

July 31<sup>st</sup>-August 5<sup>th</sup>

## 59<sup>th</sup> Annual NASCOE National Convention

Delegates for WI: Brooke Sperberg and Debra Esselman

As a new employee with FSA for about a little over a year and a half, and a member of NASCOE for about a year I was blessed with the opportunity to go and represent WI as one of two delegates. Outlined below is my report on the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual NASCOE Convention which was hosted in Sioux Falls South Dakota.

### **Wednesday, August 1st**

On Wednesday August 1<sup>st</sup> the delegates met to review the policies for voting, introductions of the State Committee and NASCOE Leadership, and to go over the itinerary for the remainder of the week. The meeting started at 5:00pm and was concluded by 5:40pm.

### **Thursday, August 2nd**

Convention was called to order on Thursday August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00am. After the Presentation of Colors, invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, and National Anthem, the roll call was taken and seating of delegates. 9 members including both NASCOE and RASCOE were present for the state of WI and 497 total members in attendance. Agenda was review by awards chair Julie Goetzman and accepted.

Special Guest Mr. Lynn Tjeerdsma who is the senior policy advisor for Senator John Thune, SD spoke and eluded confidence that the farm bill will get done in a timely manner. Other speakers for the morning session included Paul Shubeck-SED SD, Steven Peterson - Acting Associate Administrator, Richard Fordyce - FSA Administrator all discussing their background and how they got to be apart of FSA and expressing how proud they are to be apart of this agency and the good works we are providing to our customers.

Bill Northey the Under Secretary of Agricultural also spoke about his background as well as touched on the trade and tariffs issues. We still do not know any details about the Market Facilitation Program that FSA will be administering however it is expected that beef will not be getting a payment due to lack of exports on beef initially before the tariffs were set. Sign-up will be immediately after Labor Day, and the goal is to keep it as simple as possible while still using actual current year production. As far as the farm bill Mr. Northey expressed that the House and Senate have confidence in the FSA and under stand the important assistance we provide our customers and he does not foresee and major changes to our programs besides a couple of "tweaks" and the addition of the Market Facilitation Program(MFP).

After a short break the acting deputy administrator of field operations workload tool model- Linda Treese spoke and addressed how the tool works and how staffing ceiling as well as workload is determined for each office. This was the main topic of discussion at the Question and Answer Session during the afternoon with many questions focusing on how the data is used and interpreted to

determine staffing need and pointing out some inaccuracy. One point made was that the SED are relying to heavily on just the data from the workload tool and not being trained how to interpret the information. A complete list of questions and answer from the panel will be posted later, on the NASCOE website. The Labor Management Agreement was reviewed and signed and meeting adjourned at 4:30pm for the day.

### **Friday, August 3rd**

On Friday August 3<sup>rd</sup> the meeting kicked off with a bid for the 2020 National Conventional from Georgia to be held in Savannah July 31<sup>st</sup>-Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020. NASCOE's legislative consultant Hunter Moorhead gave us an idea of what the political climate in Washington is like right now and talked about President Trumps achievements and goals for the rest his time in office. Priorities for 2018 being to protect our current benefits, secure salaries, develop a new workload tool model, hire more staff, and reauthorize farm bill. This led into the NASCOE Committee breakout meeting in which I attended the Legislative meeting.

During the Legislative meeting benefit protection and staffing was discussed. The Midwest staffing numbers have suffered the worst, in Hunter's opinion this is because staffing is highly reliant on amount of workload so if a disaster strikes those states or counties look like they require more people. Something to think about is when was the last time the Midwest required a jump to for assistance in comparison to the other regions and their staffing levels. Other topics included County employees potentially being switched to GS employees and the combination of annual and sick leave into one paid time off, both of those topics however have seen little if any motion in Washington and it is unlikely anything will happen before 2019 budget comes out.

After the Legislative meeting area meetings were held. For the Midwest Area meeting committee reports were given the main highlight being that for membership Minnesota has 100% enrollment of FSA employee into NASCOE. For the Executive Committee Elections Jackson Jones was voted in as the Executive and Mary Roberts and the Alternate Executive. In new business the Midwest Area had created a promotional membership video to use when trying to recruit FSA employees to join NASCOE, all agreed to distribute it as soon as possible after a few minor adjustments.

### **Saturday, August 4th**

The last day of the convention was started by watching a presentation designed by Andrea Stafford in memory of all the FSA/NASCOE members lost in the past year. Selection of the 2020 Convention site was voted on and confirmed to be Savannah, Georgia. Voting took place for NASCOE officers reaffirming the President- Dennis Ray. Meeting was adjourned at 11:00am August 4<sup>th</sup>.