



# WASCOE Newsletter

April 2023

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF FSA COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES

## 2022-2023

### Officers

**President:**

Shelby Niskanen, Clark County

**Vice President:**

Chris Pannier, Washington/Ozaukee County

**Treasurer:**

Jon Beam, Outagamie County

**Secretary:**

Shelly Daug, Juneau County



## 2022-2023

### Area Directors

**Area District 1:**

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Susan Schwebach, Dunn

Kristine Wieczorek, Trempealeau

**Area District 2:**

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Sheila Buchholtz, Richland

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<https://nascoe.org/>

<http://wisconsin.midwestnascoe.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/WIWASCOE/>

## **A MESSAGE FROM THE WASCOE PRESIDENT - *Shelby Niskanen***

Greetings FSA friends,

All County Office employees are welcome to attend the Wisconsin Association of County Office Employees (WASCOE) annual convention on April 21, 2023. The theme of the convention is “WASCOE through the Decades”. The board’s convention focus is to renew your awareness of the benefits you receive by being a member of this association.

When you become a member of WASCOE you are automatically a member of NASCOE. One of the more important roles is to negotiate with management on behalf of membership. Kayla Mattson, Midwest Area Executive, will share with us the 2022 and 2023 negotiation processes.

It is important to point out that county office employees are not federal employees (GS) and therefore are not entitled to employee benefits. NASCOE has had to negotiate and secure benefits such as annual & sick leave, retirement, health insurance, pay equal to GS employees, and more recently the Paid Parental Leave benefits. Other recent NASCOE successes included increased promotional opportunities for program technicians through Key PT, Lead PT, PT Leadership Training, and software enhancements.

Our convention will include interactive discussions with STO staff, NASCOE officers, and presentations from a local farm to table grower, healthy life pace from Rushia of Blue Cross Blue Shield and growing your TSP with Dillard’s. There is something for everyone and the opportunity to network and share ideas with other county office employees.

The WASCOE board thanks you ahead of time for your generous donations to the Silent and evening Scholarship Auctions. WASCOE membership supports educational opportunities by funding traditional and continuing education scholarships to members, their children, and grandchildren.

I look forward to seeing you at the Convention.

Shelby Niskanen  
WASCOE President

## Save the dates:

- April 21, 2023 – WASCOE Annual Convention at the Metropolis Resort in Eau Claire!
  - ❖ Theme: ***Class Reunion: WASCOE Thru the Decades***  
**(see the next page for the registration form)**
- April 27-29, 2023 – MWA Rally hosted by Michigan!
  - ❖ Holiday Inn Grand Rapids, MI (next to the Airport)  
(see the last few pages of the newsletter for details)
- May 2023 – WASCOE Directors and Officer Elections
- July 1, 2023 – Start of 2023-24 WASCOE Fiscal Year
- July 31, 2023 – Deadline for Early Bird Dues Submission – Save \$5!
- August 2-5, 2023 – NASCOE National Convention – College Station, Texas

# 2023 WASCOE CONVENTION

**Friday, April 21, 2023**

Metropolis Resort, 5150 Fairview Dr., Eau Claire, WI 54701

Room Rate is \$90 + \$15.99 resort fee & tax. Reserve by calling (844) 855-2724

Block Code: *WASCOE 2023 Annual Convention*

Rate is available for April 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> and is valid through April 6<sup>th</sup> (was extended).

**After April 6<sup>th</sup>, the rate increases to \$140 + \$15.99 resort fee – Don't delay!**

Lunch buffet will be a taco bar: seasoned ground beef, soft shell tortillas, shredded cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, salsa, sour cream, & black beans.

Dinner buffet will be a house salad, slow roasted beef in gravy, glazed chicken (Balsamic herb, garlic & butter, BBQ), baby red garlic mashed potatoes, & Sonoma blend of broccoli, snap peas, & yellow carrots.

Attending will be Gene Schriefer, Wisconsin State Executive Director, as well as State Office personnel representatives from Dillard's Financial Solutions, Inc., and more!

Are you a first time attendee to the WASCOE convention? If you are, indicate below and you will be entered into a drawing to receive your convention and banquet on behalf of WASCOE. A \$30 value!

A winner will be selected for every 25 people registered!

**Our theme this year is "WASCOE through the Decades!" Please stay tuned for more details!**

Name: _____	<b>Convention Registration Only:</b> \$ _____
Address: _____	\$14 x _____ (# of people)
City: _____	Lunch on Friday
State: _____ ZIP: _____	<b>Banquet Dinner Only:</b> \$ _____
Phone: _____	\$23 x _____ (# of people)
Email: _____	Dinner on Friday
Guest(s): _____	<b>Both Convention &amp; Banquet:</b> \$ _____
First Time Attendee (Yes or No): _____	\$30 x _____ (# of people)
	Lunch & Dinner on Friday
	<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED:</b> \$ _____
	Send this registration form and your check made payable to "WASCOE" to:
	Jon Beam, Treasurer
	3369 W Brewster St
	Appleton, WI 54914
	<b>Mail no later than Monday, April 10, 2023</b>
	<b>Note:</b>
	Due to inconsistent mail delivery concerns, email Jon Beam to ensure your registration is received.
	Please email Jon and Shelby if you have any food allergies so we can make accommodations.

### Schedule of Events

8:00 am – Registration opens

9:00 am – Convention begins

12:00 pm – Lunch

1:00 pm – Convention resumes

6:00 pm – Dinner Banquet & Scholarship Auction

8:00 pm – Hospitality room is available

### Questions?

Contact Jon Beam & Shelby Niskanen

Jon: [bearsfan2003@gmail.com](mailto:bearsfan2003@gmail.com)

Shelby: [s3morse@yahoo.com](mailto:s3morse@yahoo.com)

Dear Membership,

### **Treasury**

There are not a whole lot of updates for the treasury since November. We have collected \$6016.28 in dues so far this year. Our quarterly dues to NASCOE have been \$5,000.00 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. Just a reminder that \$55 of every member's dues goes to NASCOE. Our rates are one of the lowest around.

Our greatest expense so far this year was sending our delegates to the National Convention in Savannah, Georgia at a cost of \$2,630.56. We spent \$295.61 to provide lunch at several new employee orientation meetings while providing an overview of what WASCOE offers and the benefits of becoming a member.

WASCOE receives a stipend from NASCOE for delegates to the National Convention. The stipend is calculated by taking the cost of airfare from the state's capital city to the destination, multiplied by the state's amount of membership, multiplied by the number of delegates. Currently our membership is at 52%. The greater our membership, the more NASCOE helps to defray the cost with their stipend.

Coming up is our annual WASCOE convention on April 21, 2023 at the Metropolis Resort in Eau Claire. The cost of the convention is \$14 for lunch, \$23 for dinner, and if you register for both lunch and dinner, the total is \$30. Dillard Financial Services, Inc. will make a donation to WASCOE based on the number of attendees. The more attendees, the larger the donation! So, make your plans to attend!

Don't forget about our cash raffle! There are 250 tickets being sold at \$20 each. There are \$2,000 in prizes to be awarded. The prizes are: 1<sup>st</sup> - \$1,000, 2<sup>nd</sup> - \$500, 3<sup>rd</sup> - \$250, 4<sup>th</sup> - \$100, 5<sup>th</sup> - \$50, 6<sup>th</sup> - \$50, and 7<sup>th</sup> - \$50. The net income taken in helps with our general fund which is used for delegate and convention expenses, as well as general operating expenses.

### **Website**

Our website contained outdated information and some areas were incomplete. It took a weekend, but I cleaned it up by updating each page with current committee chairs, emails, applicable committee page links, and more. I put designed it with a more consistent look and format for each page so it would be familiar when browsing each page and where information may be located.

A new page titled, "*WI FSA News*" is where you will find information regarding Wisconsin-specific information such as shared management updates, WASCOE Officer and STC/SED meetings, etc. The *Benefits* page was updated with all the benefits available as noted on the NASCOE benefits page. The *Conventions and Events* page has current information on our convention as well as everything relating to the Midwest Area Rally which will be in Grand Rapids, Michigan from April 27-29, 2023.

Current news and information will be posted on the main page and direct you where to go to read more. Check back as more information is added. Our website is: <http://wisconsin.midwestnascoe.org/>. We are also on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WIWASCOE/>.

As always, contact me at [bearsfan2003@gmail.com](mailto:bearsfan2003@gmail.com) with any questions, ideas, or comments you have. ☺



Jon Beam  
WASCOE Treasurer



# SCHOLARSHIPS



WASCOE offers a traditional scholarship for our state. In 2023, WASCOE set the awards in the amount of \$1,000, \$750 & \$500. NASCOE has an online application for scholarships and offers many types but, remember WASCOE only offers the traditional scholarship.

To be eligible for the Traditional Scholarship:

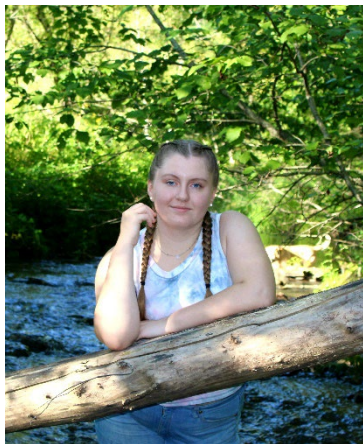
- Applicants must be a NASCOE member's child, or a member's legal dependent;
- Applicants may be either a graduating high school senior or first-year college freshman enrolled as a full-time student with a minimum of 12 hours at an accredited college, university or trade school.
- Member's dues must be paid, and membership kept current for the past 5 years, or if less than 5 years, continuous membership has been maintained since becoming a NASCOE member within the first 12 months of becoming a permanent employee. Please check with a membership chair if you are unsure of your scholarship eligibility.

This scholarship can only be won once at the Area and National level.

December is the time to apply for the scholarships with a deadline of January 15<sup>th</sup>. About a week after the deadline ends, the chair receives the listing of applications received nationally. From there, membership is verified and from those found to have met the membership requirements, they are then evaluated by 3-5 judges within the state. The membership verification is sent to the Midwest Area Chair and those found eligible based on membership are then also evaluated also at the Area level. The Area winners are then forwarded to the National level for judging.

In 2023, we only had one applicant so, we would like to recognize and congratulate the 2023 winner:

1<sup>st</sup> place – Brooke Schwebach, daughter of Susan Schwebach, Dunn Co PT



Good Luck to our winner on her next phase of education!

Thank you to all that has helped me out with the scholarship process. It is very much appreciated! I have said it before & I will say it again, WASCOE has a great group of members that are always willing to help out and we should all be proud to be a part of this organization!

Lisa Backus  
Scholarship Committee Chair

# AWARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

## NICE JOB AWARDS

The Nice Job Awards is an award the WASCOE Board of Directors started a few years ago to help encourage and uplift the spirit of good will and employee morale. If you know of an individual or a group of people, doing something a little more out of the ordinary or what you consider special, please feel free to write up just a short narration on their activities. This is not limited to work or office activities, but also includes activities out of the office and in the community. These nominations are put into a special drawing to be held at our annual convention for a cash prize.

Please submit your Nice Job Nominations to Teresa Zimmer, WASCOE Awards Chair by April 18, 2023 at [trzimm@tds.net](mailto:trzimm@tds.net). The submitted nominations will be posted on the WASCOE website and one will be drawn out for a cash prize at our convention.

Teresa Zimmer  
WASCOE Awards Chair



## **Why Join WASCOE/NASCOE?**

WASCOE is an association consisting of dedicated employees just like you; employees who have the goal of making sure that FSA is a premier place to work!

NASCOE is the only association recognized by management to formally negotiate on your behalf. For example, recent negotiation items included increasing pay grades for employees and making sure the performance rating process is uniformly applied to all. The process to submit issues for consideration in the negotiation process is very simple and is a great conduit for improving the workplace.

A robust legislative program that employs one of the top consultants in Washington, DC to make sure FSA is recognized as the “can do” agency when it is time to administer farm programs, thus insuring a high level of accuracy at an economical cost to taxpayers. More programs ensure a long career as you embark on your FSA journey. NASCOE’s legislative agenda includes making sure that FSA employee benefits are maintained and improved so we are always vigilant in watching benefits legislation.

NASCOE offers other benefits ranging from retirement planning/products to scholarships for children of our members. Also, in the rare instance when an employee faces an adverse action by the agency (and I do mean rare, but it is nice to know) NASCOE also provides one free hour with the NASCOE attorney to assist you in making the best decisions in those circumstances. For more detailed information, please visit our benefits page.

### **How to become a member:**

[Membership Application](#) / [FSA-444](#) / [Withholding Amount Memo](#)

### **Payroll Deduction**

The easiest way to become a member and ensure you remain a member is to enroll in payroll deduction. For a small bi-weekly deduction, you can enjoy all the benefits and have peace of mind that you are always current with your membership. By enrolling in payroll deduction, you also ensure you get the \$5 discount! To enroll in payroll deduction, complete the membership application, the FSA-444, withholding amount memo, and return them to our treasurer, Jon Beam, at the Outagamie County Office.

### **Check and Mail**

If you wish to pay by check, complete the membership application and mail it with a check made out in the amount indicated by your current grade to our treasurer, Jon Beam, at the Outagamie County Office. If mailed prior to July 31st, you can take a \$5 deduction from the amount indicated! Associate memberships are always at the rate of \$45 annually.

You can find all the information you need to become a member of WASCOE/NASCOE here:

<http://wisconsin.midwestnascoe.org/wisconsin/membership/>

Marilyn Lentz

Membership Chair





## **WASCOE Program Committee**

Your ideas and opinions matter. It takes three simple steps to get your thoughts put into action.

1. Identify the problem. Write down a few sentences explaining what you think could be better or ways to improve the agency.
2. List some solutions. Help us to come up with ways to resolve or improve the problem you found.
3. Submit items 1 and 2 via the NASCOE website at <https://nascoeinfo.wpcosting.com/programs/>

Angry at software that could  
operate better?

Have new ideas to make FSA  
better?

Do you want your voice heard?



## **Benefits & Emblems Committee**

Chair: Stephanie McCarthy-Wondercheck  
Fond du Lac County  
Email: [stmccart350@yahoo.com](mailto:stmccart350@yahoo.com)

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Where can you find your FSA and USDA gear? <https://nascoeinfo.wpcostaging.com/store/>



### **NASCOE Emblems Store**

***15% of all proceeds from Emblems sales go to the NASCOE Scholarship fund.***

We now offer the USDA Logo with the words Farm Service Agency under the logo. You can still order just the USDA, NASCOE and RASCOE logos, but where available, new logo option: USDA Farm Service Agency. The picture above, right, illustrates how it will look. **Gift card purchase also available.**

If you have any questions, please contact us.

[emblemsbysuperior@gmail.com](mailto:emblemsbysuperior@gmail.com)

Store: 800.342.9273

Cell: 270.704.0370

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### **BENEFITS:**

WASCOE members are reminded of all the great benefits that comes along with your membership! Check out the [NASCOE Benefits](#) page to visit the following providers that offers us extra benefits for being WASCOE members. These partners include:

- ❖ Dillard Financial Solutions
- ❖ Age of Learning- ABC Mouse & Adventure Academy
- ❖ AirMedCare Group Discount
- ❖ Allstate Identity Protection Pro
- ❖ NASCOE Employee Relations Services
- ❖ FEDS Professional Liability Insurance
- ❖ Live Streaming Fitness
- ❖ Working Advantage

Notably, Working Advantage is a great spot to find discounts for amusement park, theatre, and event tickets. It is also a great to find travel and online shopping discounts too!!!

Take a closer look at these benefits your membership provides to YOU. Go check out them out at <https://nascoe.org/benefits/>.

## **Publicity & Webmaster Committee**

Shelly Daug, Jon Beam, Kristin Look

Follow WASCOE on Facebook or check our website to get the latest updates and information.

If you are a WASCOE member, make sure you are receiving email updates. If you are not getting WASCOE emails and are a registered member contact Jon Beam at [bearsfan2003@gmail.com](mailto:bearsfan2003@gmail.com).



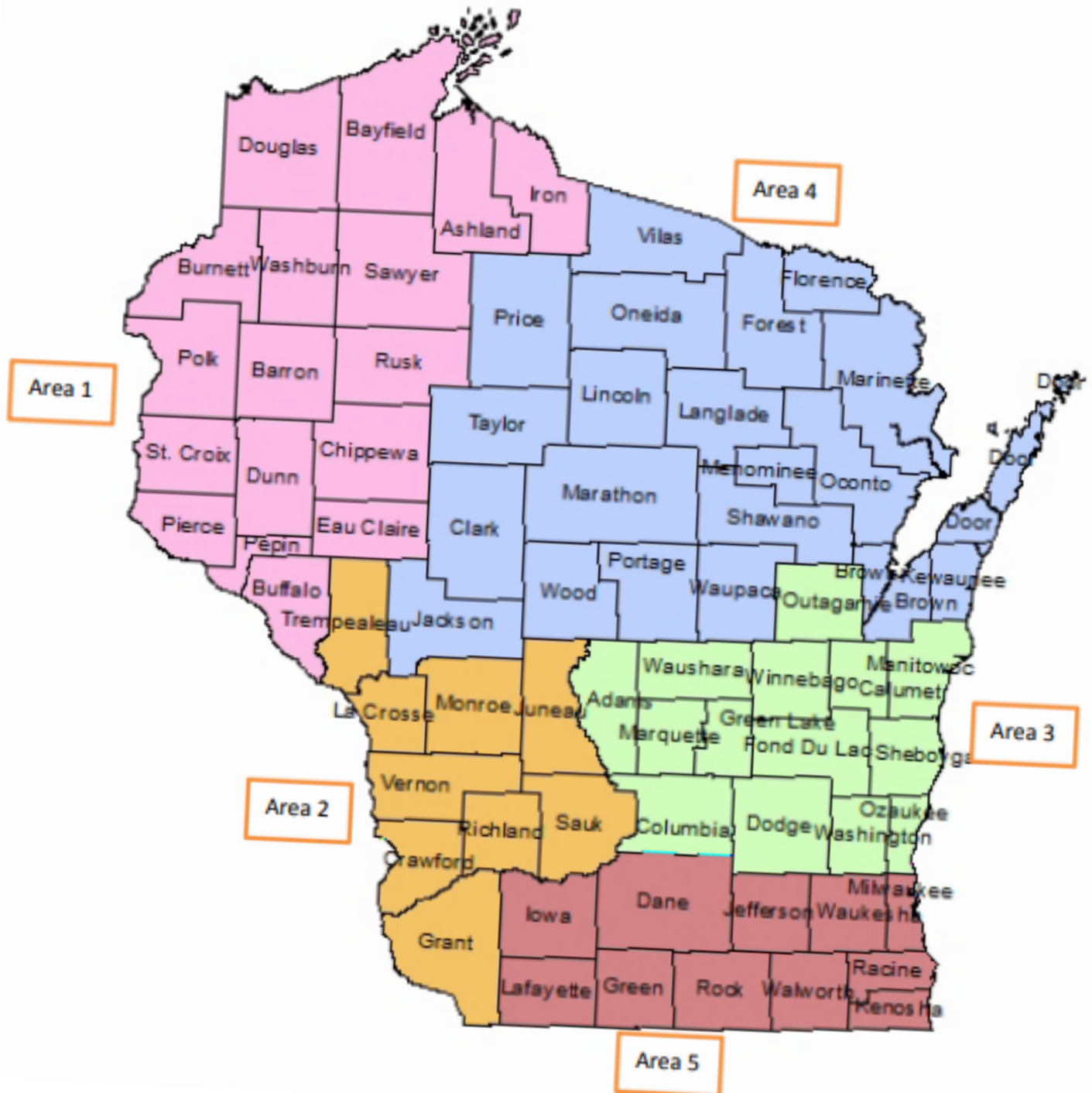
The WASCOE website is at: <http://wisconsin.midwestnascoe.org/>



The WASCOE Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/WIWASCOE/>

The NASCOE website is at: <https://nascoeinfo.wpcomstaging.com/>

WASCOE is divided into 5 areas. Each area has directors representing the WASCOE members from their respective part of the state.





## 2023 NASCOE Midwest Area Rally

April 27-29, 2023 @ Holiday Inn Grand Rapids Airport  
3063 Lake Eastbrook, Grand Rapids, MI 49512 United States

### Thursday April 27, 2023 Optional Area Tours -- Free of Charge!

1:00 pm Tour of Revolution Farms in Caledonia <https://www.revolutionfarms.com/>

4:00 pm Tour of Continental Dairy Facilities LLC <https://www.continentaldflc.com/>

*\* please wear closed toed shoes and long pants \**

### Friday April 28, 2023 MWA Rally -- Cost \$65/advance or \$75/door

7:30am - 8:00am Registration

8:00am - 5:00pm General Session

12:00pm - 1:00pm Lunch (\$25 per person if lunch only)

7:00pm - 10:00pm Game Night @ Holiday Inn

### Saturday April 29, 2023 MI MASCOE State Convention -- \$10/advance or \$15/door

(cost is included in above fee if participant attends MWA Rally as well)

Registration can be completed by April 10th at the following link:

<https://forms.gle/bwB5n3Z3BrBf7EVx5>

Hotel Reservations for 4/27/23 - 4/29/23 can be booked for a discounted group rate here:

<https://bit.ly/NASCOEMWARally>

For the 2023 MWA Rally Scholarship Silent Auction - We are asking each state to bring an item or basket to be “auctioned” during the MWA Rally on Friday, April 28 th . We are also requesting each state bring a \$25 gift card for “Gift Card Basket” which can be won by all bids, including the previous winning bids. Please select gift cards that can be used no matter where the winner resides. These cards could be obtained through donations, cashback bonus rewards, etc.

Send us a picture of your item or basket by April 10 and we will post it!

**Bids can be purchased either in advance or at the Rally for \$20/bid.**

Please note all payments for registration and bids must be submitted as a check to the following address:

Olivia Tenney  
7203 Jackson Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

# 2023 MWA Rally in Grand Rapids, MI

Other Grand Rapids Options to Check Out on Your Own - April 27 - 29



**FREDERIK MEIJER**  
Gardens & Sculpture Park

[Meijer Gardens | Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park | Grand...](#)

Currently featuring.....

## Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming

March 1, 2023 - April 30, 2023 Included with admission, see [Hours & Rates](#)

The annual Fred & Dorothy Fichter Butterflies Are Blooming exhibition at Meijer Gardens is the largest temporary tropical butterfly exhibition in the nation. Tropical butterflies from around the world fly freely in the Lena Meijer Tropical Conservatory every March and April.

Throughout the exhibition, there is special educational programming and the Lena Meijer Children's Garden offers butterfly-themed activities.

7,000

TROPICAL BUTTERFLIES



60

DIFFERENT SPECIES



85°

TEMPERATURE



70%

HUMIDITY



[Gerald R Ford Presidential Library & Museum](#)  
([fordlibrarymuseum.gov](#))



**Gerald R. Ford**  
Presidential Library & Museum



[Great Lakes Pub Cruiser](#)

GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM | *Be curious.*

♥ Donate

🎫 Tickets

Today's Hours  
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Visit

What To See

Explore Online

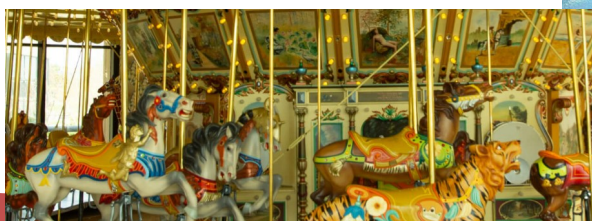
Learn With Us

Join & Give

Shop

The Chaffee Planetarium will be closed on Monday, 3/13

[Visit - Grand Rapids Public Museum \(grpm.org\)](#)



# 2023 MWA Rally in Grand Rapids, MI

## The Tours - April 27

1:00 pm



Just off a quiet country road in Caledonia, Michigan, we've created the ideal indoor environment where fresh lettuce can thrive during every month of our Midwest climate. Inside the facility is a three acre, state-of-the-art greenhouse and an on-site packaging line.

By blending technology and biology, supply chain and advanced agriculture, our farm harnesses natural light, automatically adjusts temperature, wind, shade, humidity and carbon dioxide. Our fresh greens are cut at the peak of growth, immediately packaged on-site and delivered to your local grocery store in 1-2 days.

4:00 pm



**Continental Dairy Facilities** is a dairy processing plant located in Michigan in partnership with Select Milk Producers, the 5th largest dairy co-op in the United States, made up of more than 92 dairy farmers from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Texas and New Mexico. Our plant produces over 300,000 pounds of dry, non-fat milk per day for use as the base ingredient for a wide variety of consumer products including ice cream, cheese, yogurt, whipped cream, pasta sauce and more.