



Wisconsin Association of FSA County Office Employees

www.wiwascoe.org

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JANUARY NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT—

Happy 2012 everyone. I sincerely hope you had time to spend with family and get away from FSA for a short time. As we head into the New Year, we all realize that there are rough roads ahead.

Trying to right size a state as ours is certainly a “heavy” management issue and still complete a DCP/ACRE sign-up and then head into crop reporting. With that, WASCOE did present a position paper of ideas for consideration by the STO. You probably have already heard the results through your CMMs but I have posted the SED response letter to me on our website.

I do want to comment on our priority suggestion to allow everyone to volunteer for understaffed offices, not just from overstaffed offices. After the STO presented that to DC, it came back that hiring and moving folks is a statutory requirement. Thus, the suggestion was denied. The rules of 27PM will be followed. There could also be some EEO issue as well. Having written all that, if there is someone out there who truly would like to move, contact the CED involved. There is no procedure against asking. I do want you all to know that I have been in communications with the STO and I believe that is the key to having the best for employees.

The next few months will be very busy for WASCOE and NASCOE. The first week of February 4 members (Tom Oasen, Aaron Moore, Jennifer Dempsey and myself) will head to Washington DC to present the NASCOE legislative issues to the Congresspersons and Senators of WI. I think you are very aware of the importance of the upcoming farm bill. Thank you to those volunteering their time and energy to represent Wisconsin.

It is time again for the WASCOE scholarship applications. The deadline is February 20th. Cheryl Olson and Aaron have posted information to the website. The essay question for this year is “What is production agriculture and how does it affect our daily lives?” I encourage all members to have their eligible students apply as WASCOE is offering 4 scholarships of \$1500, \$1000, \$750, and \$500.

The NASCOE scholarship applications are due to the Midwest Area by March 1, 2012. Information is on our website and the NASCOE website. A candidate can apply for both WASCOE and NASCOE scholarships.

In April we will be having our annual WASCOE convention. It will be our 50th year. To celebrate this event I am looking for a volunteer or volunteers(s) to compose a collage or scrapbook of some type to display at the convention. I ask that all counties find their old pictures and get them ready to be included in this display.

Also, WASCOE was approached by the Minnesota association to combine conventions. Last year Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana also did a combined convention. It seemed to have worked well. There are cost

concerns for the associations and the attendance has been down for the business meetings. The MN directors voted in favor and WASCOE directors also agreed to try a combination. To accommodate both states, it will be held along the Mississippi River. I have been working on places and so far the most economical is in Winona MN. All the arrangements are not final. I am still waiting to hear a final price from Stillwater MN and La Crosse WI. Then it will be presented to both sets of directors. The convention will be April 20th and 21st.

The WASCOE directors also voted to pursue a bid for the NASCOE convention in 2014 in Milwaukee. Tom Oasen and Deb Ellingson are leading the charge. They have a hotel (Wyndham) in Milwaukee. We will have to make a presentation at the 2012 convention in Boise Idaho the second week of August. Details for this year's convention are on the NASCOE website. We are going to need a contingency of folks to attend in Boise to make this work. Take a look at the convention details and give some thought to attending or make it a family vacation. I know you will have lots of fun.

WASCOE will have to have fundraisers to get the funding we will need. I am confident we can do. It was just a mere 20 years ago that our friend, Conrad Schepp led the charge for a national convention. It takes hard work and dedication and I know we have those kind of folks as members of WASCOE.

I want to thank our webmaster, Aaron Moore for the work he has done getting information out to members. He is submitting items for the NASCOE awards. He is representing WASCOE well.

As members of WASCOE stay informed through the WASCOE and NASCOE websites. If you have coworkers who do not have internet access, please share the information. It is certainly the most economical way to get information to you. Many items cannot be posted through the government computers. I have been trying to set up a separate email for just WASCOE items and separate from my personal items. I can receive just fine but sending a large group (to all members) is proving a challenge. So in the meantime, you will still see information from my home email. Stay tuned.

Looking forward to a busy 2012,

Mary Behm
WASCOE President