

The National Association of State and County Office Employees (NASCOE) was organized by Three Florida County Office Managers at an organizational meeting in Memphis, Tennessee in 1959. In 1960 in Kansas City, Kansas Past President of the United States Harry S Truman and President of the United States John F Kennedy addressed the First universally attended NASCOE convention. In 1962 the first Employee-Management Agreement was approved. NASCOE was organized for the welfare of ASCS county office employees in fields of –Recognition, High Salary, Civil Service Retirement, Life and Health Insurance, More Leave and Professional Improvement.

It is against this backdrop of history that made this the 50th anniversary of the founding of NASCOE special to a lot of people. The convention stopped taking registrations at 611 because facilities and caters could accommodate no more people.

The business of the convention was dominated by discussion of PT Reclassification, FERS Sick Leave, Budget, Cap and Trade Legislation and the modernization of USDA. A PT Reclassification plan has been negotiated by NASCOE and the Human Resources Department to allow some PT's in certain high workload situations to be promoted to a Grade 8. The plan HAS NOT been submitted to or approved by management and currently the funding to implement this will have to come from existing budget streams. It will be submitted to the new administrator for consideration as soon as possible. An initiative to modernize USDA as a result of the MIDAS reviews by an outside consulting firm is currently stalled because the legislative calendar is dominated by big ticket items such as Health Care Reform and the Climate Bill. The legislative initiative to pay FERS employees for their sick leave upon retirement was striped out of two bills by the senate and is currently on hold. The 2010 budget for FSA proposed by the Senate is 30 million dollars more than last year and the House is a 92 million dollar increase but with a 5 million dollar transfer to NRCS for administrative funding. This is only a legislative proposal NOTHING is final and COLA's and PT grade 8 promotions will have to be absorbed with the new budget.

The new administrator Jonathan Coppess addressed the convention. He stressed that he was from a family farm in Ohio and his father-in-law a farm in Illinois and that both were never shy about telling him what needs to be fixed within FSA. Even though he has only been on the job a month I found he has very thorough knowledge about FSA programs. He was a senate staffer for a senator was instrumental in passing the Farm Bill. He allowed questions from the floor and would acknowledge some issues he did not know the answer. He even dropped in for the afterhour's functions and would talk to anyone who had anything to discuss one-on-one. Do remember he has only been on the job a month. I wonder if he has computer access yet!

I do want to remind everybody that conventions are a lot of fun but that they are also very important. The Indiana banner was placed on the front row next to the door in the most visible location in the convention hall. There were 3 of us surrounded by **12 empty chairs**. Always remember that we work for the government; and in government the squeaky wheel gets the grease! The final banquet on Saturday night was full of retirees who even today understand the importance of a strong employee organization.

The next convention is August 3-8, 2010 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. At the Arlington Spa and Resort www.arlingtonhotel.com; www.hotsprings.org

Respectfully submitted:

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