

NASCOE Now

November 11, 2011

Minnesota NASCOE member Kelly Turgeon explains NASCOE's position on issues to House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson during NASCOE's November 2-3, 2011 target legislative fly in to Washington, DC.

L to R : John Lohr, NASCOE President; Dan Root, NASCOE Legislative Committee Co-Chair; Kelly Turgeon; Collin Peterson



Legislative Fly-in
Dan Root and Terry Stehr, Co-Chairman
November 2, 2011
Washington DC

24 NASCOE members made their way to WDC in short notice to take part in a targeted Legislative Fly-in. This fly-in was put together in less than a week, and visits to the Hill were well attended by NASCOE Members. The Fly-in started with a Legislative Committee meeting convened in the Eisenhower Room of the Airport Holiday Inn. The purpose of the meeting was to prepare attendees for their visits to the Congressional Offices of those members who are on the super committee. President John Lohr updated the group on the history of how we came to this point and the purpose of our visits could be very critical to the future of NASCOE. John reviewed the road leading to the Informa study and brought the attendees up to speed on why the study was done. It was noted that the information in the study reveals that FSA involvement in crop insurance will provide Congress with significant savings. The higher the level of FSA involvement in crop insurance would mean a higher level of savings.

Bob Redding addressed the group and discussed the work of the super committee and the expected input they will receive from the leadership of both the House and Senate ag committee as it pertains to cuts in agriculture. Bob reviewed the interests of each of the super committee members and noted that the main topic in each office could be slightly different. Bob noted that it is important to fine tune our message so as not to lose the importance of what we would like to see in farm legislation. Our mission was to address each member of the super committee and to make sure we stay on the topics of crop insurance, conservation administration and reorganization of FSA.



The legislative team reviewed with all the attendees the position papers that were developed for this fly in. Upon completion of the review all attendees felt comfortable with the papers and conducting their assigned visits. It was noted that appointments were obtained for all super committee offices. The legislative team reviewed the assignments and determined where they would be available to assist new attendees with the visits. Additional visits were planned for Congressman Collin Peterson of the House Ag Committee and Senator Debbie Stabenow of the Senate Ag Committee.

The message for this fly-in consisted of three items – conservation administration, FSA involvement in crop insurance and reorganization of FSA. Conservation Administration was presented to assure Congress that FSA should be handling those duties deemed as administrative functions of conservation program delivery. This will allow NRCS the time to do the technical aspects of the program. The paper outlines the improvements which would be realized if this process was implemented. FSA's involvement in crop insurance was designed to reinforce the concept of FSA being responsible for acreage reporting and the gathering of production evidence for USDA. The legislative team provided additional information for attendees to use on their visits to support FSA involvement in crop insurance. The Restructuring document contained information put together by the NASCOE Focus Group. The theme of this document is to encourage FSA management to conduct any restructuring plan from the top down. FSA has continually looked at County Offices for reductions and it is time to put all locations on the table when looking at staff ceilings and budget cuts.



Attendees were off to the Hill at approximately 12 PM with folders for each visit containing our position papers for Conservation, Crop Insurance, and Restructuring of FSA. All attendees returned to the Hotel later and met at 7PM in the same room to review the outcome of their afternoon on the Hill. Most attendees were positive about their visits and that Congressman and their aides were interested in the information provided to them by NASCOE. Some visits were more positive than others, but you find that true with any legislative visits that are completed. There is a large amount of follow-up that will take place in the coming days with congressional members and staffers.

Joseph A. Beaudoin
National President

Paul H. Carew
National Vice President



Elaine Hughes
National Secretary

Richard G. Thissen
National Treasurer

PROTECT America's Heartbeat

November 3, 2011

Mr. John Lohr
President
National Assoc. of FSA County Office Employees
PO Box 59
Norvelt, PA 15674-0059

Dear Mr. Lohr:

It has been an interesting year for those of us who work to protect and enhance the benefits of the federal community. And, as we look to 2012, we all know we have our work cut out for us.

On behalf of the thousands of members of NARFE, allow me to thank you and the National Association of FSA County Office Employees for standing side-by-side with us in this fight. I pledge to you that NARFE will never back down from this attack on the integrity and earned benefits of the federal employee and retiree and ask that you continue to play an active role in fighting back.

On behalf of our members, please accept the enclosed NARFE 2012 Photo Contest Calendar – featuring the work of some of our members – as well as the latest copy of *NARFE* magazine.

Best wishes for a successful 2012.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Beaudoin, National President
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

www.NARFE.org | 606 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 | phone 703-838-7760 | fax 703-838-7785

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NASCOE Awards & Scholarships

www.nascoe.org

As I mentioned in the last edition of the NASCOE Now, a new Scholarships and Awards Season is fast approaching! I realize it is only November, but due to the fact the NASCOE Now will only be published once a month, I felt it would be a good idea to start early this year!

Your 2011 Distinguished Service Awards (DSA) winner's photos and nominations have been posted to the NASCOE web site (just click on the Awards link). Please read the nomination forms and think to yourself, do I know a fellow NASCOE Member that I can nominate? Use last years winning nominations as your guide to helping you submit the perfect nomination! As I have said for years, we have so many deserving individuals, but so few writers! By using last year's submissions as a guide, we hope this will help everyone with ideas on the background information about the person they want to nominate write a winning nomination. Get started early, so you have time to gather the information you are looking for (and to keep your nomination a secret from the person you are going to nominate!). The judges use facts of accomplishments as a guide, so please do not feel that you have to become a world class novelist to pull this off! We wish you and your nominee the best of luck, and hope to see you in Boise Idaho in 2012!

Sick Leave Certificates, Extra Mile Awards and Professional Improvements Awards are in the very near future going to be easier than ever to submit! You can now easily submit your requests directly to me with one click of your mouse! If you are not comfortable with the new method, just send an email to me or your Area Chairperson and let us know what you would like us to do. Most of our certificates are per-printed and easy to complete for you. However, I now have blank certificates that are fillable and we can create the perfect certificates for your event – just let me know if I can help you out.

Please check out the NASCOE website for the latest edition of the NASCOE Awards and Scholarships Handbook. As promised in the last NASCOE Now, the 2011-2012 forms have been updated and include your Area Chairpersons information on the nomination forms. They are willing and able to help you out!

We have plenty of time, but I just wanted to remind you that the deadline to submit the completed NASCOE Scholarship applications and attachments (for the traditional NASCOE Scholarship and the NASCOE Members Continuing Education) will be due to your State Scholarship Chairperson by February 20th or sooner (check with your State Scholarship Chairperson for the exact date).

Please let myself or your Area Awards or Scholarships Chairperson know if you have any questions.

Tom Casen, NASCOE Awards, Scholarships and Emblems Chairperson

November 2011 NWA Report

by Larry Olsen, NWA Exec

News from the NWA for October can best be described as what is going to happen next? That would probably be true for the rest of the Areas. The VISP notice came out with numbers for each of the States. The application/deadline period announced and then the waiting process to see just where the VISP offers will be accepted. The anticipation of all this is, what will happen next? Directed reassignment (possibility and process), more shared management, possible consolidation or closure of County Offices.

We all know that the reduction of staff through the VISP is not the end of the story, but the beginning. The phrase that NASCOE President John Lohr has so often used "we are waiting for the other shoe to drop" pretty well sums it up!

NASCOE has not been waiting to see what next. NASCOE has been proactive through this whole process.

NASCOE sent out an alert, which basically questioned the anticipated reductions as premature because there was no FY 2012 budget yet only projected budget numbers.

NASCOE President John Lohr and Vice President Mark Van Hoose met with Administrator Bruce Nelson, Assistant Under Secretary Caris Gutter, DAFO, and other Agency folks the second week of October where they discussed the issues of consolidation/closure concerns, the lack of agency plans to reduce/reorganize above the County Office level.

NASCOE President John Lohr and Vice President Mark Van Hoose had a conference call with FSA Administrator Bruce Nelson Thursday October 20, 2011 to address employee concerns and offer suggestions.

The NASCOE Legislative Committee organized a targeted WDC legislative fly in Wednesday and Thursday November 2-3, 2012. The belief was the House and Senate Ag Committees will try to finalize a farm bill with the 12 member Super Committee. The feeling was that this was an opportunity to get a bill done without sending it to the floor for debate. If it could be included with the Super Committee recommendation for deficit reduction then it will be included along with an up or down vote on the deficit plan. NASCOE wanted to try to push our NASCOE positions with the 12 member Super Committee.

The NWA has two States with Super Committee Members. Senator Murray from Washington and Senator Baucus from Montana. The NASCOE Legislative Committee requested 2 members from each State be sent to WDC. The NWA Legislative Chair James Anderson contacted each one of the NWA States mentioned. The respective States selected Paula Reed and Kathy Modin from Washington and Lori Knudsen and Bill Evans from Montana as representatives to participate in the NASCOE Leg Fly-in. We all need to give thanks to our NWA Representatives!

This was very short notice and a slim in numbers group. The attendees also included the NASCOE Legislative Committee Chairs Dan Root and Terry Stehr, NASCOE President John Lohr and VP Mark Van Hoose, and 2 members from the States with Super Committee members and representatives from Michigan (Senate Ag Committee Chair Stabenow) and Minnesota

(House Ag Committee Ranking Member Peterson). The Ag Committee Chairs and Ranking members submitted their recommendation to the Super Committee regarding the Ag cut recommendation amount. The amount submitted was 23 billion. The main focus of the fly-in was

Conservation Administration

Our Crop Insurance initiative

FSA-Reorg above the COF level

Thanks to all of attendees of the Legislative fly-in. The NASCOE Legislative Committee for their quick work, and all of the attendees for taking the time to represent us all.

NASCOE has had a busy month. Was it a successful one? Time will tell. The one thing that we do know is that our positions have been put forth and pushed as hard as possible.

Coming events for November include the NASCOE Executive committee and negotiations consultants from the 5 NASCOE representative areas will be going to WDC to finalize the 2011 negotiations with FSA management by discussing the various program issues. The goal from NASCOE's perspective is to increase program efficiencies for the employees and address employee concerns. NASCOE along with FSA Administrator, Bruce Nelson basically restored this face to face meeting process. It had been halted initially due to budgetary reasons. There will be a NASCOE business meeting on Monday November 14, and meeting with FSA management will be November 15 and 16. Attending the meeting will be the NASCOE executive committee and the 2011 negotiations consultants. MWA- Dennis Ray, Missouri, NEA Howard Rood, Vermont, NWA Annette Schenk, Idaho, SEA Sabrina Conditt, Arkansas and SWA Perri Jennings, New Mexico.

The South Dakota Association SDASCOE recently held its annual fall board mtg. October 13-14, 2012. I was invited to attend as NWA Exec. The SDASCOE group made plans for the 2012 SDASCOE convention to be held in Brookings, SD on April 20-21, 2012 at the Staurolite Inn/Fireside Restaurant. The SDASCOE group also invited South Dakota FSA State Director Craig Schaunaman. Mr. Schaunaman answered questions that had been submitted prior to the meeting. Mr. Schaunaman also took questions from the SDASCOE group during the meeting. The minutes of this meeting and Question and Answer session by SED Craig Schaunaman are posted on the SDASCOE website www.sdascoe.org or access through the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org . My thanks to the SDASCOE crew for their invitation and hospitality

It is time to submit 2012 negotiation items. December 1, 2012 is the deadline to submit. The process has changed some for 2012. The negotiation submission form is on the NASCOE website this year and will all be done electronically online. Negotiation form is now available. You can access the form from the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org or the NWA website www.nwanascoe.org Please take the time to voice your concerns and issues that are important to not only you, but also to the rest of our Agency. Negotiations are one of the most important processes that NASCOE takes place in.

We are all anxious to know what the future holds for all of us in FSA. What will be the next round after the VISPs are over? I have learned that many States received more VISP offers than they have slots for, but Nationally the VISP did not get enough participation to meet the targeted personnel reductions. There are rumors of another round of VISP in January of 2012,

but at a reduced amount (\$18,000). There are no details yet from the SED mtg. in Atlanta, GA. Hopefully NASCOE will learn more of what we may be expecting at the WDC negotiations mtg. in November or in the near future regarding possible plans for directed reassignment and possible office consolidation/closure. Once the reductions take place at the end of November obviously there will need to be some plan to deal with reduced numbers. NASCOE will continue to be proactive in this area.

What can you do as NASCOE members? Sign up for CAP/WIZ and make sure you respond to the alerts. Encourage membership in NASCOE and your State Association; enroll in the PAC (access through the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org). NASCOE is a grass roots organization which depends on its membership to stay in contact with their congressional delegations.

Reminder to make your reservations for both the NASCOE Northwest Area Rally (August 8-9, 2012) to be held in conjunction with the 2012 NASCOE Convention in Boise, ID (August 10-13, 2012) information available on the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org and do not forget to purchase a raffle ticket for a Jayco Travel Trailer offered as a fund raiser by IDASCOE, host of the 2012 convention in Boise, ID. Tickets are \$20.00 a piece or 6 for \$100.00 WHAT A DEAL!! The perfect Christmas gift for that hard to buy for person!

Thank you!

Respectively submitted by

Larry Olsen, NWA Exec.





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www.nascoeemblemsonline.com

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We try and provide items that we hope you can enjoy for years to come, but as always, if there are items you do not see at the NASCOE Store and would like us to make available, please let us know! You can either email Tom Oasen at oasen@charter.net or info@nascoeblemsonline.com with your ideas and suggestions!

The Holidays are fast approaching! Let the NASCOE Store take the pressure off of you from buying that perfect gift for your co-workers and give them a NASCOE Store gift certificate this Holiday season! Not sure if your co-workers would like a beret for just \$10.00, get them a gift certificate and let them pick out the perfect item!

The most wonderful thing about the NASCOE Store is that all commissions go directly to fund our NASCOE Scholarship programs! Shop early, shop often knowing that a portion of each and every purchase you make goes directly to your fellow Members children that are eligible to win the NASCOE Scholarship!

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Thank you for shopping at the NASCOE Store!

Tom Oasen, NASCOE Awards, Scholarships and Emblems Chairperson

