
 - JM Marketing (Insurance)
 - Working Advantage (Employee Discounts)
 - Offers various discounts for hotel, car rental, theme parks etc.

Scholarships/Emblems

- Will be online for 2017!!!
- We encourage sending all state applicants to the MWA.
- New - Assoc. Member Application
- Emblem sales are great
- The new Superior Company that we are using is great

Membership

- Dillards Financial is holding a Special Membership Drive in June of 2016.
 - Plaque to the State Winner and a traveling Trophy that will be passed around to each year's winner
- 40 – 50 – 55 year membership forms are due by June
- Submit members who pass away by July

Negotiations

- 7 Reps in WDC
- Shared Management
- Hiring Process for COT's
- Handbooks
- Streamlining the 13A's

Publicity

- New NASCOE Database
- NASCOE news flash emails
- FB posts / Mobile Friendly Website
- Area Bulletins
- 1 area hard copy newsletter
- Publicity contest has been eliminated and replaced by 1st timers contest
 - 7 applicants
 - Why are you wanting to attend National Convention for the 1st time

Programs

- New Chair Person
- Has a new PP available for all states to look at
- Encouragement to submit Program/Policy change ideas
- Your voice is heard

Legislative

- Copy of report is available

Candidacy Announcements

- President
 - Wes Daniels announced his candidacy for President
- Vice President
 - Dennis Ray announced his candidacy for Vice President
- Secretary
 - Deb Esselman announced her candidacy for Secretary
- Treasure
 - Curt Houk announced his candidacy for Treasurer
- MWA Executive
 - Chris Hare announced his candidacy for Midwest Area Exec
- MWA Alt Executive
 - Jackson Jones announced his candidacy for Mid West Area Alt Exec

New Business

- No new business

Meeting was adjourned at noon on Friday.

Check out NASCOE News on Facebook for some great pictures of the rally.

Respectfully submitted,

MASCOE Delegates

Tina Young

Sheria Yancey