

# **NASCOE 57<sup>th</sup> Annual National Convention**

*August 3-6, 2016, Doubletree Inn Convention Center, Cedar Rapids, IA*

## 2015-2016 NASCOE Officers

President: Wes Daniels  
Vice President: Dennis Ray  
Secretary: Deborah Esselman  
Treasurer: Shelly Odenkirk  
Past President: Mark VanHoose

## Area Executive Committee Persons & Alternates

Northeast: Richard Csutoras  
Southeast: David Curtis & Mike Mayfield  
Midwest: Curt Houk & Chris Hare  
Northwest: Jenae Prescott & Jessi Colgrove  
Southwest: Darvin Collins & Jay Goff

## National Committee Chairpersons

Awards/Scholarships/Emblems Chair: Micki Crider  
Benefits Chair: Larry Olsen  
Legislative Chair: Jackson Jones  
Membership Chair: Samantha Garrison  
NAFEC Chair: Billy-Wayne Dennison  
Programs Chair: Richard Csutoras/Dana McKinney  
Publicity Chair/Webmaster: Kristal Rater  
Parliamentarian/Resolutions Chair: Mark VanHoose

## Negotiation Consultants

Northeast: Jamie McLane  
Southeast: Sabrina Conditt  
Midwest: Sara Bateson  
Northwest: Harold Boggs  
Southwest: Lynette Bond

## FSA Management Team

Administrator Val Dolcini  
Associate Administrator Chris Beyerhelm  
Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Greg Diephouse  
Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs Brad Pfaff  
Deputy Administrator for Management Mark Rucker

## Agenda & Activity Report

*Wednesday, August 3*

Variety of Tours throughout the Day

Informational meeting for state officers and delegates was held in room Taft A. Proper voting procedure was discussed by Parliamentarian, Mark VanHoose. They let us know when we got the vote on the resolution coming before the delegation it would be a roll call vote and each state would be asked to say how many were for or against. Otherwise most votes would be voice votes unless otherwise asked from the floor. This meeting was to make sure they had the proper delegates on file and we knew the proper procedure for conducting the convention. Missouri delegates to the convention were Jessica Claypole and Sheria Yancey.

Evening theme was "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" and attendees dressed in their favorite sports team gear. A ballpark style meal was served, including hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, etc. A cash bar was available and DJ played through the evening. Many attendees stayed to visit and enjoy dancing.

*Thursday, August 4*

Thursday's meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by President Wes Daniels. Maria Rosmann gave the invocation, followed by the Presentation of Colors by members of the Iowa National Guard. Ron Pethoud led the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem was also presented by a NASCOE member. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack delivered a video message thanking all FSA employees and NASCOE for the work they do. At 8:10, the roll call began with Secretary Deb Esselman announcing each state and the number of members and guests present. MASCOE President Sheria Yancey gave Missouri's introduction and announced 24 members and guests in attendance. Once all states had been announced and introduced, Iowa took the floor with more than 150 NASCOE members and 125 COC and STC members representing their state. In total, 584 attendees were present for Thursday morning's session. Following roll call, NASCOE officers, area executives and committee chairs were introduced. The agenda was then approved and a first-timer's contest was announced and adopted. The bid for the 2018 National Convention was presented by South Dakota, to be held in Sioux Falls. Iowa SED John Whitaker and IA Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey took the stage and welcomed all members and guests to Iowa. Jennifer Comer, IASCOE President & Convention Chair, also gave a welcome announcement. John Whitker, Iowa SED, welcomed everyone to the state of Iowa and thanked all of IASCOE for all their hard work. The Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture told us all about agriculture in Iowa. At 9:30, FSA Administrator Val Dolcini took the floor and gave agency highlights from the year, including \$2 million paid for 2014 ARC/PLC contracts which equates to \$0.67 pumped into the economy for every \$1 paid. He stated he had visited 45 states to date and plans to get to all 50. He also discussed the improvements to hiring timeframes, which has come from an average of 120 days to less than 80 to bring on a new employee. Leadership training, career planning and succession planning were just a few of the other topics he addressed in terms of agency accomplishments. President Wes Daniels presented Administrator Dolcini with the NASCOE Support Award. FSA Associate Administrator Chris Beyerhelm took the stage next and focused on improvements made with regards to workforce engagement, including harvest awards in the form of coins and pins being presented to FSA employees across the nation. He emphasized the role of hearts and minds in the agency, and starting each journey with the end in mind and working back. He stressed the importance of being more responsive and more accountable for the work done and customers served each day. He touched on topics including the skill

gap, pathways opportunities, budget and staffing, customer service, IT issues, handbooks and records retention. He announced a new initiative that is being looked at to better serve beginning farmers by providing access to land, capital and technical assistance in the form of landowners, loans and financial institutions. In the next 5 years, 16% of land in the U.S. will change hands. President Wes Daniels presented Associate Administrator Beyerhelm with a Certificate of Appreciation. Glen Schafer then took the floor and gave a brief overview of Bridges to Opportunity Initiative. Schafer had a booth set up in the commons area for attendees to ask questions and even pilot demo software for the program. After a morning break at 10:30, FSA Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Greg Diephouse took the stage and presented 3 Keys to A Strong FSA. His program outlined Workforce Satisfaction and the direct correlation to customer satisfaction, resulting in a mission-driven workforce to get the job done. He spoke about Leadership by and from all, stating that everyone can and should be a leader, not just CEDs, SEDs, etc. Managing up and down and back up is crucial an open communication is key to achieve a culture of integrity and precision. Finally, he expanded on the customer-centric strategy and operations, asking questions like “Who Are Our Customers?” and “What Do They Want?” There is an increasing gap between the traditional FSA customer and the new. Bridges to Opportunity is one way in which FSA can help bridge this gap and end each customer interaction with “How Else Can I Serve You Today?” President Wes Daniels presented DAFO Diephouse with the NASCOE Support Award. Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs Brad Pfaff took the floor next and gave a Farm Program Activity Report for CEPD (Conservation & Environmental Programs Division), PECD (Production, Emergencies & Compliance Division) and PSD (Price Support Division). He discussed the high potential for ARC/PLC payments to be made this fall for 2015, and also announced recent enhancements to software, some of which have already been released with more still to come. He also spoke about the importance of an increasingly diverse customer base and new opportunities associated with these producers. Deputy Administrator for Management Mark Rucker then took the stage and talked about the passion and dedication of FSA staff nationwide. His childhood and background in military helped him realize the importance of FSA and appreciate the work the agency does every day. He touched on quality of service and investing in the workforce by consistently providing outstanding and equitable service and increasing operational efficiencies. President Wes Daniels then introduced Teresa Dillard of Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc. who gave a short presentation on the benefits and services provided. She also announced donations and awards presented to both NASCOE and the Massachusetts Association for having the most new members to the organization. Jennifer Comer of IASCOE then made a few announcements about the remaining agenda for the day and evening activities. Members were adjourned to enjoy lunch on-site or nearby in downtown Cedar Rapids.

At 1:00 p.m., the afternoon session reconvened with the signing of the Labor Management Agreement by members of FSA management. Chief Information Officer Darren Ash then spoke about his new role with the agency and emphasized a field-centric view, meaning “what’s the view of the customer?” He discussed his department’s mission to do things incrementally in order to achieve better delivery of systems. He also stated there are no absolutes when it comes to technology and software. Doug Nash, OCIO-CIO, discussed the progression of upgrading IT at county offices, including phones, computers and printers in the form of managed print services. He also discussed the implementation of guest WiFi access at the county office level. All members of management along with Radha Sekar, Chief Financial Officer, and Thomas Mulhern, Director of Human Resources Division, participated in a Question and Answer Panel, led by Administrator Dolcini. Questions and related items during this discussion are as follows:

- What’s the status of Managed Print Services (MPS)?
- Why can’t we have a program for donated sick leave, similar to annual leave?

- Where are we at with potential for grade/salary increases for program technicians?
- What's the protocol for having COC meetings – still monthly or bimonthly?
- What are next steps for approving 2016 ARC/PLC Contracts?
- Are we getting new Trimble units or updated Garmin units for field work?
- Where are we with implementing the option for permanent employees to “buy back” time from their temporary status to count towards retirement?
- We need software training prior to Windows 10 rollout
- We need a way for MIDAS Business File to retain farm information for a producer when a new farm is added, instead of having to reload all farms already linked to that producer.
- Overturning COC Decisions – why does this happen at national level? Where is the relief?
- Is there a way we can allow retiring employees to work part time in order to train new staff?
- Can we start reviewing CRP Contract Rental Rates every year instead of bi-yearly?
- NRCS Access to CLU layers and data sets – lots of concern about this issue
- BCAP process for accepting offers – need a better way
- When will there be another furniture refresh?
- Staff Ceilings & Current Staffing Levels?
- Credit for work done for other counties – how is this being accounted for?
- AGI & IRS disconnect issues – what's being done about this?
- ARC/PLC Payments – many discrepancies between FSA & Extension about what payments will be – also issue of Irrigated vs. Nonirrigated and yields. What is the relief?
- COC Approving & Reviewing CED Timesheets in WebTA?
- Credentialing Centers for LincPass Cards – is it possible to have someone in every office?
- Likelihood of keeping temps onboard past September?
- Is there a way we can put a producer on a farm for grazing rights so the crop report is accurate for all producers?
- Why are we paying for office space we're not using?
- Employee Viewpoint Survey – is there are way to add a comment box to clarify answers to questions?
- CRP Approval Authority back to COC?
- IRS Verification on AGIs – is this necessary?
- FSFLs and new eligible structures, including movable trucks – what's the point – feel like we're competing with banks in some areas?
- SAFE Acres – what's the status on allotment?
- ACRSI – many agents telling producers they didn't have to come to us – what's the procedure?
- Comp time & a half when no overtime is available?
- MIDAS DOD Workflow – what's the point now?
- Other agencies governing CRP – concern about taking back control
- Why are COFs closed when there's producers to serve – it's not because there's not work, it has to do with staffing and budget
- Can beginning farmers get a bit more relief on less than 10 acre base farms?
- Bridges to Opportunity – what's next?
- Shared Mgt & Compensation for CEDs – what's being done to this effect?
- Relief for reporting date on winter wheat since it varies state to state
- Input from PTs to DDs on CED performance, input from CEDs to SEDs on DDs performance – better accountability at each level.

Following the Question and Answer panel, additional speakers took the stage, including John Gehrke from NACS, Angie Giester from NASE and Michael Kresin from NADD. The afternoon session adjourned at 4:00. Area and state photos were taken in the commons area. A hospitality room was hosted by Missouri and South Dakota from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Social hour began at 6:00 in the exhibit hall, followed by the scholarship auction from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Nathan Allen, Maniac of Magic and Comedian then took the stage until 10:30 p.m. The evening concluded with a DJ, cash bar, dancing and "Down on the Farm" theme night.

### *Friday, August 5*

Friday morning's session convened at 8:00 a.m. with Vice President Dennis Ray presiding in the Exhibit Hall. Candidacy announcements were made for President, Vice-President and Secretary for the 2016-2017 as follows: Wes Daniels, President; Dennis Ray, Vice-President; Deb Esselman, Secretary; Curt Houk, Treasurer. Hunter Moorhead with Crossroads Strategies and our NASCOE Legislative Consultant then took the stage. He said WDC is mostly involved in elections but what is most important to us is the appropriations bills that are going on. The bill has made its way through committees and we are awaiting more action. He said the President's budget has us with an actual increase. Overall he would expect pretty level funding coming out of the President's budget. The House has some members talking about opening the farm bill. They want discussion on food stamps and payment limitations. This could be harmful for us but he did not really think this would get the necessary numbers. Level funding for us in the House also. The Senate is more likely to be ready to take their bill to the floor. When they do, Hunter said they are ready. There have been discussions that government employees would pay more of their share of their government retirement. This is not going to go away. We have been there each time it has come up but be aware that you may be called on to contact your senator or representative when the time comes. He said a continuing resolution is likely through the November elections and sequestration is still a reality. He also mentioned the Political Action Committee (PAC) resets every 2 years. Upon completion of his comments, attendees were dismissed to attend individual break-out sessions for each committee, as follows: Awards, Scholarship & Emblems; Benefits; Legislative; Membership; NAFEC; Programs; Publicity.

The Legislative committee session was largely focused on the PAC and upcoming Legislative/Leadership conference in Washington D.C., September 19-21. Each area gave a report on their respective membership, with the Northeast area boasting a 42% increase in PAC Participation. Communication seems to be the biggest issue in terms of getting new members onboard and involved with NASCOE and the PAC. There is a need for the current membership to pass on the excitement to new members. The Legislative conference hopes to serve as a "succession plan" for the organization. Hunter Moorhead was also in attendance at the legislative committee session and fielded questions from the attendees, most of which were focused on "what's next" for the current leadership and management on the heels of the upcoming election.

The Membership committee session was led by Chairman, Samantha Garrison. She discussed the membership award contest that Dillard sponsored for states with the largest % increase. Also the award for office with 100% membership for 40, 45, 50 & 55 years was announced. Then the Honorary membership award given to members who retire and have been members their entire career. Everyone was given the membership training guide to help the membership chairman's do their jobs for the

states. Then a brainstorming session to increase membership and goals for the coming year was discussed.

At 10:45, break-out meetings for each area were hosted as follows: Midwest – Curt Houk; Northeast – Richard Csutoras; Northwest – Jenae Prescott; Southeast – David Curtis; Southwest – Darvin Collins.

The Midwest Area met with Curt Houk calling the session to order. Delegates for each state were announced. . In the Midwest area meeting, which comprises Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio and Wisconsin, each committee chair gave their respective report, as follows: Awards – Kathy Balbaugh (OH); Emblems/Scholarship – Kitty Benda (IA); Benefits – Jon Williams (WI); Legislative – Kay Lumsden (MI); Membership – Samantha Garrison (IN); Programs – Liz Ludwig (MN); Publicity/Webmaster – Teresa Holmquist (MN); NAFEC – Mary Roberts (IA); and Negotiator – Sara Bateson (IL). The area chairs that had attended each session made a report to the area. If there were any questions that a committee want brought before the delegation, it was discussed during this session. One such discussion was whether or not to have Dillard's print and distribute membership cards for each state. It was decided we would want more information on what kind of information we would have to give Dillard's to get these distributed. The MWA was opposed to giving out members home addresses unless they personally had given that information to Dillard's. During this breakout session, candidates for election came into the meeting and asked the MWA for their support for their candidacy.

Attendees were released for lunch break at noon and hot and cold concessions were available in the commons area.

At 1:00 p.m., a joint meeting of all NASCOE committees was called to order in the Exhibit Hall and each committee chair presented reports from their respective meetings.

At 2:30 p.m., area meetings reconvened in their respective rooms to finish committee reports, executive nominations and voting and awards. Brad Pfaff, DAFP, was in attendance during the morning session, along with NASCOE President Wes Daniels, NASCOE Secretary Deb Esselman, and Iowa SED John Whitaker. During the afternoon session, Jackson Jones, NASCOE Legislative Chair and NASCOE Consultant Hunter Moorhead were in attendance to answer questions regarding Ag Appropriations. NASCOE Vice President Dennis Ray was also in attendance. Upon conclusion of committee reports, executive committee elections took place, with Chris Hare accepting the nomination for Area Exec and Jackson Jones accepting the position as Alternate for 2016-2017. Certificates and awards were then presented to members who had served as committee chairs, scholarship judges, and a special recognition was presented to Curt Houk as outgoing MWA Exec. Ohio announced their plans to host the 2017 Midwest Area Rally and potential dates were discussed for that meeting. The MWA meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

The evening's activities included the hospitality room hosted by Missouri and South Dakota from 4:00 to 5:00, and buses began boarding for the Iowa Night in the Corn at Bloomsbury Farm at 5:30. Once on site, the farm offered a plethora of activities for all ages, including barnyard, haunted houses, corn maze, pedal cars and a zipline. Dinner was served buffet style beginning at 7:00 p.m. and Nashville Recording Artist Jason Brown took the stage to host a live concert with dancing for the remainder of the evening.

*Saturday, August 6*

President Wes Daniels convened the Saturday session. The “in Memoriam” was given honoring employees, COC members, and others who have passed away this year.

At 8:30, Craig Turner, President of NAFEC addressed the convention followed by RASCOE President, Brenda Boomer.

Missouri presented their plans for the 2017 NASCOE Convention in St. Charles. Sheria Yancey, Jessica Claypole, Barb Denker, Randon Leathers, Connie Gibson, Mandi Bird, Debbie Leeper, Jared Singer, Abby Ingles and Julie Ray were in attendance and represented Missouri by announcing the location and dates for the 2017 Convention. Connie Gibson and MWA Exec Chris Hare dressed in period costume to highlight the theme “historically awesome”. Joni with the St. Charles Convention and Visitor’s Bureau was also in attendance and spoke briefly about the Embassy Suites hotel where the convention will be held and all of its amenities, including free parking, cook-to-order breakfast and evening happy hour. She also spoke about the city and all attractions and sites St. Louis and surrounding areas have to offer. She then played a video highlighting St. Charles and all of its offerings, including recreational activities, food and drink, shopping, nightlife and history. President Sheria Yancey spoke about plans for the convention and invited all those in attendance to join Missouri in 2017.

The delegates then voted on the 2018 site for the NASCOE convention and Sioux City, South Dakota was approved.

The proposed amendment to the constitution and bylaws under By-Laws, Article II-Membership, Section 1 added the following as the last sentence under section 1 was presented and voted on and past.

“A permanent appointment county office employee according to this section is defined as a permanent FSA employee whose work performance evaluation rating or review official is the county committee or a district director.”

“Further, County Operations Trainees (COT’s) and Farm Loan Officer Trainees (FLOT’s) also meet the definition of a permanent appointment county office employee for membership eligibility purposes.”

Other resolutions were presented for the different individuals and organizations support to NASCOE. These resolutions were also approved.

Wes Daniels gave his President’s report starting out by thanking everyone. He especially thanked Shelly Obenkirk, Treasurer who is going off the board this year for all her years of service. NASCOE is well in the black after she tightened the belt on the whole organization. Accomplishments he listed were rewriting PT position descriptions in an effort to get PT upgrades. There is a task force working on this with members from joint associations. Another is BTO-this is a way for us to show how many people we serve and a better system for RFS. ACRSI-NASCOE has been involved in this since the start due to management letting us have a seat at the table. Other things that have been worked on this year included KSA’s, IT issues, negotiations, program issues, NAFEC, and the PAC.

Secretary report was given by Deb Esselmann. She announced she had visited the 2017 site for the NASCOE convention and the site was terrific. She enjoys being the Secretary and hopes to continue to work for the organization in any way she can.

Treasurer report was given by Shelly Obenkirk. She received a standing ovation as she came to podium for her service to NASCOE. Shelly talked about the privilege of serving all the members of NASCOE and

the members of the NASCOE board. She gave an account of what we had in our account and in savings. It was her goal to have more in savings than is our budget each year and she said we are almost there so she feels we are in good hands.

The delegation voted to accept these reports. Then all the committee reports were voted to be filed with the secretary.

Then voting was completed for the Treasurer, Curt Houk; Secretary, Deb Esselman; Vice President, Dennis Ray; and President Wes Daniel each being elected by acclamation when no other candidates were announced from the floor.

The 57<sup>th</sup> annual NASCOE convention was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Delegates  
Jessica Claypole  
Sheria Yancey