

WOW! The only word I can use to describe the week I spent in St. Charles, Missouri attending the 58th NASCOE National Convention. MASCOE did a phenomenal job hosting this year. From an Exec and attendee's point of view, it went off flawless. I encourage everyone to attend at least 1 NASCOE National Convention in their career. The motivation that is driven from the energy of the members is contagious.

We had 16 attendees from Washington D.C. This is such an honor to our association. The bonds NASCOE has formed with our leaders in Washington D.C. is truly remarkable. I always enjoy watching our members ask questions during the Q & A. Members can directly voice their compliments and concerns to management.

The work NASCOE Officers, the Executive Committee, your National, Area, and State Committee Chairpersons do for us is tremendous. Your dues are well spent to ensure member's benefits are protected. If you could not attend the 58th NASCOE National Convention, please take the time to read through this Bulletin. We have a lot of information to relay to our members.

This year, I returned home without the NASCOE blues. I returned home more motivated to serve the Midwest Area (MWA). Jackson and I met Monday night and throughout the week discussing items and issues our area is facing. How do we make things better? How do we "tell our story"? Where we have come from, and where we are today?

I am getting asked the question more and more every day, "*what has NASCOE really done for me lately?*" It is usually followed by, "*I haven't got a pay raise in years or my health insurance benefits keep increasing, or there is no upward mobility for me since I cannot move since my spouse farms and I can't sign the form that I would go anywhere in the United States.*"

I would like to respond in writing to these items to show new employees why it is so important to join NASCOE, and to remind seasoned employees why being a member is still very important.

So what *has* NASCOE done? Well in the past few years, NASCOE has:

- **The most recent win for NASCOE was the buy back time. This affected many employees who are still working that were hired on before 1989. This was due to NASCOE.**
- **Are you in an office with an employee who was hired in the past 4 years? NASCOE has saved 815 FTE's. We have 593 offices here in the Midwest Area. Imagine if each office in our area had to RIF 1 person. NASCOE was also scheduled to take a \$61 MILLION dollar hit. This was saved. FSA operated like normal with no staffing reduction. This was due to NASCOE.**
- **How about 5-7 years ago, when NASCOE got us credit for our sick leave towards retirement. THIS WAS HUGE! This helped many offices where employees were struggling with "FERS FLU".**
- **Employee's with 30+ years of service may remember the days of taking Leave Without Pay (LWOP) since County Office employees were not**

recognized like GS employees were. We are not entitled to anything in life, let alone at FSA. Our leave is a benefit. Many people do not know that our leave is negotiated on a yearly basis. That's right, our leave could be taken away. However, NASCOE negotiates it since we are not GS employees we are CO employees. I don't know about you, but every time I take a day off PAID, I am glad I am a member that supports this. Can you imagine if NASCOE Members got leave and non-members had to take LWOP? We would have 100% membership. I guarantee it.

Now, the cost of living increases and health insurance premiums being raised, this is not a NASCOE issue. If you have worked for ASCS/ FSA I would hope everyone knows but these are items dictated by congress that we as NASCOE cannot control. We have to take a deep breath and appreciate what we have..... Just remember, we work in air-conditioned offices, there's another perk many of us take for granted. I would suggest anyone to talk to my newer employee. Her last job wasn't air condition and had to stand for 12-13 hour shifts. So I hope that clears up some confusion there. Since NASCOE can't control the lack of cost of living increases, or our insurance premiums going up, NASCOE is always looking out for our members. NASCOE said if we can't control it let's look at other avenues. Did you know:

- a. There are 40-50 NASCOE members working on multiple task forces. One task forces includes the PT reclassification task force. Yes, that's right, NASCOE realizes our programs are much more complex and to retain good talent, working on upgrading to PT's to Grade 8. This is difficult due to budgetary, but at least NASCOE and WDC management are working on this together. Grade 7's didn't happen overnight. Many of you may remember being a CO-3. Look where we have come, thanks to NASCOE.
- b. KEY PT's – here's that first step to item a, and also upward mobility for PT's who are not mobile. Key PT's are Grade 8's.
- c. Grade 9 Acting In Charge PT's, now have the ability to potentially apply for a CED vacancy, another item NASCOE has gotten for us, depending on how the COC wants to open the CED vacancy.

The list goes on. As we enter into a time of restructuring, I encourage everyone to join NASCOE. The more members we have, the stronger our voice is. At the MWA Rally this year, Debbie Staley, PT from Illinois shared with us her "Home on the River Bank Analogy". I want to leave you with this:

Home on the Riverbank Analogy
by Debbie Staley, IL IASCOE President

Picture this: You purchased a quaint little home on the riverbank. You loved your home and most of the time the river would rise and fall without notice. However, one day your home is threatened by a flood and a team rushes to the aid to save, not only your home,

but everyone that lives on that riverbank. There were many helping, i.e. Neighbors, community members, even strangers not from your area came to aid for all those who would be affected, and all the time, YOU choose to sit on the porch...admiring their hard work.

You, of course, are benefitting from their hard work even though YOU did not contribute to it.

Let's be honest, don't you want to be a part of the work and not a porch potato? Your home is like your career, the river rising and falling is much like our benefit issues that come up in Washington, some are noticed and, again, many are not. NASCOE is much like the workers; there are many involved, some you know and many you do not know. Regardless, there is a team of workers putting in long hours, phone calls, many miles in travel and other ways to calm the waters or sandbag the issue and potentially work for something new in all of our interest. The point here is we are ALL recipients of the hard work, big and small! Being a part of the work is good for you and good for NASCOE. Membership is the Strength of our Association!!

Benefits were never a given for our predecessors and as a member, you have the assurance that the state and national leadership and its members are constantly monitoring discussions that could affect the benefits that we currently value.

It has been a pleasure serving with your Midwest Area Alternate Executive, Jackson Jones this year. He brings a lot of knowledge, energy, and passion to our area. He is truly an asset to our area.

To our Midwest Area Committee Chairpersons:

Awards:	Kathy Balbuagh, Ohio
Scholarships:	Charlene Stone, Ohio
Emblems:	Tina Young, Missouri
Benefits:	Jon Williams, Wisconsin
Legislative:	Kay Lumsden, Michigan
Membership:	LeAnn Oltmanns, Illinois
Programs:	Jamie Garriott, Indiana
Publicity/ Webmaster:	Teresa Holmquist, Minnesota
Negotiations Consultant:	Sara Bateson, Illinois

A big THANK YOU to all that you do for our area and Service to NASCOE. Your hard work is not unnoticed. I have asked all of the current area chairpersons to serve in the same capacity for one more year with the exception of Sara Bateson. Sara was accepted into the County Operations Trainee (COT) program.

I had mentioned at one time, Jackson and I were going to hold interviews for the next Negotiation Consultant. After careful consideration, I have decided against this. This process could have become very timely. I have a list of names of people who want to get more involved and we have plenty of items to work on. Your call of duty is coming.

I would like to announce Debbie Staley, Program Technician from Illinois has accepted the position of Midwest Area Negotiations Consultant. Jackson and I look forward to working with Debbie and representing the Midwest Area.

I hope reading this has inspired you to remain a NASCOE member, become a NASCOE member, and appreciate the amazing benefits we currently have, and the ones to come in the future.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Hare,
NASCOE MWA Executive
Chrishare05@gmail.com
[765-505-3355](tel:765-505-3355)