

# NASCOE NOW

## October 22, 2010



**Employees in the Shelby County Farm Service Agency and Soil and Water Conservation District in Shelbyville, Illinois participated in “National Wear Pink Day” by releasing 15 pink balloons over Lake Shelbyville. All of us have been touched in some way or another by a friend, relative, or co-worker with breast cancer. Shelby County is particularly aware of the seriousness of breast cancer as one of their own employees was diagnosed with breast cancer last year. The following message was attached to each balloon: “If you find this balloon, please consider making a donation to your local organization to help find a cure for this disease!”**



**The local online newspaper was also on hand for the balloon release. The photo and article was featured online in support of USDA’s national campaign for breast cancer awareness month and “Wear Pink Day” in support of those who lost family members and friends while fighting breast cancer.**



Breast Cancer pink was everywhere at the Iroquois County, Illinois, Farm Service Agency on October 20, 2010! All employees participated in the national “Wear Pink Day” campaign. Perhaps the most surprising part was the amount and variety of pink items employees found in their closets. The county office made it a “silly” pink campaign to try to raise even MORE awareness to cancer. And that it did! We received honks and comments from passerby’s while taking these photos. Producers visiting the office that day questioned our attire. This was a great way to promote cancer awareness not only to female customers but male also. This disease is not gender specific.

Most everyone in the office has been affected by breast cancer by someone we know, someone we love, our family members, or our neighbors. In addition to the dress up day, the county office is participating in the Yoplait Yogurt Lid Campaign. It is an easy way anyone can make a difference. Purchase Yoplait Yogurt with the pink lids and for every lid sent in by December 31, 2010, Yoplait will donate 10 cents to Susan G Komen for the Cure. For more information please visit <http://www.yoplait.com/sls>.

It is our wish to make a difference by raising awareness to make breast cancer, and all cancers, a thing of the past.





# *The NASCOE Store*

[www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com)

*Ask and Ye shall receive! My friend Cindy Peterson from South Dakota asked me if the NASCOE Store could sell magnetic appointment card holders. Era Jarrard (owner of the NASCOE Store) and I were able to come up with exactly what she wanted! I asked Era to find a product that is high in quality and low in price, and that is exactly what she did! These are great stocking stuffers for you to give to everyone on your holiday shopping list, and for just \$2.00 each you will have plenty of money left over to purchase additional items from the NASCOE Store that are sure to please! Here is a photo of the new appointment cardholders (Ctrl and click to go directly to the NASCOE Store):*



*We will be adding additional new items in the near future. We'll keep you posted!*

***The "Team Colors" theme is a hit!  
If you haven't done so already, take action now!***

***ARE YOUR TEAM COLORS cardinal and white? OR maybe purple and gold? SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT WE CARRY TEAM COLORS SUPPORTING OUR FAVORITE TEAM TO WEAR ON DRESS-DOWN FRIDAYS TO SHOW "TEAM SPIRIT" AND ITEMS TO TAKE TO THE GAME - AND YES WE CAN ACCOMMODATE! EMAIL US AT [info@nascoeemblemsonline.com](mailto:info@nascoeemblemsonline.com) AND TELL US WHAT COLOR ITEMS YOU WANT US TO DO NEXT. CHECK OUT THE NEW TEAM COLOR CATEGORIES ON [www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com). WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL TEAM COLOR ITEMS COMING SOON.***

***Thank you for shopping at the NASCOE Store!***

*Tom Oasen, NASCOE Awards, Scholarships and Emblems Chairperson*

## More on...NASCOE EMBLEMS!

New Items Added Today!

-----Check Special Items for a Magnetic Appointment Card Holder and a 'FRUSTRATION' Bumper Sticker.

-----Check Drinkwear for a 4-cup gift set of NASCOE mugs.

And, while you're browsing, look at the NEW ITEMS FOR FALL. The new ladies fleece vest is a Columbia brand. The Ladies and Men's fleece jackets are Weatherproof brand.

Under the team colors, we have some neat items in navy. Check out the fleece navy jacket; it's a Columbia brand. The navy polos are really, really nice.

We'll watch for your order.

thenascoestore.com STAFF

---

Here is this week's summary for your Facebook Page:



### **Nascoe News**

109 monthly active users ↓6 since last week

199 people like this ↑6 since last week

4 wall posts and comments this week ↓11 since last week

53 visits this week ↓35 since last week

## Upcoming Legislative Challenges: It's Time to Get Fired Up

As most members know, there is a lot at stake in the next Farm Bill for NASCOE. Take a good look at the overall situation: for one thing, the budget will be extremely tight. Simultaneously, one of our largest programs, Direct Payments, is being targeted for elimination not only in Congress but by producer groups as well. There is talk of GRP, SURE and BCAP possibly not being funded. IT challenges continue to be highlighted. Outside groups continue to want a piece of FSA duties. And of course, potential changes in political leadership in the House could require a great deal of new outreach and legislative action.

NASCOE will likely pursue program administrative priorities in an attempt to counter some of the above challenges. These include the goal of making FSA the sole source for acreage reporting and data collection, rather than farmers reporting to crop insurance and FSA. This could reduce discrepancies, increase program integrity, eliminate some administrative spending to crop insurance, increase customer service to farmers, and force reports that use real-time GIS and entity data. Another goal will be the administration of conservation programs, as it has been in the past.

There are several tools or actions at our disposal, which to me make up a "four-pronged legislative approach." They are: 1) the upcoming Legislative Conference in WDC along with continued education and communication with House and Senate contacts; 2) The cooperation, membership development, and coordination with NAFEC; 3) The commitment to using the CAPWIZ system; and 4) The growth and deployment of the NASCOE PAC.

Legislative Conference: NASCOE executives have approved a two-day full legislative conference for this upcoming year. This has always been a critical event for presenting our positions and ideas in mass, and is extremely important this year given the Farm Bill talks and potential changes in House and Senate Ag Committee leadership.

NAFEC: NAFEC members can ask for policy-type changes that we cannot. There is a great potential for this association of FARMERS to work hand in hand with our goals, however they need to have more membership first and foremost. In the coming weeks, CEDs will be asked to promote NAFEC at an upcoming COC meeting, and will be provided with steps to review how to sign up a COC member, dues withholding, etc.

CAPWIZ: This is the most efficient way to drop large amounts of correspondence into a Congressional office, at a much faster turnaround than traditional letters. The effectiveness of CAPWIZ depends on our members not only signing up, but following through on alerts through their home emails. The process is very quick. Steps can be found at the NASCOE website.

PAC: To date, our PAC has grown to become a useful tool for building vital support with members of Congress. Yet, only about six percent of members currently contribute to the PAC. For just a few dollars per pay period, you can make a big difference for NASCOE and your own job security. Instructions on signing up can be found on the NASCOE website or obtained through your Area Legislative Chair.

Participating or assisting with any of the above items will help NASCOE with its legislative goals and continued proactive approach. It's time to get involved. It's time to get fired up.

Rob Gallinger  
Northeast Area Legislative Chair

## ***What Would You Change?***

Dennis Ray, MWA Negotiation Consultant

I hesitate to start this article sounding negative, but the reality is we all face daily challenges and frustrations in our jobs. It may be receiving a clarification to policy that means we have to revisit something that we were sure had been put away for good. Or it might be working with a report that doesn't quite have all of the necessary information, requiring us to dig in several places to find what we need. Or maybe you had people waiting to sign up in CRP while you were dealing with CRP software that couldn't handle the acreage from the CLU layer being in hundredths and not tenths. The truth of the matter is that at some point in time you will run into something that is hindering you in the performance of your job.

Now let's pretend for one moment that I have the authority to let you change one thing that would help you better perform your job or provide you and the membership a benefit. After giving it a little thought, what would it be? Would you change a report format? Would you change software? Would you like to be assured that we have policy and procedure before the program is announced? Is there a benefit that would be meaningful to the membership? We have all been around long enough to know that we can't make any changes just by pretending. However, that doesn't mean that we don't have a say or that we can't affect change in the way we do business.

Hopefully you have participated in the negotiation process in past years, but in case you haven't let me tell you how it works. Every fall NASCOE petitions its membership for negotiation items that can be taken to management and try to affect change. The national officers, area execs, negotiation consultants and programs committee chair then meet to research, discuss and formulate a NASCOE proposal to management regarding the item. In the spring, the negotiation team meets face to face with agency personnel to discuss the proposal. While not every item submitted will be taken to Washington and not every item taken to Washington will be resolved in NASCOE's favor, some will. This process is an excellent way for you to actively participate in your organization for the betterment of all.

Myron Stroup, our NASCOE President has challenged every area to submit at least 50 negotiation items. The deadline for submitting items this year is December 15<sup>th</sup>. Members can browse to the negotiation link on the NASCOE webpage and submit the item directly or you can save it and email it to your Area Exec or your area negotiation consultant.

While the negotiation process can be used to address your frustrations, it is not designed to be a place to just vent. In addition to calling attention to an issue, please note that the submission form asks for recommended solutions. One of the great things about working with this agency and organization is that it is filled with creative individuals and I know many of you have excellent ideas. I hope that each of you will take the time to participate in this process and share your ideas. You never know, your suggestion just might make all of our days a little better.

+++++

*Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it. -*

*Edmund Burke-*

How well do you know your NASCOE history? See if you can answer the following true or false questions from the early years of NASCOE.

1. When NASCOE was first organized Congress was unaware that ASCS employees were federal employees and not state, county or city workers.
2. The Transfer Bill passed in the mid 80's allowing County Office employees the right to transfer to a GS position without losing their accrued years of service took over 15 years of NASCOE petitioning Congress before it was passed.
3. Originally offices were located in any government building that could provide space and office furniture was tables, chairs, stand-up counters and second-hand fruit crates for filing cabinets.

All of the above statements are true and they were all things that I didn't know about this organization before reading the historical articles that are posted on the NASCOE homepage or researching old records.

The NASCOE History Committee has been charged with the task of compiling a history of the past 25 years of NASCOE and is asking for your assistance. We are actively seeking photographs, articles and items of interest to be included in this publication.

It will not be possible for the Committee to return these contributions. We are, therefore, requesting that contributions be submitted electronically. Simply scan it into your computer and email it to one of these three people. Cindy Peterson at [bkfury@sio.midco.com](mailto:bkfury@sio.midco.com), Linda Feldkamp at [lfeldkamp@wi.rr.com](mailto:lfeldkamp@wi.rr.com) or Dennis Ray at [djray2239@sbcglobal.net](mailto:djray2239@sbcglobal.net).

Hardcopy contributions will be accepted but cannot be returned. If you wish to make a hardcopy contribution, please send it to:

Cindy Peterson

4205 S Hickory Hill Road

Sioux Falls, SD 57103-4949

By simply sharing any knowledge you have of our organization you can:

- Participate in the progress of your organization and its membership.
- Help educate and inform others about your organization's history.
- Help NASCOE move forward without costly duplication of time and effort

We thank you for your contribution. We know you will understand that not all contributions can be included in the final product. As this is your organization and your history, inclusion of items submitted will be carefully considered

**BENEFIT UPDATES:**

Recently some of our members have faced difficulty when trying to get the discounted services and products offered by Sprint. I have just finished a phone conversation with one of their sales representatives.

He has given us the following code for use in receiving the government discount: GUSDA\_ZZZ.

Please share this with all of the members in your areas and let me know if they are still unable to receive the discounts.

Also, we have been working on a "coupon" for Sam's Club. We will keep you informed through NASCOE Now issues and postings to the website.

Have a good day,

Phillip Morton

Benefits Chairperson



**Happy Halloween**





## National Association of FSA County Office Employees

**President**  
Myron Stroup  
11238 W 2200 Rd  
Fontana KS 66026  
(913) 294-3751 – Office  
(913) 285-3398 – Cell

**Vice President**  
John Lohr  
PO Box 59  
Norvelt, PA 15674  
(724) 853-5555 – Office  
(724) 771-3682 – Cell

**Secretary**  
Annette Hyman  
746 Perry Rd  
Strykersville NY 14145  
(716) 652-1400 – Office  
(716) 998-7294 – Cell

**Treasurer**  
Shelly Odenkirk  
PO Box 114  
Wooster OH 44691  
(330) 262-1911 - Office  
(330) 464-1475 – Cell

### Government Computer Usage

**NASCOE Members** repeatedly ask for a list of DO's and DON'Ts on FSA computers and email usage. Your NASCOE leadership agrees with this need, however, it is impossible to identify every potential situation that could result in an employee receiving a reprimand, suspension, or even someone losing their job from misuse of government resources.

This document has been reviewed and approved by DAFO on October 22, 2010.

**As for the DON'Ts, here's what we do know.** Government computers, internet, email and other resources can never be used to solicit monies on behalf of NASCOE or our State Affiliates. These items can definitely never be used for political purposes, including lobbying Congress for support or repeal of any legislation, program, or proposal, or frankly, anything.

**What can we DO?** The membership can be kept informed through the electronic newsletter "NASCOE Now". Information on benefits, awards and scholarship deadlines can also be offered. It is permissible to write, submit and read negotiation/consultation items. There is no problem in relating concerns and issues and how they relate to FSA. And, you may offer questions, suggestions and solutions to your NASCOE leadership.

**When in doubt...** Good Judgment and Common Sense never cost anyone their job. If you question an email's subject matter, don't send it! If you still care about earning thousands of income dollars, don't send it! While you cannot control emails received, you can control what is passed on or saved. When in doubt, throw it out!

You have heard that occasional personal use of government resources is permissible. This is a privilege not a right or entitlement. The quickest way for everyone to lose this benefit is for a few to abuse it. Limit your personal use during breaks or lunch times, or before or after work.

**Your help is needed!** NASCOE and State Affiliates are developing a database of home email addresses. Any item, issue or announcement that is controversial, questionable or lengthy can be sent directly to you at home. This is the preferred method when corresponding with each other as well.

Hopefully this message gives you a better idea of what you CAN and CANNOT do!

Sincerely,

Your NASCOE Executive Board