

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

Greetings WASCOE Members! Mallory Harrelle and I (Heather Kirkpatrick) represented WASCOE and its members as delegates at the 65th Annual NASCOE National Convention. It was a jammed packed several days filled with excellent information. The following is an attempt at a comprehensive record of what happened, including breakout sessions, a scholarship auction, addresses from partner organizations, workshops, and NASCOE business.

Please review the following bullet points we felt were the most important pieces to take away from convention:

- It is unlikely to get a NEW Farm Bill prior to February 2025 (after elections).
- There are several differences in the proposed farm bills from the House vs. Senate.
- Serious concerns about verbiage in the current farm bill draft that would change the administration of CRP from FSA to NRCS.
- 2025 National Convention will be held in Whitefish, Montana, June 22-26.
- 2026 National Convention will be held in Michigan, dates and location to be announced.
- Proposal to switch CISCO phones switching to Teams calls. Pilot offices used to verify if it works ok and investigate other options if needed.
- Future use of the kiosk will likely involve a customer check-in process starting late Fall/Winter.
- Wisconsin got a shout-out for our success with the Cash-a-palooza membership drive!!

Now, here's the meat and potatoes of it all:

### **Thursday, August 8, 2024**

IASCOE (Illinois Association of County Office Employees), most notably Carolyn Slightom, the Convention Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting, followed by the Illinois SED, Scott Halpin. Mr. Halpin discussed the importance and impact of the PT Reclassification, the increasing utilization of expanded hiring authority for filling CED positions, the hurdles we all face with the simple things such as ensuring we have functioning printers. Mr. Halpin especially focused on the importance of FSA employees participating in the FEVS (federal surveys). He underscored how the current National leadership is taking the responses to these surveys and the need to build a more employee centric organization.

### **Steve Peterson, FSA Associate Administrator**

Steve Peterson, FSA Associate Administrator, then addressed the crowd. He spent time discussing the budget. In 2024, FSA's budget was \$1.515 Billion. The present 2025 proposal ranges from \$1.51 billion to \$1.550 billion, depending on whether you are looking at the proposal from the House (lowest), Senate (middle - slight increase over 2024), or the President (highest). He expressed that in order for the agency to maintain the same hiring ceiling, the budget must be increased. Of the budget proposals, \$305-\$311 million is slated for programs, and \$1.204-\$1.240 billion is for operations. In 2024, the costs of leases for offices are up \$3.8 million and there was a 5.2% pay increase (\$48.7 million). \$15 million was slated for hiring and training FLOTs, CEDT's, and COF staff. \$11.6 million went to employees in the form of awards. The Student Loan Repayment Program (SLRP) provided \$8.8 million to employees. For the months it is in effect during FY2024, the PT Reclassification will cost the agency \$6.3 million (August- September 2024). There was some additional budget provided to the agency for

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

administrative costs of implementing ERP2, FLA, IRA, and Farm Worker grants (about \$82 million).

Mr. Peterson reminded us that the current Farm Bill extension is set to expire September 30, 2024. He believes that we are unlikely to get a new Farm Bill prior to February 2025 (after elections). He stated that most of the debate with the Farm Bill is on the nutrition side of the farm bill. The House wishes to cut nutrition benefits, while the Senate does not.

Looking at the Farm Bill proposals so far, he noted the following:

### House Version

- Raise reference prices for all eligible crop sunder ARC/PLC between 10-20%.
- Increase ARC Coverage from 86% to 90% of benchmark revenue and raises the payment band from 10% to 12.5%.
- Annual election maintained.
- Expanded Base Acres based on 2019 - 2023 plantings exceeding current base.
- Higher pay limits.
- Increased loan rates.
- Sugar Policy Improvements.
- Improve U.S. Dairy Policy.
- Enhances Standing Disaster Programs.
- Makes the new funding baseline permanent, no longer subject to September 30, 2031, expiration.
- Maintains current 27-million-acre CRP acreage cap and requires state allocation be based on historical allocations.
- Increases payment limitation from \$50K to \$125K per year.

### Senate Version

- Reference price increase of 5% for certain crops.
- Allows underserved producers the opportunity to establish new or additional base acres.
- Prohibition on commodity payments.
- ARC Coverage increase.
- Increases Marketing Loan Rates.
- LDAP Improvements.
- NAP modifications.
- Maintains IRA dollars in permanent budget baseline.

## 2024 NASCOE National Convention

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

- Permanently authorizes Conservation programs (no longer needs reauthorization each Farm Bill).
- Gradually increases CRP acreage cap from current 27 million acres to 29 million acres.

Mr. Peterson stated that in FY2024 FSA issued more than 1.8 million payments, totaling more than \$10.7 billion in assistance for farmers and ranchers. MAL, ERP 2022, and CRP were the top three programs.

Mr. Peterson continued saying that FEVS is extremely important to this Leadership helping them become more employee centric. Leadership is working to develop several new SharePoint sites for AO, DAFO, DAFP, DAFLP, Outreach, and others, and welcomes feedback. FSA is working to improve their public facing image on the web and ensuring their sites are mobile friendly.

There is an FSA Facebook page monitored by National Office Employees dedicated to committee developing content. There is a forthcoming policy update, expected to be released in the 4th quarter of this year, regarding GovDelivery and email to text, and the roles and responsibilities in this area.

Going into FY 2024, Payment Integrity Testing Corrective Action Plans, Mr. Peterson explained that error rates climbed in 2023, with ECP having the highest rate of improper payments at 45.15%, followed by LFP (12.90%), ARC/PLC (12.78%), NAP (11.61%), and CFAP (9.71%). He stated that the National Office admits they may not be providing some of the tools necessary to staff to avoid these payment issues, and that corrective action in this area will be focused on trainings.

Mr. Peterson stated that many of the issues leading to improper payments boil down to issues with acreage reporting, such as offices not collecting late file fees, not getting signatures, etc. The National Office is working to develop internal controls and to give DDs better tools to prevent errors in the future. He underscored that the goal isn't to get people into trouble so much as it is to mitigate errors internally before OIG gets involved. He also stated that he understands that people cut corners when offices are not properly staffed, and that nationwide we are currently about 200 under ceiling and they are working to address that.

### **Kara Napier-Bays - Assistant to the DAFO**

Following Mr. Peterson, Ms. Napier-Bays addressed the crowd to share information from DAFO. She highlighted the recent 27-PM Amendment and how the language regarding qualifications has changed to allow more flexibilities for hiring authorities. She explained that States are now allowed to request expanded hiring authority for CED vacancies on the first job announcement rather than waiting until they have had other postings that failed to provide a viable candidate. She stated there are concerns over getting individuals hired as CED's under expanded authority properly hired, and that DAFO is working to address that concern.

On the topic of SLRP (student loan repayment program), she stated there were 223 SLRP requests nationwide totaling \$1.8 million dollars. These were funded through a lapse in appropriations. Individuals can apply any year it is offered, and the 3- year commitments run concurrently if someone is awarded more than one SLRP.

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

Ms. Napier-Bays informed us that new recruitment resources for field offices are being created, including a specialized SharePoint page for this purpose which they hope to be a “one stop shop for onboarding employees.” A notice is forthcoming regarding employee development resources on DAFO which will be linked through the Employee Central page.

FSA Skills for Success (new name for PT Skills for Success) training will be rolling out in the next several weeks. DAFO is working on doing more to standardize COC minutes and creating a simpler delegation’s template to be available nationwide. They are interested in collecting more feedback from NASCOE in this area and hope to have it make setting up delegations easier and more convenient.

DAFO is developing a new tracker for CEDT training, similar to FLO Track which they use for FLOT’s, to ensure CEDT’s receive consistent training nationwide.

DAFO expects the CO ceiling to stay flat over next couple years. It has been hovering around 7,208 employees over the last couple of fiscal years.

Ms. Napier-Bays encouraged people to put in tickets for issues with MPS3 printers as OCIO is paid to be the middle person for resolving these printer issues. She acknowledged that the Lumen transition has been bumpy and detrimental to some offices. They believe the problem is caused by a mixture of old equipment and new equipment not talking well together, and that once the Lumen transition is complete everything should work much better and be much faster. Part of the reason for the transition is the need to go from 17 servers to 1, which they are required/mandated to do for cybersecurity. This is part of a USDA Enterprise Solution that is not specific to FSA.

DAFO is looking at switching from CISCO phones to Teams phones in offices (as well as some other options) to seek out cost-savings.

On the topic of leasing, there is backlog of about 800 leases that need to be resolved. DAFO acknowledges issues in this realm within FPAC Business Center where there is a communication breakdown. They are working to do better at planning ahead for changing leases.

### **John Berge - Acting Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs**

Mr. Berge is from Nebraska and has been Acting DAFFP for 17 months. He acknowledged there is training gap in many of the ad hoc programs which have rolled out which have led to so many of the improper payments noted above. He expressed optimism that improvements to the programs, creating of additional checklists, trainings, etc. would help to improve these error rates.

Mr. Berge reminded us that these disaster programs help to keep farmers on the land, and thanked COF employees for doing what they do to get these much-needed funds out to farmers this year.

DAFFP is doing what it can to work with Washington DC to ensure that we do not issues with another Farm Bill extension this year such as we had with DMC and ARC/PLC last year, and echoed others’ statements that they do not anticipate a full Farm Bill being approved prior to the election. He stated that at the end of this Farm Bill we lose authority to implement CRP, and

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

DAFP is working hard to avoid that and ensure that we are able to move forward following the expiration of the current extension. He stated that all 107 people working for DAFP think about the field as they develop policy, and that all parts of the Leadership Team are doing their best in this area.

DAFP is considering ways to improve NAP. He acknowledged that it requires significant record keeping and raises questions about what is acceptable and verifiable. He believes that buy up coverage should be available for all, including new NAP enrollees. There is a working group considering these and other issues to make NAP more accessible and useful for producers. There are also changes to LIP being proposed, and he stated that many of the improvements to these programs come through suggestions from the field.

ODMAP 2.0 is anticipated to be coming out later this summer, and ELAP/LIP rule changes are in process. Mr. Berge discussed getting as close to the CRP cap as possible. He also discussed the impact H5N1 is having and how DAFP was able to quickly redevelop ELAP to allow for assistance to producers for this program. There are significant hurdles to getting applications in for this program and only 11 applications to the program have been made nationwide. They are interested in learning why producers aren't applying, creating outreach materials to help people with applications, and to make sure that people don't feel they will be wearing a "scarlet letter" by having a positive case in their dairy herd.

Mr. Berge closed by reminding everyone of the importance of mental health and self-care for our employees. Everyone needs some grace. Take the time to go hang out with your kids, your friends, read a book. Get out of the office. Take the time to walk around the block.

### **Caleb Gildea - Management and Program Analyst, Special Projects Coordinator**

FEVS 2024 had a 60.3% unadjusted response rate, which is up from last year and ahead of NRCS. They expect results to be available for the field in November. Mr. Gildea reminded everyone that they can review last years' results online. While FEVS is very useful, they are working on developing other ways to collect information from the field. Current data points, aside from FEVS, include exit interviews, focus groups, and anecdotal data. In the future, they plan to utilize pulse surveys, state-specific focus groups, and State Ac-on Plans to help determine the effectiveness of initiatives.

The current FSA Action Plan is focused on performance and culture, awards and recognition, accountability and responsibility, transparency in action, leadership development, employee empowerment, teamwork, collaborative communication, internal data review, analysis, and action.

The WE Committee's Coffee Break Teams Meeting has 4,000 viewers monthly, which makes it the most popular regular meeting in the agency. It is led by colleagues in the field and those that haven't participated and encouraged to join.

Notice PM-3081 made it a requirement that all states implement an Employee Recognition Program in FY2024.

On the topic of kiosks, Mr. Gildea stated, "They don't do too much right now, which is OK. We wanted to push these out while we had the opportunity." They are working on giving kiosks more visibility, implementing screensavers to scroll through upcoming programs, utilizing for

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

signing documents and working through the Farm Loan Assistance Tool, making them available for video conferencing employees located in a different office, helping producers research available, farm programs and deadlines, accessing the internet, and accessing necessary information such as email, bank accounts, and farm records.

Mr. Gildea closed by stating "Feedback is a gift. Please give it to us."

### **Zach Ducheneaux - FSA Administrator**

Mr. Ducheneaux attended via Teams. He discussed the new Farm Loan rule put out last week, much of which is available elsewhere.

### **Bill Cobb – Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs**

Mr. Cobb also attended via Teams and discussed the new Farm Loan rule. Primary changes to repayment terms includes expanding the opportunity for direct loan customers to budget for savings, offering maximum term lengths, interest-only first year payments and other flexible repayment terms, and empowering producers to choose preferred terms. Primary changes to collateral requirements include reducing additional security requirements by decreasing security margin requirements from 150% to 125%, removing additional security requirements for certain loans, and the fact that primary residence will not be required as additional security. Also, it expands the opportunities for the release of security as principal is paid down.

### **Nanette Pena - Program Specialist**

Ms. Pena explained that one new feature of the kiosk that is forthcoming is the use of Customer Check-In, where when a customer arrives they would check-in on the kiosk. If the customer would leave prior to getting help, and employee would document that. Customer Check-In Receipts (CCR) would not replace the requirement to create and offer customers a receipt for service.

Customers using the Check-In would be able to choose their language, utilize 1 of 3 available log-in options, provide details of the purpose of their visit, and the op-on to be emailed a CCR.

Employees cannot edit or delete Customer Check-Ins. Employees will be provided a Check-In Queue, which would display who checked in, allow you to open and print/email CCR, add a SCIMS ID when there is an existing record for the customer, and to indicate a customer departed prior to receiving service.

This system is being piloted. It links to RFS, so when you go to RFS you could click on a customer that "Checked-In" without searching for them. They anticipate additional functionality in the future such as potentially tying into a national appointment calendar app.

Customer Check-In is expected to be released nationally in late Fall/Winter.

### **Friday, August 9, 2024**

Representatives from NASE, NACS, and NADD spoke to those in attendance.

### **Keith Hiser – Vice President, National Association of District Directors (NADD)**

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

Mr. Hiser stated that DD's can see that COF employees are struggling. We often have both a lack of information and an information overload happening at the same time. The workplace has become more efficient, which has allowed for more programs to be rolled out. But communication is hindered and people find it hard to see the whole picture.

Mr. Hiser reminded us that you don't have to have a special title to be a leader. Associations like NASCOE allow us to network and grow as professionals.

### **Teresa Dillard - Dillard Financial Solutions, Inc.**

Ms. Dillard reminded those in attendance that NASCOE members are entitled to a complimentary financial checkup, focusing on understanding your TSP, Roth vs. Traditional IRAs, Insurance, Securing your income, and Cancer & Disability Insurance.

Dillard's provided \$15,000 to NASCOE, as well as \$20,000 directly to IASCOE for hosting the National Convention. They also provided the Presidential Membership Award, which is for states that had the largest increase in NASCOE membership in any one year, to Wyoming.

### **David Wayne - NASCOE Legislative Chair**

Mr. Wayne explained how the NASCOE Political Action Committee (PAC) is used to contribute to politicians that support the causes that NASCOE cares about. Mr. Wayne encouraged all NASCOE members to contribute to the PAC. Mr. Wayne stated that NASCOE needs contributions to the PAC to pay for lobbyists to gain support of lawmakers. The current number of NASCOE members that are active in the PAC is extremely low.

### **Hunter Moorhead - Crossroad Strategies NASCOE Legislative Consultant**

Mr. Moorhead has been working with NASCOE for over a decade. He stated this is the first time he is coming to ask for help on a legislative issue, and that NASCOE members are in a situation where we need to engage local congresspeople. This is regarding the CRP issue in Sec-on 12204 of the House version of the Farm Bill. More below.

Mr. Moorhead doesn't believe the House Committee has enough votes to pass their version of the Farm Bill right now. He stated that he felt the vote on May 23 of the House Farm Bill was a vote for agriculture. The House version of the bill didn't include equity commission recommendations.

Mr. Moorhead's biggest concern is regarding Section 12204. The language in this section would allow for the Secretary of Agriculture to cease having CRP administered by FSA and move it to NRCS. Mr. Moorhead believes this provision is a direct hit on the FSA. He underlined that CRP is a commodity program because it was originally based on a set aside program. There are rental rate impacts, and local COC's can adjust these based on the needs of the local area. Mr. Moorhead is working to make sure this provision does not become law. He does not believe it will be in the Senate draft of the Farm Bill.

Mr. Moorhead echoed many of the earlier statements about the potential for a full Farm Bill prior to the election. He added that there may be supplemental funding for salaries that isn't directly within the Farm Bill.

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

Mr. Moorhead believes Pennsylvania will decide the Presidential election, but he has no idea where it is going to go.

Mr. Moorhead believes the PT Reclassification will be very significant for the agency being a competitive place to work into the future.

Mr. Moorhead believes that come January, we could have a very different landscape in Congress and be restarting the process of developing the Farm Bill. He warned that there will be another debt limit reset conversation coming the 1st quarter of next year. He stated that FSA Leadership has been clear about what the agency needs budget wise to be effective and maintain staffing.

Mr. Moorhead updated the group about the Dairy Margin Coverage.

Bolsters dairy programs to continue providing vital assistance.

- Increases the cap on Tier I coverage for the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program to 6 million pounds, as seen in H.R. 4125.
- Provides an opportunity to update production history for DMC.
- Provides a 25% discount on DMC premiums for operations that enroll in coverage for the life of the 2024 Farm Bill.
- Mandates biennial cost surveys to ensure make allowances accurately reflect the cost of manufacturing dairy products as seen in H.R. 1756.
- Restores the “higher-of” formula for the calculation of the price of Class I (fluid) milk until such time that updates to a Federal Milk Marketing Order are ratified, a modification of the provisions of H.R. 1756.
- Ensures the Dairy Forward Pricing Program does not expire.

### **Gloria Montano Green - FPAC Deputy Under Secretary**

Ms. Montano Green expressed great thanks to the field for all their hard work over the last four years and the benefit of FSA to the communities we serve.

Ms. Montano Green stated that leadership was very creative in how they went about implementing the PT Reclassification and making a reality.

Most SLRP enrollments are CO employees.

Ms. Montano Green stated that the goal of ERP was to create a program that was more efficient and not as difficult for the field to implement as WHIP was to implement.

Ms. Montano Green thanked the field again, and encouraged the sharing of information about EAP with all staff.

NASCOE President Joel Foster stated after Ms. Montano Green’s speech that “Folks at the National Office worked just as hard as anybody to get through the PT Reclassification.”

### **Legislative Breakout Session (Hunter Moorhead and David Wayne)**

This breakout focused on Section 12204, reiterating much of Mr. Moorhead’s comments above. In addition, it was discussed how the Equity Commission believes the CED should be hired by



## 2024 NASCOE National Convention

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

and directly report to the District Director. NASCOE's position is to stay with the DD fulfilling more of a liaison role. It was pointed out that not many DD's SDA, and DDs are hired by political appointees instead of elected COC's, which in the opinion of Mr. Moorhead and NASCOE would result in a less representative leadership than the COC system in place.

Mr. Moorhead provided talking points for conducting outreach to representatives regarding Section 12204. He believes this CRP provision is one of the biggest threats we have faced in years. NASCOE plans to contact people systematically to do outreach to their representatives based on who their representatives are. He reminded everyone that there are ethics rules regarding what you cannot do in a county office. You cannot, as an employee of the USDA, advocate or lobby during work, in your workspace. Any outreach in this area will have to be done off time after hours. He advised if you are ever in doubt that you may be approaching a Hatch Act violation, DON'T DO IT!

Section 12204 amends the 1994 Reorganization Act. Sec-on 12204 has no one that is stepping forward to say they are responsible for adding it into the House version of the Farm Bill. It gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority to make a determination to give administration of CRP from FSA to NRCS. When performing outreach, we are to state "We, as an individual in this District, are not in favor of this provision and would like it to be removed."

Mr. Moorhead stated that some will respond at this time to say they will fix it in conference. We should encourage them to recommend to offer an amendment if the bill goes to the floor to remove this language. FAQ's will be sent out to NASCOE members to help with these conversations.

Lead point: This particular provision would shift decision making away from the county and the state to the National Office. Do you believe we should take away the local input for the soil rental rates and move them to the National Office?

Point: If this were to happen USDA would be burdened with more costs from a software and personnel standpoint.

Do not speak on behalf of NRCS.

Point: We want them to go to the chairman of the committee and other members of the agency committee to remove this provision now - not at conference.

We will need to share this information with farm groups that are commodity focused such as Farm Bureau, National Farmers Union, COC members, etc.

### **Saturday, August 10, 2024**

#### **Becky Zirpel - RASCOE President**

RASCOE has been focusing on HR82. They are fighting a proposal to make the high 3 years considered in retirement pension calculations into a high 5. They are also working to eliminate a State Tax on Social Security.

Ms. Zirpel shared that the retirement process hasn't been smooth or fast for the last few years. She has heard horror stories of it taking 12-18 months for people to start getting their retirement. She stated that if you are retiring and it is taking more than 3-4 months, we need to look into

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

where the hold-up is taking place. STO? OPM? If you know people experiencing these issues, contact RASCOE so they can work on getting it addressed. OPM loses 1 in 10 retirement files.

Ms. Zirpel encouraged everyone to become associate members of RASCOE. She also encouraged everyone to go home and talk to people that aren't NASCOE members and remind them that the PT Reclassification didn't just happen - it took hard work from a lot of people over a lot of years.

### **News**

- Michigan was selected to host the 2026 NASCOE National Convention!
- Jessi Colgrove, NASCOE Treasurer, Taylor Stucki, NASCOE Secretary, Kayla Mattson, NASCOE Vice President, and Joel Foster, NASCOE President, were nominated and approved for re-election by acclamation.
- No new resolutions.

### **Joel Foster - NASCOE President - Report**

Mr. Foster reported while NASCOE was behind in working through their Programs & Negotiations with the National Office, they did 2 years this year and are now current moving forward. The PT Reclassification notice wiped out about 1/3 of their negotiation items immediately before NASCOE representatives went to meet with the National Office, and they spent much of their time thanking the National Office profusely for helping to make this day a reality. He recommended that everyone look at the long term effects of this reclassification, noting that going from a Grade 7 Step 10 to a Grade 9 Step 10 amounts to a 22.3% raise, and the classification of a Program Analyst is a much better representation of what PT's/PA's do.

NASCOE is now focusing on key legislative issues, including Section 12204 regarding CRP and recommendations from the Equity Commission, as well as advocating for appropriations. The PT Reclassification is a permanent, long-term expense and we need to make sure that FSA can continue to pay for that expense.

Mr. Foster highlighted areas where NASCOE has worked to tighten their budget, including holding the National Leadership Conference jointly with the NASCOE Organizational Meeting in Tampa this year. Pre- negotiation meetings for Programs & Negotiations have been moved to virtual rather than in person.

### **Jessi Colgrove - NASCOE Treasurer - Report**

Ms. Colgrove said it has been an honor to serve NASCOE for the last 3 years. She reiterated Mr. Foster's message that NASCOE is always looking for ways to improve cashflow. She sourced new credit cards for the President and VP which offer cash back into accounts that has led to \$1400 back to date. The Executive Committee moved \$200,000 into a high interest CD, earning NASCOE \$11,000, which they are repeating. She reminded everyone that you can review the full NASCOE budget and what they spend it on their website. NASCOE spent \$47,000 less in 2023 than 2022. They have reduced in-person meetings, moved to Teams for conference calls, and worked to hold meetings in more affordable locations. The Executive Committee also voted to eliminate a \$50 a month reimbursement for a data plan for its members

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

(she was speaking of Executive Committee and Chairpersons), which will save \$8,000-\$10,000 a year.

Despite these cost cutting measures, Ms. Colgrove stated that the cost of airfare, food, hotels, and other expenses has increased over the years. Membership is down. The NASCOE Executive Committee is concerned that if they are forced to make additional budget cuts, the value of NASCOE membership will go down, and NASCOE membership has made clear that they do not want to be dependent upon 3rd party sponsors for their budget. In 2008 (the last year they had a dues increase), there were 7,200 NASCOE members and they brought in \$396,000 in dues. As of 2024, there are 4,700 NASCOE members and they brought in \$285,000. This is a difference of \$137,000, and it has made it very difficult to balance their budget.

### **Taylor Stucki - NASCOE Secretary - Report**

Ms. Stucki reported that the past Organizational Meeting was in Kansas City, which saved a lot of money. The next Organizational Meeting will be in Tampa, which will also save money.

Ms. Stucki encouraged everyone to look at the NASCOE Annual Report on their website, which is 425 pages long and covers everything they have done. Questions can be directed to her or the Executive Committee.

### **Heidi Clinkingbeard - NASCOE Awards & Scholarships Chair - Report**

Ms. Clinkingbeard informed us that there were 111 scholarships, and 67 sick leave awards this year. The new deadline for sick leave awards is July 4. There will be an overview training for all states in the Fall, along with budget training in January. Awards can be ordered through a portal on the NASCOE website. There is a flow chart of the scholarship process and timeline of what to expect on the website as well. They are now providing medallions for sick leave awards in excess of 2,500 hours. She encouraged each state to make at least one nomination for the Distinguished Service Awards.

Ms. Clinkingbeard closed by encouraging all NASCOE members to become involved with their local state committees.

### **Travis Eisele - NASCOE Benefits & Emblems Chair - Report**

Mr. Eisele encouraged everyone to review the benefits available through NASCOE. He stated that they are not hearing from members enough regarding what they want or need for benefits, and recommends that members contact State or Area Chairs, or Mr. Eisele himself, to help.

### **David Wayne - NASCOE Legislative Chair - Report**

Mr. Wayne stated that the current item the Legislative Committee is focused on is PAC improvements and getting people to join, working to ensure CRP stays with FSA (Sec-on 12204), to protect our funding interests, and to ensure that DD's do NOT become the direct supervisors of CED's. He stated that during the Convention, their Political Action Committee Challenge to increase contributions increased overall contributions by 6.5% as of the time of his report.

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

There will be a Nationwide Challenge to increase PAC membership running through the time of the National Leadership Conference in September.

He explained that the PAC is how NASCOE is able to do things in WDC now. This money doesn't go to services. It goes directly to those in Congress that support our priorities. He stated that this is the modern way of doing business in WDC.

### **Glenn Thomas - NASCOE Membership Co-Chair - Report**

Mr. Thomas congratulated Rhode Island for being the only state with 100% membership. Mr. Thomas challenges State Associations to establish goals and to devise plans of succession to prepare new officers and committee chairs and to grow and establish relationships with your State Office. He recommended that all State Associations leadership groups hold at least a quarterly meeting, and that Area Chairs are able to coordinate Teams meetings for this purpose.

Mr. Thomas stated that Wyoming has the largest percentage increase in membership this last year. Mr. Thomas said that nationwide, membership is at 70-71%. He would like to see this go up to 73% and then 75%, which would mean bringing on 411 members across all 50 states, which he is optimistic can be done if we all chip in.

### **Marcy Logan - NASCOE Publicity Chair - Report**

Ms. Logan highlighted the NASCOE App and encourages all members to get on it as that is where all NASCOE information exchange now takes place.

### **Jeannine Wendel - NASCOE COAC Chair - Report**

Ms. Wendel encouraged everyone to become an associate member of the National Association of Farmer Elected Committees (NAFEC). She also encouraged everyone to watch the Equity Commission meetings that took place.

### **Christa Kraatz & Sarah Houin - NASCOE Programs & Negotiations Co-Chairs - Report**

Ms. Kraatz & Ms. Houin were happy to report that P&N was all caught up. In 2024, NASCOE received 377 submissions for P&N, which is the most they ever received in a year. They would love to see that number continue to increase. 50 of these are closed/completed, 20 are negotiated, 40 are duplicates, and 70 items have been sent to DC for review. 85 are pending. The Midwest sent in 103 submissions. Other area contributions included Northeast Area -19, Northwest Area - 84, Southeast area-89, and Southwest Area -112.

Some of the highlighted wins for 2023 Programs & Negotiations were updates to the Producer Farm Data Report, resolving the questions around need for Linc Pass to print on the new Xerox printers, getting SCIMS to default to "Start With," and getting staff Bin Safety Training.

The main goal of the P&N committee moving forward is to improve the response rate.

Area representatives gave their reports

### **Janice Acree – Midwest Area Executive Report**

Ms. Acree expressed that she is very fond of all 8 states in her area, and happy to be working with MWA Alternate Executive Stacia Stover. She is very excited that Michigan won the bid to

## **2024 NASCOE National Convention**

August 7-10, 2024

Davenport, Iowa

host the 2026 National Convention as she wants to see it hosted in the Midwest yet again. One of her goals is to empower State Leadership, and her biggest concern is membership levels. She wants to empower State Leaders to communicate with their membership more, and is looking for innovative ideas to build membership, such as Wisconsin's recent Cash-a-palooza, which was very successful bringing onboard 18 new NASCOE members.

### **NASCOE Business**

#### **New Business**

Delegates unanimously voted to adopt the NASCOE dues increase proposal, raising dues from \$55 per member to \$75 per member over a two-year period, as well as from \$25 to \$35 a year for Associate members.

Delegates unanimously voted to adopt the proposed by-law changes. (Note - these were mostly minor revisions required due to NASCOE moving its corporate entity from New York to South Dakota because it was cheaper and easier to work with.)

Delegates unanimously voted to adopt the proposed Executive Committee policy changes as proposed. (Note - the most significant items here were to essentially create a 3-year plan for allowing NASCOE to continue to assist State Associations whose membership dropped below 50%. Prior to these revisions, State Associations dropping below 50% immediately lost their ability to vote or receive reimbursements for participation in the NASCOE National Convention, and also lost access to many of the helpful services such as jump teams that NASCOE could provide to help State Associations correct their membership issues.)

### **Resolutions**

Resolution for continued support of NAFEC was reaffirmed for 46<sup>th</sup> years. NASCOE urges all NASCOE members to show support for NAFEC through associate membership.

Resolution for continued support of RASCOE. NASCOE urges all NASCOE members to show support for RASCOE through associate membership.

Resolution in support of the COC system, stating that COC's are the "True and only supervisor of CED's."

Resolution to thank IASCOE for hosting the 2024 NASCOE National Convention.

All resolutions were adopted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mallory Harrelle and Heather Kirkpatrick