



President:

Brandon Wilson
115 W. 17th Street
Lyndon, KS 66451
785-828-4631
wilsonbj86@gmail.com

Vice President:

Ernie Battin
PO Box 609
Syracuse, KS 67878
620-384-6955
ebattin@pld.com

Second Vice President:

David Sweany
1410 East Iron Street
Salina, KS 67401
785-825-8269
d.jsweany@hotmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Marsha Gerstner
1520 Kansas Avenue
Great Bend, KS 67530
620-792-5329
marshagerstner@hotmail.com

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KASCOE is on the Web at
<http://kascoe.org/default.aspx>

KASCOE e-News

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December 2011

Extending Pay Freeze for Feds is a Bad Idea

Note: The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) works with NASCOE on many issues. NASCOE helps promote what FSA County Employees do (workload) and NARFE advocates employee benefits for all Federal Employees. NASCOE fought for and earned special legislation granting FSA County Employees the right to federal benefits. Many NASCOE members are also NARFE members. For more information on NARFE go to: <http://www.narfe.org/home/>

WASHINGTON, DC – In response to a proposal by Senate Republicans that would extend the pay freeze for federal workers through 2015, Joseph A. Beaudoin, president of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association, released the following statement:

“The payroll tax cut is designed to help America’s middle-class families who are struggling in this tough economy. So it’s incomprehensible why some senators, to offset the costs of the payroll tax cut, have proposed freezing pay once more for middle-class federal workers across the nation – 62 percent of whom only earn between \$25,000 to \$75,000 a year.

“The current federal worker pay freeze, which went into effect last year, is expected to save the United States \$50 billion over two years. Our nation’s federal workers are already doing their part to address a financial crisis they did not cause. “

The Republican proposal also includes an irresponsible plan to cut up to one-in-10 federal jobs – jobs that ensure our food, water, airports, borders, nuclear power plants and highways are safe.



NASCOE Conference Call Report-

The NASCOE Executive Board had a conference call Friday December 2, 2011 to discuss and make decisions on many items. The first was the planning of a Legislative Conference. The Executive Committee decided to have a "Full" NASCOE Legislative Conference, February 6 thru February 9, 2012. The Full Conference would include inviting all State Associations to attend. The 6th and 9th will be travel days. Tuesday Feb. 7 will include an in structural program session with the NASCOE Legislative Committee and NASCOE Consultant Robert Redding. Wednesday Feb. 8 will be Capitol Hill visits to State's Congressional Members. Wednesday evening will be individual Area wrap up meeting to submit Key contact reports, report cards, and general discussion of Hill visits. All states participating in the legislative Conference will receive \$750.00 to help with expenses of attending the conference. The remaining expense will be the responsibility of the State Association. If a State Association needs additional assistance they would need to contact the Area Exec. For the SWA that is me. The NASCOE Legislative Committee would also like to see as many NAFEC members attend as is possible. The Legislative Co-Chairs plan to have more information out to everyone in the near future. The dates are set Feb. 6-9, 2012 so start looking for airfare deals. I will get the hotel information out as soon as possible. The rate will be \$183.00 per night (government rate), which is far cheaper than last year.

The failing of the Super Committee has put the farm bill back into a normal farm bill process, going through the House and Senate Ag Committees and will go to sequestration and full debate on the floor. The failure of the Super Committee sets the stage for automatic reductions to take effect in the 2013 FY. For the Ag Bill this would mean a 12 + Billion reduction. Certain items are exempted in this reduction amount. Food Stamps, CRP, and possibly Crop Insurance would be exempt from this reduction. Mr. Kevin Wooten from North Carolina has been appointed by NASCOE President John Lohr as a Co-Chair to serve with Dan Root (existing Co-Chair) to the Legislative Committee. Congrats to Kevin. NASCOE CO-Legislative Chair Terry Stehr from PA accepted the buy-out and has retired. A big thanks for all Terry has done for NASCOE and the Legislative Committee and Good luck to Terry in his retirement.

The Executive Committee discussed PAC (political action contributions) Promotions. The Executive Committee would like to be able to do a PAC presentation for every State and Area Rally if at all possible. Charla Daly, SEA Legislative Chair is updating a print promotion and a power point presentation. Charla may also be able to attend a State Convention, State gathering, and/or Area Rally to help promote participation in the PAC. If a State is interested in having Charla for a PAC promotion, please contact me. The Executive Committee is developing a plan to contact every member that has not contributed to the PAC. Charla Daly is working very hard on this for all of NASCOE. We will need everyone's help on this. The PAC is very important especially now.

NASCOE was planning to help do a big push for membership with NAFEC (National Association of Farmer Elected Committees) in January in time for the Organizational Meetings. Since AO-1528 and its revision along with budget issues, Counties in some States may not be having Organizational Meetings, NASCOE has a new plan. Chance Fenoglio, SWA Legislative Chair, is emailing the NAFEC promotional material to the Execs for distribution to all State Presidents. We hope that all CED's can have this information by Wednesday in advance of their COC ballot counting meetings. The material should be posted to the NASCOE website. That would make it easy for us to notify everyone to go there to get it in time for these meetings. As we move forward, NAFEC will be an instrumental part of keeping and strengthening the COC delivery system.

Conference Call Report– Continued

Annette Hyman, NASCOE Secretary, has received around 60 Negotiation Items in the last two days. That is great news, but we really would like to have many more. The board decided to extend the date of submission of negotiation items until December 15, 2011 (See Related Story). The process is simpler now than ever and is completely done online. The online submission process is on the NASCOE website. I am asking everyone to please submit your ideas online to the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org and then let our Negotiation Consultant, Lynette Bond from Utah, lynette.bond@ut.usda.gov or lynette.bond@yahoo.com know that you submitted an item. Lynette will be working very hard on all the negotiation items for us and will represent the SWA well. The items will need to be compiled and ready for discussion at the Pre-Negotiation Meeting January 15th and 16th of 2012. With the holidays coming up all our ideas will need to be submitted by the 15th of December to give Annette Hyman enough time to put together for the pre-negotiations session. State Associations can use government email to put out reminders on negotiations information. Visit the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org to submit a negotiation item. With everything that has gone on this past year I am sure we can all think of something that could be submitted. The Negotiations process is part of the labor relations agreement with management and one of the most important things that NASCOE does. This is our chance to let management know what does not work, what is perceived to be unfair, how the agency can be improved, and basically make management be accountable..

During the 2011 Negotiation Meeting in WCD, Deputy Administrator of Field Operations, Mr. Mike Wooden stated that he would support CED's requesting to get trained and certified to deliver FLP in the county office. I would like to get some feedback on this issue. I would encourage all CEDs in the SWA to express their feelings to me on this issue or through their State Association President. There are some individuals that think this would be a big step towards job security in the future. There are others that do not want any part of this, please let me know your thoughts in the SWA. NASCOE also wants to know your feelings on pursuing either a change to the FLM eligibility (some type of training requirement) for vacant CED positions and/or a change to the CED eligibility (no initial training requirement same as FLMs that apply for CED positions) for vacant FLM positions. Let me your thoughts on this issue also.

The vast majority of the CO employees that took the VERA/VISP were NASCOE members. Friday December 2, 2011 a new VERA notice came out. It will be very important that we continue to try and grow our membership. It is going to take all of us working together to strengthen the COC system, work with our Legislative team on farm bill and policy issues, take care of our benefits, and many more issues that will face us in the near future. It is an honor to represent the SWA on the NASCOE board, as it is a privilege to serve with the other members of the Executive Committee. Please keep me updated on any concerns, questions, or other issues that you may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dale R. Fowers,
SWA Exec



Awards & Scholarships Committee:

Rachel Hendrickson
rachhendrick-
son@yahoo.com

Benefits & Emblems Committee:

Lisa Crockett
crockett9@cox.net

Legislative Committee:

Ernie Battin
ebattin@pld.com

Membership Committee:

David Sweany
d.jsweany@hotmail.com

Programs Committee:

Brenda Matteson
Brenda.matteson@ks.usda.gov

Publicity Committee:

Karen Holloway
cherry-
creek3@earthlink.net

Associate Member Liaison:

Sue Rusch
srusch061@gmail.com

Webmaster:

Carl Warner
cdwarner@ruraltel.net

File in PM-14

Questions/Comments?
Contact Brandon Wilson

Program and Negotiation Processes Explained

NASCOE offers its member two ways to provide feedback to the administration through the Program Suggestion Process and the Negotiation Suggestion Process. These two processes can be offered to the membership because USDA recognizes NASCOE as the only way to provide employee feedback to FSA. The agreement between FSA and NASCOE is outlined in Exhibit 22 of 22 PM.

Program Suggestion Process— is a means by which “quick fixes” are submitted to the administration. Suggestions are taken all year by NASCOE and they are sent up to WDC soon after they are received since they are “quick fix” suggestions. In Kansas, if you have a program fix you should e-mail it to Brenda Matteson, Programs Chairperson in Phillips County at brenda.matteson@ks.usda.gov. The submission form can be found on the KASCOE website <http://kascoe.org/Programs.aspx> under “Programs Committee.” An example of a “quick fix” would be the following:

NASCOE Issue:

There needs to be a “warning” on the 578 when not all the tracts have been loaded saying something to the effect “*not all active tracts are reported*”. We are not always remembering to load all tracts on the farms and there is nothing that warns us of this mistake. In the older acreage reporting software, there used to be a warning that printed on the 578 saying tracts had been missed. Can you pass this on to the person working with the CARS software??
Thanks!

National Office Response:

As an enhancement for 2012 CARS, a warning message will be incorporated on the FSA-578 print to notify users when all active tracts have not been reported.

Negotiation Suggestion Process— is a means by which ideas for long term changes (policy) are submitted to the administration. If you have items that you feel should be negotiated you can submit the items directly through NASCOE by visiting the NASCOE website Negotiations Page: <http://nascoe.org/Negotiations.aspx>. Suggestions are accepted until December 1st, however this year they are being accepted until December 15th. An example of a negotiation item that was taken up in November is below:

Disposal Dates and Disposal of Records

Issue:

FSA Handbook 25-AS (State and County Office Records Operations) addresses the length of time records must be maintained and The Records Transfer Desk Reference Guide provides authorization for the disposal of records. Groups can have many disposal authorities and different disposition dates. For example, the Fiscal Management Files group has over 10 disposal authorities. Current procedure prohibits grouping these records together when sent to a Federal Records Center for retention and eventual disposal.

Position:

This process could be simplified if all of the files in a group (i.e. Fiscal Management) would have the same disposal date and operate under one disposal authority. This would save time at the county office because you wouldn’t be sorting by different disposition dates and boxing records accordingly. It is recommended that all files in a particular group (i.e. Fiscal Management) be able to be boxed together when transferred to a Federal Records Center and the most stringent disposal authority and the longest disposal date be applied to the entire group.