



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF FARM SERVICE AGENCY COUNTY OFFICE EMPLOYEES

President – Eric Armentrout c/o Amy Barber Phone: 812-582-0373
Vice-President – Darla Norris 2103 E Main St Fax: 812-354-9026
Sec/Treasurer – Amy Barber Petersburg, IN 47567 Email: abarber3@frontier.com or
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**IASCOE Board of Directors Meeting/Convention
4/15/2010 and 4/16/2010
At the Embassy Suites in Indianapolis, Indiana**

The director's meeting of the Indiana Association of FSA County Office Employees was held at 10:30 am, Thursday, April 15, 2010 at the Embassy Suites in Indianapolis, IN. The meeting was called to order by President Eric Armentrout. Roll Call was taken by Sec/Treas Amy Barber. The following directors and members were present for the meeting:

Jacob Maxwell	Morgan Thornburg	Abby Curtis
Steve Rodenburg	Jay Gould	Cynthia Carroll
Tom Saggars	Jason Kishton	Lisa Wooten
Stacy Hare	Chris Hare	Darla Clodfelter
Roger Bailey	Tracy Soliday	Mike Kohlsdorf
Craig Dishman	Terry Wilds	Amy Barber
Marijo Kane	Darla Norris	Eric Armentrout
Suzanne Strietelmeier		

The agenda for the convention was discussed in detail by President Eric Armentrout and Vice President Darla Norris.

The 2011 convention will be at Bel Terra (a resort/casino in SE Indiana) in conjunction with Ohio and Kentucky on March 31 and April 1, 2011.

President Eric informed the directors that SED Julia Wickard would be unveiling her changes to the district and State Office during the convention. He asked everyone to keep in mind that we need to think about whether we want to keep our current district lines or update with whatever the SED sets forth as Indiana's new districts. Re-districting will be discussed further at our October meeting.

A discussion was held on the Scholarship program and the possibility of limiting a winner to one or two times.

President Eric thanked all of the Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Awards chairperson, Scholarship Chairperson, Emblems Chair and all of Directors for all of the efforts to make this convention a success.

Mike Kohlsdorf made a motion to approve the corrected Secretary's Report (it should have read Tom Saggars instead of Tom Sheppard under who made the motion for District #3 nominated Directors). This motion was seconded by Chris Hare and approved unanimously.



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The Sec/Treas presented the Treasurer Report, which is as follows:

**IASCOE TREASURER'S REPORT
04/14/2010**

2009-2010 Year

Checking (Now an Interest Bearing Acct)

Balance as of 2/3/2010 \$18,331.12 *
*(Includes \$3448.69 that was formally in Savings)

Total Income \$ 5,228.10

Total Expense \$ 5,353.25

Balance as of 4/14/2010 \$18,205.97

Savings

Balance as of 03/27/2009 \$ 0.00

Certificate of Deposit (13 Month)

Opening Balance (09/19/2008) \$10,834.78
Matures on 11/19/10
Interest Rate
Annual Percentage Yield

Roger Bailey made a motion to accept the report and Tracy Soliday seconded the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and it was unanimously approved.

Door prizes will be given throughout the convention. All registered convention attendees will receive a numbered ticket for the drawing. Chris Hare made a motion to spend approximately \$250 for the door prizes which was seconded by Lisa Wooten. The motion was passed unanimously.

Roger Bailey made a motion to adjourn the Directors meeting until the convention reconvenes which was seconded by Jacob Maxwell and unanimously approved.

The IASCOE Convention Meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by VP Darla Norris

Invocation: Jacob Maxwell

Pledge of Allegiance – Stacy Hare

Welcome: Eric Armentrout, president. Eric commended the SED, Julia Wickard, for allowing 4 hours of Admin leave granted to members to attend the convention this afternoon. He also encouraged everyone to bid on the silent auction items because that money is used for scholarships. He discussed the speakers that were at the Midwest Area Rally in Newark, OH and some of the topics that were on the agenda.



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Committee Chairs:

- Scholarship- Lisa Wooten: the former SED Kenny Culp will be the auctioneer for the live auction in the evening.
- Emblems-Jay Gould: Emblems are available, please purchase as much as you can.
- Legislative- Jacob Maxwell
- Membership- Chris Hare
- Benefits- Craig Dishman
- Awards- Suzanne Strietelmeier
- Programs- Marijo Kane
- Webmaster- Amy Barber

IACS/FLP-John Simmons: He has been the state president 5 times. This association started in 1973 and each state has an association. There is another association IASE-for support employees. There are only 11 FLM's in Indiana. He described how the FL teams are structured and how this affects service. Everything is budget driven. There is money in the programs, but not for staff to deliver the programs and the technology has to work correctly. Their association does not work on benefits, they work on program issues. If you get the opportunity to become more involved in your association, please do so; become active. There are 24 members in IN and this is 100% membership in IACS. If you are going to whine, then get involved to get things corrected.

Retired IASCOE-Carol Reedy: She is representing the Southern IN retirees. She invited all to the meetings. There is interest in getting a northern group started. The members currently decide where they are going to meet and they all keep in contact via email, etc. She encouraged everyone to get a northern group together and start having meetings to keep members informed. It is a wonderful way to keep in touch. She worked in the STO for many years and has been retired for 15 years. Her life really began when she retired. You can always form social groups outside of the office and perhaps once you are retired, there may be more time to form such groups. The theme here seems to be "get involved." This is the message that she would also like to send out. The PAC is very important to work with congress on your behalf. Membership is very important and the more numbers, the louder the voice you have with congress. By virtue of being a government employee, you can join NARFE and this organization is over 325,000 members strong. This group in addition to NASCOE is constantly pitching on your behalf. She discussed the surcharges in the new health bill and NARFE has already affected some changes to delay some of the parts of the bill. NARFE fights for all federal employees and county office employees are eligible to belong to NARFE by virtue of having federal benefits as part of their jobs. She discussed some of the current legislative items and accomplishments of NARFE. They are trying to get part of the federal pensions exempted from taxes. There are 12 states that totally exempt pensions and this is something that NARFE is working toward.

Indiana Dept. of Agriculture-Joe Kelsay: He is also a 6th generation farmer. He gave regards from the governor and the Sec of Ag. He came from a dairy farm. He studied Ag Economics at Purdue and now he is back on the farm, but he started this position in November 2009. He discussed the following:

- We all have a connection to agriculture and the important role that plays. Indiana is primarily an agricultural state. You will not see the spring breakers flocking to IN! Indiana Ag represents \$25 billion and has 61,000 farms, making IN the fourth largest agricultural state.
- Corn yields per acre have continued to grow despite decreases in fertilizer application rates. Soybeans yields and most Ag outputs follow this trend.

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- Currently 10-12% of disposable income goes for food in this country. Food expenditures have decreased over the past forty years. With 88% of income left, this can go to other things that we want to have and not for things that we HAVE to have. In other countries, the % of income used for food is much higher.
- He discussed agriculture's importance and impact in this county and in other countries. As people earn more money, they tend to eat better and consume more animal protein. There are opportunities for the United States to provide food for growing populations in developing countries.
- There should be concern, however, the amount of people even in this country who still go to bed hungry.
- The Department of AG must respond to the needs of consumers. Advocacy and outreach are extremely important for the Dept. of Ag to educate the public and groups about agriculture. They want to reach out to the public about crop production. The Humanities Council started a 2 year campaign with people who are not typical Ag groups with the Food for Thought Campaign. Online presence with Facebook and Twitter are also ways to reach out to the public. The Dept. also gets involved in education of Legislative issues. There are 13 agencies in IN that can regulate farms and it is important to communicate with these agencies. The Dept. acts as an ombudsman to communicate between farmers and the agencies.
- The Challenge is the Economic Opportunity through tough economic times, with tight budgets, severe competition and be sure to show that the future looks bright. There are program managers that ferret out possibilities and look for initiatives that can help create jobs and encourage the economy. One such opportunity is ethanol with 12 plants in IN. Hardwood production is the largest Ag area in IN. Livestock is another area that provides a lot of opportunity.
- Economic trade with other countries provides an exciting opportunity.
- Environment Stewardship is critical to our future. Farmers are truly the first environmentalists and for whatever reason, agriculture gets a bad rap, but it could be a good resource for protecting the environment. IN has 75% of the state managing erosion at or below "T". This is a testimony of the dedication of the farmers to conservation practices. The CREP program has 570 practices and will include 11 watersheds soon. This should increase the acres involved considerably. There are national initiatives that are focused in the Midwest, the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Q: Can you offer any information on the vomitoxin issue?

A: There is a great difficulty in defining the areas where the problem exists and this presents a great challenge. This does not affect ethanol, but it does affect the product that results. This is also really bad for farmers who need to feed their crop and cannot. They are looking at getting a disaster declaration, however, to get this type of declaration on the quality of feed. He is hopeful that the problem can be managed and find places to take crops affected with this. There is no easy solution to solve this problem.

Blackford Co Purdue Ext Education- Stacy Clupper: She is a graduate from Purdue and her presentation was "How to Kill a Tree." She works with farmers and horticulture they get many calls regarding trees. They try to educate people regarding the care for trees. She discussed the following:

- Do not plant your tree in the wrong place. If the site conditions are not right, it will not survive. You must consider the mature size of the tree when planting. When you plant a tree, the hole must be 2 ½ times the size of the root ball and not plant the tree too deep. Plant the tree at the same depth it was when originally in the ground.

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- Do not use too much mulch; use only about 2" of mulch because more attracts insects and diseases. It also creates too much moisture on the trunk. Do not leave the staking on the tree too long. Use three stakes and take down when tree is strong enough to stand on its own.
- Be sure to remove the burlap and wire that is around the roots when you purchase the tree. When the roots start to surface, all kinds of damage can occur. Many times insects do not show up until there is a real problem.
- Be careful using a lawn mower or trimmer around the trunk. The bark is like the blood vessels of the tree and when you damage the bark, it will start the decline to the tree's health.
- Topping a tree is a practice that is not recommended. The new growth is not necessarily good growth. Proper pruning is highly recommended, but you must do it correctly. It is better to prune somewhat than not at all. Be sure that your tree does not have a "double leader" trunk (two trunks) and have it trimmed right away. Do not use the tree as a sign post.
- Evergreens are different than regular trees and if the needles are affected, they do not grow back. You must be careful pruning and do not go into the dark area of the plant.
- Do not perform your own first aid to a tree with problems. Duct tape is not recommended!
- Follow recommended care for trees and there is a lot of information through Purdue. Arbor Day is April 30 and this is to encourage tree planting and care.

IN State Director-Julia Wickard: Granted the employees who attended the convention this afternoon 4 hours of administrative leave. She thanked everyone for the opportunity for the STO specialists to answer questions.

STO Specialists on Panel: John Walters-IT, Mike Mattingly-AO, Dori Pickett-RLPO, Carl Schweikhardt-PL/PA, Rick Kelley-Exec Officer, Don Hunton-PS, Gail Peas-Conservation, Greg Foulke-FLP, Ron Birt- SURE/Disaster/NAP, Kris Soonpaa-GIS. Other STO personnel were introduced.

John Walters-IT: discussed Internet Explorer 7 release and why it takes so long to get out various softwares to the counties. Windows 7 is to be tentatively out in the next fiscal year. All machines will have to be loaded with the new windows program. New equipment- is based on budget but IT does not have a budget for actual equipment, this comes out of the agency budget. They are trying to replace some of the older equipment. New software coming out called Remedy, this is help desk software. This has a service request module and it should be easier to submit help tickets. This is to come out in June.

Mike Mattingly-AO: Budget- it looks so far for this year, especially on the CO side. When the allocation was distributed to the COF's, they took the best approach they could and if some counties are over, just contact the STO. There may be money that can be moved around. Allocation: \$29.4 million is for CO, \$24.4 is for S&E and awards, only \$5 million for personnel, but \$4.4 of that is for rent/utilities. Only about \$600,000 is left for discretionary spending. There was no equipment money allocated. There could be some emergency purchases if necessary. On the GS side, there is very little margin on the allocations. Staffing: there were two staffing levels, DAFO staffing-what you need to take care of business and the funding level for the FTE's. There are 7 FTE's short at this time. There are 327 on board now and will have 328 and this puts them at ceiling for CO and are at ceiling for GS. Health Insurance bill will impact our FEHB, but not sure just how. Flexible Spending will be capped at \$2500. Dependent children will be covered until 26 as of 1-1-2011. Retirement training: they wanted to have a full day training, but there are

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free seminars that the STO has let the employees know about. There is a certified benefits trainer that will be available in the future and employees will be alerted when that is possible.

Dori Pickett: RLPO, contracting officer: Has been on board for a year. She handed out information on CO leasing status. She discussed the leasing process that is in effect.

Carl Schweikhardt -PL/PA: Software will probably not be available for a couple of months to load benchmark yields for ACRE. Corn affected by mold is causing concern in how to determine production for use in actual yields. It is to the farmers benefit to report the highest yields he can because it does not look like the State benchmark trigger will be met. The June 1 deadline is holding firm. The July 15 deadline to establish benchmark yields is also coming up quickly. AGI certification form and the IRS received over 600,000 927's and this is about a third of the ones that need reviewed. There are many rejections, but in some cases, the IRS is sending the 927 to the wrong person. Please report any of these to the STO. The problems with payments this past fall caught everyone by surprise and they are working through the problems and still have some hanging. Let the STO know if there are some that have not been paid. Please be sure to thank all the staffs for their patience in this endeavor.

Rick Kelley, XO: Thanked everyone for their patience for working through difficult programs and problems. It is good to see everyone and all the retirees that are present. Outreach: there have been tremendous changes in outreach. It is critically important to reach all of our farmers. There are not many SDA's farming in IN. There are many women and disabled farmers that we need to concentrate on reaching. All the FLM's were out doing presentations promoting the loan programs. There was \$64,000 in outreach funding. They are targeting women and disabled farmers. Youth and other groups are considered general audience. We still want to do events and participate whenever possible. There is \$7,000 budget for the two targeted groups. There is \$2,000 for general audience events, and this will be used for the new FSA banners and table top exhibits. There is \$20,000 for public outreach and funding will be determined for any events that need some funds. OTIS-there has not been good instructions for public affairs and it is bogged down now, so news releases, etc., are to be removed. Accessibility reviews are done on offices to be sure they comply with ADA requirements. Three counties will be reviewed soon.

Don Hunton-PS: Facility loan training to be started next week. There are many changes in the 2008 farm bill regarding this program. There will be four meetings in the next two weeks. They will do an overview of the changes, examine the application, review COR findings, environmental issues that must be addressed, financial analysis, severance agreements, UCC-1's, etc., and will look at other issues that need to be reviewed. RD has been invited to the meetings to discuss their grant program that must be taken into account if a producer gets a grant. In May, there will be changes in how information is presented to the COF's. There are still many issues with the NRRS software and especially with PS refunds. They must be done manually and must be researched before releasing them. Washington does not know when the software for the fix will be released.

Gail Peas-Conservation: She gave some projections about the program. There will be an expansion of the CREP agreement that should be done in May. This will have CREP in 65 counties in IN and all congressional districts will have a CREP area. There are some changes in the CREP program. The state incentive for wetland practices has increased. There will be a large push to involve the SWCD's in IN. They should be ready to offer enrollment in June. There could be a general signup in late June or early July, there is a rumor that 2 million acres that could be accepted and this is the largest signup since signup 26. The state priority area changed in IN, so counties will have to be aware of that. The Great Lakes area is a national priority, so that stays. There should be some type of training on the signup. Any PT that has not done a general signup should get more training. There could be soil rental rates increases and this

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would come down the pipeline. The cropping history should be moved forward. There is no idea for new software. BCAP-no activity can take place until the bill is finalized. There will be significant changes and it will probably not come out until late winter or even later. She feels that the COF's should be very busy this summer.

Greg Foulke-FLP: On Monday migration was complete from MAC to the web. This enables the FL team to utilize this information no matter where they are in the state. There were 3 new FLOT's hired and this has not happened since June 2002 when new hires came from the outside. There should be another position opening soon. There will be another FL specialist hired in the STO. At this time, 31.6% more loans than last year. Funding: there was a lot of money allocated by congress, but the money ran out even though there was an extra \$900 million allocated. There is a movement to petition congress for more money for the FL program. He went on to describe some of the programs that are available for beginning farmers, etc. They considered themselves the lender of first opportunity.

Ron Birt-SURE/Disaster/NAP: He is to become a district director soon. He has been with the agency for 27 years and the SURE program is certainly the ugliest program that has been announced. There has been millions of dollars allocated under the SURE program to date. There is no deadline for the SURE program at this time. The 3.0 workbook version is to be the final version. You will have to run new reports when this comes out. The 2009 program is to come out in October and there is no sign of software for that program, we will use the workbooks. Interim reports, there is a wrong price coming in on some insurance codes, especially with the code 90, so hold off until this is corrected. There should be answers coming in on some other issues. RMA, GRIP, and GRP policies have been corrected. Signature policies: will need producer to sign new workbook.

Kris Soonpaa-GIS: What is coming: new NAIP imagery for 2010? There will be a migration to a centralization point. 1,000 counties in the nation will be migrated. Each state will have counties involved in the process and the information will no longer be loaded onto individual machines and loaded into a central server. In June there is to be a patch to correct some software issues. Certification maps have changed a bit based on county needs.

If there are any questions and they will be given to the specialist and they will be answered via email.

Chris Hare-membership: Today's theme has been getting more involved. He encouraged everyone to donate and support IASCOE.

Hospitality Reception

Banquet, Presentation of Sheltered Reality and a live auction took place in the evening. Sheltered Reality is a dynamic group of drummers who use music to help people and children across the country. The Live Auction was a lot of fun and was a great success for the first attempt to do this. \$985 was raised at the live auction.

Friday, April 16, 2010 - Convention Re-Convened at 8:30 am

Eric Armentrout-President of IN IASCOE: Welcomed everyone. He presented a \$20 gift certificate to the person from IASCOE who traveled the farthest to the convention. The winner, Greg Knowles from Posey County traveled 302 miles.

Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem-Deb Esselman-Baird, WI



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Military Tribute: Deb Esselman-Baird-WI: Gave a presentation on the military and flag etiquette.

JM Marketing, Trevor Gartner: He gave a donation to IASCOE from JM Marketing for the scholarship fund. JM Marketing has worked with NASCOE for over 20 years. There is a free Accidental Death policy available to all NASCOE members. He encouraged everyone to look over their life insurance portfolio and be sure they are insured properly. The beneficiary form for the Accidental Death policy should be available online soon. JM Marketing invested heavily in personnel who can provide better information on the Federal Employee retirement system. They can provide different scenarios for members so that they can make more educated choices regarding their retirement. The Dental Program has permanent open enrollment, but you need to stay with the program for at least 12 months.

OGC, Steve Reed: He is an attorney for the Office of General Counsel and covers Ohio and Indiana. If you get a subpoena, contact your STO immediately. OGC will deal with these. If the situation is outside the scope of employment, you are on your own.

Q: Jury duty, what is the procedure?

A: This should be covered in the handbooks on the process.

IN SED, Julia Wickard: One of the first things that she did was to become an associate member and do some reading on the association and understands the importance of the organization. She gave some of her background. She was asked to become the SED by the Obama Administration and this has been an incredible journey since she started at SED. She began on August 3 and has visited 61 counties to date. The programs are very complicated and the STO is working through that. It is her job to be sure that employees have the tools to do their jobs. She understands the frustrations associated with IT. The Administrator has a common sense approach to program delivery. She feels that the administration has a strong commitment to providing the tools we all need to provide good service to the farmers.

Reorganization in IN: The changes were based on budget with the District Directors. There are 8 DD's and almost all work out of their home county to save taxpayer dollars. There is some STO reorganization and there is an opening in PS/Disaster and another for an Ag loan specialist. Cross training has been lacking in the STO and the goal of the reorganization is to provide backup for the COF's. She has been listening for the first months in her job and has been identifying areas that need addressed. She is committed to become more efficient, effective and proactive. The STO will do weekly conference calls beginning May 4. She wants to be sure that everyone gets the same information. The agenda will be posted prior to the call. The conference call notes will be posted by the next day those results from the calls. She understands that there could be a fear to ask questions, but they want employees to share questions and they will keep the names confidential. The goal is to deliver information to the employees directly from the specialists. The calls will be very structured and pertinent to the agenda. This is modeled after what Washington DC is doing. She encouraged everyone to provide feedback. The goal of the DD meetings will be more management related.

Role as SED: She wants to be "one of you" and she will ultimately have to make decisions but she wants feedback and input. Fiscal Responsibility is one of her major duties. Reorganization, training, and oversight were three issues that come out in the survey that was sent out. The farm program area is very important but we need to address other employee issues. Budget restraints make face to face training very difficult. District training seems to be the way training will be accomplished in the future. She asks for everyone to be patient as modernization progresses. She also discussed other types of training modes that will be used, such as web cam, etc.

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Customer Service: she wants to continue outstanding customer service, from Washington to the COF's. They are hoping for counter skills and management training in the future.

Turn over: there are 6 COT's on board and there will be many retirements coming soon. There are 4 FLOT's on board, too. There could potentially be opening for all COT's in the next year. As SED, it is her job to ensure that there will be new employees trained to take over the future vacancies.

She presented a power point and discussed the following:

- Generational Differences were discussed. There are 32 employees that are in the age range of 60-82 and are considered the Veteran Generation.
- Baby Boomer: there are 258 employees in this bracket that are age 44-60.
- Generation X: there are 99 employees in this category and encompass ages 26-44.
- Generation Y: there are 11 employees in this range and include ages 26 and younger.
- FSA has all of these types of employees and this is what makes the agency strong.

She thanked all for their hard work. She has an open door policy and gave her cell phone number to all and encouraged everyone to touch base with her with issues. She showed a map of the new district areas. The changes will take effect April 26, 2010. She wants to know how the changes will affect everyone.

Q: Has there been any considerations to have CED's get loan approval authority or in any other way to help with the FLP workload?

A: This is a good point. She wants IASCOE to provide feedback on this issue. We are one agency and very dependent on each other to deliver all FSA programs. She wants some feedback on this issue.

Q: Could the power point be posted to the internet on the generational differences?

A: Yes, this will be done. They are also looking into SharePoint and it will take some time to ensure that this is done in conjunction with the intranet.

Q: In addition to the generational differences, have you thought about personality testing and profiling to better identify employee talents and differences.

A: We need to partner with other agencies and organizations that could provide such information and this is something that could be looked into for the future.

Q: They recognize that some redistricting could be the result of personality differences and will this change with the change in different personalities become involved. Do you see the map changing in 5 years?

A: This plan has to be flexible and the map needs to be dynamic, and there could be different approaches taken in the future. The map could be changed. Some states are conducting their own workload analysis and basing DD areas and vacancies on this more current information.

Q: It must be taken into account how the DD changes affect the employees.

A: This will be noted.

The DD map will be issued today or next week and the training notice will also be coming out.

MWA Legislative Chair, Tony Augustine, IL: He discussed how the leader of Sheltered Reality has made a difference and each of us can make a difference. You need to take a chance and step up to help NASCOE. You have to believe in yourself and NASCOE. It is clear that everyone in the room believe in the association and themselves, but we must take a chance and do whatever it takes to make a difference. We need to talk to those who are not members or who are not involved. He discussed the following:

- **Farm Bill:** He read an excerpt from an article from a farmer publication. It projects a significantly lower dollar amount that will be available for the next farm bill. It appears to be unlikely that the same bills and spending will occur in the next farm

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bill. House Ag Chairman, Peterson, has called for further reforms in farm bill programs. There is support for more revenue based programs. This will impact our jobs tremendously.

- **Membership:** The greatest benefit we have is our jobs and we live from one farm bill to the next. Our jobs are not really that secure and the programs are probably going to change. This is where we can all make a difference. When we leave this convention, we need to make sure our membership is strong. We need to go back and talk to the non-members and share with them the need for them to be members and how this could affect shaping the next farm bill.
- **CAPWIZ:** this is the medium that we utilize to get messages to congress quickly. An alert came out a few days ago regarding 2011 budget based on the additional programs that we have to administer at this time so if you have not responded to it, please do so. There are more alerts coming out very soon. The more letters that hit the congressman at a time, the more they pay attention. The leg aides keep track of the issues and when they see a predominate issue, they take it to the congressional and they look into that issue further. You need to get more people signed up for CAPWIZ.
- **PAC:** This was formed in 2005 and it was started out of need. He gave a presentation on the PAC. We can be part of the change TODAY and become involved in the PAC. We need to do whatever it takes to make a difference. Even if you do not agree with the PAC, it DOES make a difference and we need to be involved. We need to have a voice with Congress so that we can ensure we have jobs in the future. You have to believe and take a chance and make this work. We are in still in the early stages of having the size of our PAC where it will make a difference, however, even at this point, our PAC is starting to be recognized and legislators are beginning to seek out our PAC. The large PACs give out \$5,000 to legislators with a stipulation that the legislator cannot EVERY vote against their cause. This demonstrates the influence the power a PAC can have on policy. After the MWA rally, our PAC surpassed the corn growers PAC and we are well on our way to becoming one of the largest Ag PACS in the nation. If only 16% of our membership participated at a \$3 per pay period level, the NASCOE PAC would rank 3rd of the Ag PACs. This would mean that we would have a much stronger voice with congress. He has a computer available to set up for a PAC allotment and can help members here at the convention.

NASCOE President, Myron Stroup discussed the following:

- **WebTA:** NASCOE requested that a form is to be signed by the COC in order for the DD to sign off on the CED timesheets.
- **Congressional Hearing-** This was a wonderful opportunity for NASCOE to be able to testify at the hearing, even though there was a short time frame to get things ready for the hearing. There was a survey sent out to get NASCOE member input on IT. The data made an impact on the committee at the hearing. You can listen to past hearings and these are rather informative.
- **Administrator visits:** The Administrator visited some states in the Midwest area regarding IT issues.
- **Transformational Hearings:** Please take the time to listen to the recorded sessions. NASCOE supports a more grass-roots approach to programs and IT. He discussed the need to get new talent into the agency. Duplication of work: this needs to be addressed and eliminated, such as crop reporting to two agencies. PT Classification: this has been in the works for a long time. An Assistant CED position was turned down by management. There is a great hindrance for PT's to be allowed

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in the COT program based on a mobility issue, which has to move to an open county.

- **New farm bill:** hearings are to begin this month on the bill. This means that we have work to do in monitoring programs and ensuring our future. We are completely dependent on the farm bills because if the programs are eliminated, we don't have our jobs. The gross revenue program would be funded by cuts in crop insurance and cuts in the direct program. This is a proposal at this point, but we need to monitor this closely. Even though ACRE and SURE are difficult programs, it is a good thing that FSA was designated to administer them because there are many other organizations that are willing to take these programs and others.
- **NAFEC:** invited NASCOE to attend meetings in Washington DC with them. There was a lot of discussion about building membership in NAFEC because the stronger NAFEC is, the stronger NASCOE is. NAFEC is able to get appointments with individuals that NASCOE probably could not get, so the partnership is very important to get the message we have across.
- **PT Classification:** the wheels of government don't turn very fast, but they do turn. A notice is in clearance and should be out to the field shortly describing the pilot program for Key Program Technician position. This person would be a district or area resource person. It will be a pilot program for two years and the STO must request this. The funding will come out of state budget. Julia has talked to Eric about this already.
- **CAPWIZ:** HR4865 regards the use of lump sum annual leave to turn into your TSP account. There is also a bill regarding Ad Hoc disaster and NASCOE is taking a position against how the funds would be distributed through state Ag Dept. and not FSA. This could lead to a dangerous precedent.
- **Family:** This organization has been referred to as a family many times and this is very true. Family members work together, play together and most importantly, help each other. He appreciates everyone's membership, but he feels that members need to make additional contributions to the organization to ensure its success. This can be done through PAC, CAPWIZ and many other ways.

Scholarships: Lisa Wooten: there were 10 applications received this year. Many items were analyzed and the scores were very close. There were two winners for \$500 each. They raised \$985 at last night's live auction. With increased funds, the possibility of another scholarship is something that will have to be discussed.

Indiana Tourism, Kurt Braningham: He gave a presentation on the Department of Tourism. He discussed how important tourism is very important to Indiana economy. Visitors generate nearly \$1 billion in this state. You can go to the state website and get electronic newsletters. They have an email blast of 122,048 subscribers. They started a new initiative for local artisans to promote their products and build tourism. There are 7 new wineries are set to open in 2010.

IASCOE Program Chair, Marijo Kane: She showed the program suggestion form that is available on the NASCOE site. You need send your form to her and it will be forwarded to the MWA chair and the National Chair.

MWA Alternate Exec, Charlene Neukomm: Negotiations, this is a tool for us to be able to make a request to revise programs and forms to make our jobs easier or just improved. Under the Program area, you can make a suggestion through that medium and get something within the program changed. Negotiations are based on different issues. She gave examples of some program suggestions.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm. The Negotiations process starts in the fall. You can submit a suggestion at any time and they are acted upon in the fall to spring. NASCOE reviews every



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item submitted, the board discusses the issues and then a position is written up on the issue and then discussed at the spring negotiation session with management.

NASCOE has a big voice. IN has about 73% membership. Having a big voice has everything to do with big membership, and the bigger the voice NASCOE has based on the number of members, the more the congressional folks will be willing to listen to the NASCOE message. NASCOE was started because CO employees had NO benefits. PAC and CAPWIZ are part of the voice the NASOE uses to get the message out. The last alert discusses the separation of S&E in the budget. The last time we got NAIP imagery, the funds were taken out of S&E. We need to be sure that any IT upgrades do not come out of S&E.

Conventions:

WI: April 23-24 Eau Claire, WI
MI: April 30-May 1
MN: July 22-23
NATIONAL: August 3-7, Hot Springs AR
MO: Sept 23-24

Candidacy Announcements

MWA Exec: Charlene Neukomm
NASCOE President: Myron Stroup
NASCOE Secretary: Deb Esselman
MWA Alternate Exec: Dennis Ray-Kathy Post announced his candidacy

Suzanne Strietelmeier gave out sick leave awards and certificates of appreciation. These awards are as follows:

1000-1500 Hours

1. Tammy Cooper – Boone Co
2. Denise Trimboli – Knox Co
3. Pat Jones – Boone Co
4. Debbie Bush – Washington Co
5. Tracy Soliday – Washington Co
6. Glenna Harper – Lake Co

1500-2000 Hours

1. Tom Saggars – Steuben Co
2. Linda Lake – Steuben Co
3. Verna Rupe – Boone Co
4. Sheryl Longstreth – Porter Co
5. David Gottlieb – Porter Co

2001-2500 Hours

1. Roger Bailey – Putnam/Hendricks Co
2. Brad Summers – Knox Co

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Other Awards

1. Certificate of Appreciation: Judge for Midwest Area Scholarship – Jacob Maxwell
2. Extra Mile Award – Suzanne Strietelmeier

Distinguished Service Awards

1. Service to NASCOE – Amy Allen
2. Service to Community – Jay Gould
3. Service to FSA/Agriculture – Steve Rodenburg

Scholarship Raffle winners were as follows:

Wooden bowl – Lisa Cleveland from Muncie

Quilt Rack – Linda Lake from Stueben Co

Wooden Trivet – Brenda Crawford from Tipton Co

And Corner Shelves – Tracy Soliday from Washington Co.

The silent auction winners were announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Amy R Barber,
Secretary/Treasurer of IASCOE