

## 2018 Midwest Area Rally – Missouri Delegate Report

March 22-24, 2018, Marriot Hotel, Des Moines, IA

### Missouri Attendees

Dennis Ray, NASCOE President

Jackson Jones, MWA Alternate Executive

Tina Young, MWA Emblems and Scholarship Chair

Jared Singer, MASCOE President and Delegate

Mandi Bird, MASCOE Vice-President and Delegate

### Thursday, March 22

The Iowa Association held their State Convention during the day. Rally attendees arrived Thursday evening for registration and a social activity.

### Friday, March 23

The meeting came to order at 8:00 a.m. with invocation, presentation of colors, Pledge of Allegiance, and National Anthem. Jennifer Comer, Iowa, led the roll call of delegates. Chris Hare, MWA Executive introduced the SED from Iowa, Amanda De Jong, who welcomed the group to Iowa.

8:25 a.m. Under Secretary Northey

Next, Under Secretary Bill Northey addressed the group via VTC. He indicated he is “drinking water from a firehose” right now, getting up to speed. He appreciates the work that we do. He has been on the job 13 days and is working to “stand-up” some things He indicated the goal of FPAC Business Center is to take “administrative burdens away” to make sure the doors are open in the morning, etc. He went on to describe the transition to the Business Center as being like changing a tire on a car that is going 70 miles an hour down the road. He is trying to get some hiring plans done, and appreciates our patience.

There are 15 teams – 80 people – working on the FPAC Business Center. Focusing on what the pieces are to keep leases renewed, to get people hired and onboarded, etc.

Have had some people in working on the Bi partisan budget act. \$2.36 Billion to address wildfire, hurricane ECP, EWP Cotton implementation for ARC/PLC, MPP changes

Great to have the Secretary come in to talk to that group this week. Secretary emphasized speed in implementing. “weeks not months”

We are a mission area that people care about. Many farm groups have asked Northey if we have enough people to get the work done.

Secretary wants us to be strategic as we back fill. Appreciates your patience as they continue working through the process.

Significant effort by October to get staffing back to levels “we’re used to”.

Continue to use myFPAC site to submit questions.

Wants to work on process improvements as well as customer experience. Mentioned customers sending things to us through the web.

Working on drought and fires on the plains. Talk of CRP and what else can we do to help

Workload analysis- Thanks for what you have filled out in the past is very helpful, particularly with asking folks on the hill for more staffing, and substantiating our requests.

Under Secretary Northey then opened the floor to questions.

Q. Are there currently any county employees or producers involved in the FPAC working groups

A. No

Q. During 90s reorg, GS FLMs were able to apply for CEDs slots, without FP training and less supervision. Thinking about that again now with FPAC, and NRCS. Maybe this is just a comment, but we need to require them to apply for COT positions.

A. Northey – not versed in that process

A. Steve Peterson – FPAC is not a combination of agencies like we had in the 90s. So we should not have those concerns under this realignment. Each agency will maintain their separateness.

A. Northey – Reiterated that agencies will maintain their identities. He hears that concern from all three agencies and from crop insurance agencies. That is not the intent and there is no hidden agenda.

Q. What is the hiring outlook for the FY

A. Currently hiring 300 employees across FPAC. Hopefully another group weeks away that will be larger, then hopefully another even larger group. Hope to be back to Oct 1 levels by the end of the FY. Knows that Oct 1 staffing level wasn’t ideal, but hopes to at least get back to that.

Q. What will be the COC role in FPAC and will the COC continue to supervise CEDs

A. COC role will not change. Agency roles will not change. We're all very proud of the COC system and happy to have the COC members on board. FPAC is not designed to change the COF structure.

Q. Can we use GovDelivery to issue NRCS and SWCD articles as well as RMA info

A. Makes a ton of sense to coordinate that effort in the FPAC mission area

Q. Will FPAC result in any combinations of offices?

A. No plans right now to do that. Workload analysis going on, effort to look at right sizes for offices, some offices with no employees reporting full time. No plans right now, but I wouldn't say that it will never happen. Law currently requires FSA to go to Congress. No behind the scenes plan to consolidate offices.

Q. What's on the horizon for CRP in the next 6 months?

A. Congress looking at it from several different proposals. Speculation that Congress will not get a farm bill passed. But looking at CRP caps short-term, how many acres do we have available. Possibly offering extensions for contracts coming due in Sept. He hopes to get information to COFs sooner rather regarding expiring contracts so that we will be able to provide that information to our customers.

Q. Appointment of DAFO, DAFP – now that you're in place, will these appointments be made.

A. Still weeks away, not months. But he also didn't anticipate it taking as long as it did for his appointment.

Q. Will any programs be moved from one agency to another?

A. Not in my plans, nor in plans that he is aware of. Mentioned shared crop reporting flowing between RMA and FSA.

Q Office layout – it seems FPAC is dictating office design with one counter, etc. It seems little local input is available. I hope local staff have more input in office design.

A. I have not dug deep enough into that criteria to know how those leases are arranged. We want to show unity between the agencies, but you all know what works for your offices.

Q. Workload and zero staffed offices. In 2011, when we went through closing. County in St Joseph Co Indiana, large workload, snap shot in time was taken while all staff had retired, etc. So that office was closed. Make sure we are thinking about service and many other factors before closing an office.

A. FSA has spent a great deal of time working on workload. NRCS is struggling to capture workload, especially with partner work. No plans now to close offices

Also make sure you let us know about unnecessary paperwork burden, auto populating forms, other suggestion, make sure you pass those along through myFPAC.

Steve Peterson

From Maryland, CED, STO, DC.

About \$20 Billion annually benefits issued from FSA. 2016 and 2017 were our busiest loan years.

FPAC – No agency is taking over another. He has already seen benefits from being the same mission area as NRCS. Better communication with him and NRCS chief. North Carolina ECP example – needed help getting technical side done, and was able to work directly with NRCS. NRCS and FSA has one boss – Bill Northey – when an issue arises.

Business Center – focus on those mission delivery areas that are not associated with rolling out programs – IT, HR, etc. Pull those resources from the three agencies together more effectively and efficiently. FSA, NRCS and RMA are becoming customers of the business center. Will STO possibly fold in – possibly yes. But Peterson wants to keep a core group of budget/hr/etc under each agency. But no employees will have to move.

Hiring

Had meeting with Secretary in the fall about hiring. Secretary wants people put where the work is. Can drill done to COF level. WebTA data is being used. Talked about bell curve. SEDs did a good job of putting their states aside and identifying where staffing needs to go based on workload.

150 hires approved for FSA in February. NRCS – each state got three positions. (they got 150 also) FSA did not do that. SEDs submitted 500. Had to reduce to 150. Have only done internal hires because they want to wait until the analysis is done first.

## Policy

### Bipartisan budget act – Passed February 9 – Changes

- ECP – Ran out of money due to hurricanes in fall. \$200 million shortfall – \$400 million provided for ECP, \$53 million in ECP already disbursed.
- Adhoc disaster program - \$2.3 billion – Secretary can use for hurricane/drought/wildfires
  - Secretary has huge discretion
  - Will pay up to 85% loss if they NAP or crop insurance
    - 65% if no coverage
  - Does have linkage requirement
  - Meeting with the Secretary every week
  - Will be able to use some program funding for administrative costs
- Farmers.gov
- LIP/TAP/ELAP/LFP
  - LIP – lifted \$125,000 PL.
  - Now we cover livestock sold due to natural disaster for a reduced price because they were injured
  - ELAP – now we won't have to wait for a national factor
  - TAP – 500 acres limitation increased to 1,000, PL removed
  - LFP was not touched?

### MPP – decreased premiums

- Month by month trigger instead of bi-monthly
- We'll have to reopen sign-up because of the budget act's changes

### Seed cotton

- Seed cotton will now again be an eligible commodity
- Those producers now get to make new base and yield updates, and cotton base ARC/PLC elections for 2018

## Farm Bill

- Budget act showed what is being considered for farm bill
- Congressional staffers have been meeting with FSA folks regularly
- Secretary believes that USDA has a technical role, but is not taking a policy role
- Doesn't know if Farm Bill will get done this year or not.
- CRP 24 million acres cap – 23.5 Oct 1 2017 , then down to 22.5 after oct 1.
- ARC/PLC – concerns over yields. Believes Congress will be more prescriptive on yields and more discussion on admin vs physical county.
- NAP buy-up will go away if no action

- Farm Loan – discussion of increasing limits

Michelle Motely, NADD Membership Chair, addressed the group.

- 190 DDs in the nation
- Membership at 92%
- Started in 1992
- Provide support wherever we're needed
- Mentor Program
- Headed to DC in two weeks to work with other associations and leadership
- 31 years with the agency
- Started as temp, CED, Conservation Specialist, DD
- Cooperation
  - Implementation of Key PT program
    - Provided promotion potential
  - National Leadership Training
  - To date over 1800 supervisors have been trained
  - Joint meetings

Dennis Ray

- NASCOE Service is a Labor of Love
- Build good working relationships at the local level
- Negotiate regularly with the STO
- Communication – NASCOE tries to get information out through a number of channels. Let management know if you're not receiving updates.
- Program suggestions – link on webpage
  - Suggest a solution
- Michelle Stall, Ohio is the national programs chair
  - Program items go up immediately
  - Negotiation items go in once per year
  - There are over 1,000 software enhancements in the queue waiting to be worked on at some time in the future.
- Senate passed budget late last night.
- NASCOE has traditionally met with management quarterly with just the NASCOE President and Vice President.
- Workload/Staffing Tool
  - All of the associations were allowed to participate in the process since June of 2016
  - NASCOE optimistic that it will be beneficial
- Needs to be dedicated funding for COC meetings
  - Separate from temps – don't want COC meetings squeezed in order to use money for temps

- PM-2993 Concerns
  - New performance standards
  - Conflicting information in notice
  - NASCOE does not believe there should be arbitrary hold downs on summary ratings
- Task Forces
  - Competencies
  - Internal Acrsi
  - Marinda Kester – Ad Hoc Disaster program
  - Need volunteers for
    - Cybersecurity – FPAC
  - If you have an interest in serving let Dennis know
- NAFEC
  - Encourage you to become an Associate member
  - Share that information with your County Committees
- PAC
  - “Charge to State Presidents”
  - Membership currently around 80%
  - Whatever participation rate you have, don’t be satisfied with it. Keep at it
  - Also focus on retention rate.
- Closing comments – 3 things that NASCOE does
  - Only organization that can negotiate with management on behalf of CO employees
  - Hunter Moorehead, Legislative Consultant
  - NASCOE attorney for personnel issues

#### Brandon Wilson

- Chris Hare spoke on Brandon’s behalf of how dedicated Brandon is to NASCOE
- Mentioned MO SED Richard Fordyce wished to be here but couldn’t as well as the SED from IN

#### Jackson Jones-MWA Alt Ex

- Encouraged PAC. If you get a new enrollment or increase by \$3.00 you get a NASCOE PAC tumbler
- Emblems are in the back, encourage everyone to check them out
- COC system- no other place in Federal Gov where programs are administered by local committee- no other place you can appeal their decision- no other place where local committee hires and fires employees for gov administration. There is pressure to “erode” the COC system, so the importance of NAFEC is real. Encouraged employees to be associated members of NAFEC.
- Legislative- Donny Green other Leg Co Chair- he and Chris started the legislative spreadsheet to know who has political connections through the states and nations.

There was a Legislative emergency and Hunter Moorehead called and needed 20 members

- Used to make contacts as needed
- Process is kind of down to a crawl but want to pick it back up
- Just used it recently to contact members in TX and MN at Hunter's request

Q and A with Dennis Ray and Steve Peterson

Q. 10 employees per supervisor was mentioned – will this apply to COF

A. No -logically would not work at the COF level.

Q. Temps – are they the most efficient/best way?

A. Maybe the onboarding process needs to be improved.

Q Why does NRCS keep their logo while FSA cannot?

A. No real answer

Q. BCAP – will it be funded?

A ?????

Q My lease is expiring. How will FPAC effect my layout, etc

A Not known yet. Secretary does want each agency to have their own entrance. He wants one shared entrance

Q When will the workload/staffing tool be available and are we waiting on it for staffing?

A Yes, we are waiting on the tool. But it is really going to help. Again stressed the importance of accurate WebTA Data.

Q Can we go back to non-ceiling COTs? Or a National Office COT ceiling?

A ??????

Q Is there a national CO staffing ceiling target? Will there be right-sizing between states?

A No intention to move people between states. Staffing model should help looking forward. Doesn't mean we'll be moving people.

Q What was the number Peterson asked the Secretary for?

A. "Over 11,000 employees" 10,380 on board Oct 1 2017 We are below that now due to attrition.

Q. What happened to all of the money we have saved on salaries?

A. Will see some of it in temps. Training (Skills for Success, other training)

PAC Presentation

NAFEC Rep

Trying to get back in budget as a line item so that it does not affect temp resources

Chris Hare

- Headed to Washington
  - Neatest part of NASCOE
- Chris and Janae from Idaho will be presenting
  - Bringing back the mentoring program
  - Shared management offices
- NASCOE is working for you
- From October 9 to March 1 – MWA Challenge
  - Michigan won

Saturday, March 24, 2018

- Encourage employees to submit suggestions for MyFPAC, farmers.gov, etc
  - Also program suggestions
- Awards
  - Service to Community – Vicky Schwass (sp?) from Illinois
  - Service to NASCOE – Tony - IL
  - Service to FSA – Kevin Beekman – MN
- National Convention Update
  - 2018 Sioux Falls, SD
    - Send raffle tickets to:
      - 37761 169<sup>th</sup> Street, Redfield South Dakota 57469
  - 2019 Manhattan, KS – CVB Video
  - 2020 – Maybe Oklahoma
  - 2021 – Maybe Indiana
- FSA Hot Topics
  - Co-location - Illinois NRCS STO is in Champaign – FSA STO is in Springfield  
Concern with FPAC and the effect on employees if STO's are combined. No solid answers at this point
  - Leasing – my lease is expiring, but I haven't heard much.
    - Leasing is a mess.
    - NASCOE is still asking for leasing to be moved back to the local level
  - Workload model – what years will be used?
    - Previous three years will be used
    - NASCOE is still working hard on this issue
    - It looks like now the data may stop at the state level with the SEDs
    - Have there been any developments on tweaks to the number of activities we report?
      - No reduction anticipated currently
      - When DC has asked the field, half want more codes, half want fewer
      - Any way to document service for other counties?
        - Not at this point
        - But if you're doing something long-term in another county, they may give you that county's code for WebTA purposes, but not simply for doing Nationwide Customer Service
        - What about shared mgt? If temporary shared mgt – may try to break the workload out between the two counties. But if long term, likely won't break it out.

- Building Security Assessment – Many of the things that came back on the report were fine and can be addressed
        - But one item was that the county is high-crime area and therefore requires a fenced parking lot.
        - Dennis doesn't expect to actually need to do that.
        - Dennis thing it's a little bit extreme and doesn't expect those things to come to fruition
      - Dennis – workload – How do you count for workload not getting done? Progress was made with Rahda Sekar, but she has left he agency.
        - NASCOE working with DC to devise a way to track work not getting done –
          - FLP can show that 50 YEAs were required, but only 20 were done.
          - We don't have a system to show for example that 20 recons were requested but only 10 were completed.
- State Reports
  - Illinois – Debbie Staley
    - Recent State Convention Recap
    - Did a training with Dillard's – partnered with the STO. Went well
    - Guest speaker – Leadership training, team building
    - Thankful that Chris was there
    - Committee reports were done to the entire convention
    - 92% membership, maybe 5 counties with no members
    - Hosting 2019 MWA Rally March 14,15,16
  - Iowa – Jennifer Comer
    - Working to establish relationship with SED
    - They have a promotion that you will be reimbursed for the first year's membership for new members
    - A lot of new faces on their board
    - Pleasure to have everyone in Iowa again
      - But now Iowa is done for awhile!
    - Support states who are hosting events
      - It all comes at a price – please show up for events
  - Indiana – Abby
    - Amending by-laws and Labor-Mgt Agreement
    - Convention April 27
    - Jamie Garriot heading up committee
    - Bidding for 2021 NASCOE Convention
    - Having two membership chairs – one north and one south to better connect
    - Working on associate members
    - Working on more legislative contacts
    - Scholarship apps increased

- Michigan
    - Rough year in Michigan with CRP – but also a learning opportunity
      - We got through it
    - Dairy industry has been hit hard in Michigan
    - University has been offering stress classes for folks who work with farmers to communicate with farmers about stress
    - Convention May 5
      - Positive start with SED
    - Using PTs in Charge a lot due to CED retirements and no COTs
  - Minnesota – Kayla
    - 90% membership
    - PT Training going on
    - MNASCOE member working on FLP workload task force – FLP is short staffed
    - Met with STO for negotiations along with MACS
    - Bi-monthly conference call with SED
    - Have co-chairs for membership chair
  - Missouri – Jared
    - Hosted the NASCOE Convention in 2017 – Thanks to all who worked on it and attended. Hope you all enjoyed it
    - Restructured Board of Directors in late 2017
    - Offering a stipend for a MASCOE member to attend the NASCOE Convention in Sioux Falls
    - Skills for Success training refreshments
    - Working well with new SED
    - MASCOE Convention Aug 27 and 28
  - Ohio
    - Has had good luck with Dillards
  - Wisconsin
- Rally Schedule
    - 2018 IA
    - 2019 IL
    - 2020 MO
    - 2021 WI
    - 2022 MN
    - 2023 MI
    - 2024 IN
    - 2025 IA
    - 2026 OH
  - Committee Reports

- Awards
- Benefits/Legislative
  - Sam's Club discount resurrected \$10 gift card
  - "Relief fund" has been tabled, but a state could choose to do so if they wanted
  - Demographics are changing – let Jon know of any benefits membership wants
  - Tony
    - Legislative contact spreadsheet very important
    - Successful day yesterday
    - 5 increases totaling \$13
    - 5 new
- Scholarships and Emblems – Tina Young
  - 59 scholarship applications from MWA
    - IL
    - IN 7
    - IA 12
    - MI 5
    - MN 3
    - MO 10
    - WI 9
  - Emblems
    - Sales have been great
    - Online sales for each state have been great
    - 4 states have contacted Tina for emblems at State Conventions
- Membership
  - 81% membership in MWA
  - Wouldn't it be great to see 85% next year!
- NAFEC
  - Communicate the importance of NAFEC
  - Make sure COC members know that they are in charge of the COF.
  - Advisors and past COC members are eligible to maintain regular membership in NAFEC
- Negotiations – Debbie Staley
- Publicity
  - Sign up for alerts from the NASCOE Website
  - Review email data base listing for MO to see if they are members
    - The intent of that listing is for members only
- Dennis Ray
  - Bridges
  - The partner relationship is going away
  - Receipt for service is not going away. It's still statute.

- RFS is part of your performance plan now.
- Candidacy Announcements
  - MWA Executive
    - Jackson Jones, MO
  - MWA Alt Exec
    - Mary Roberts, IA