

# It Is a New Year!

## NASCOE Now

### January 10, 2009

#### **NASCOE President's Report - January 2009**

**Fond Farewell** - Our Administrator Teresa Lasseter will be leaving FSA January 20<sup>th</sup> when national administration changes. Teresa has been an inspiration to many of us in field offices due not only to her start with ASCS as a tobacco clerk who worked her way up the ladder, but more importantly her sincere caring about American Agriculture and our agency. Teresa's accessibility as Administrator has been deeply appreciated during my involvement with NASCOE. She has been fair, open-minded, and transparent during her tenure as Administrator. We may not always have agreed, but she always listened and considered other points of view when making decisions as to what was best for the Farm Service Agency and our farmers. As we bid Teresa a fond farewell, perhaps our paths will cross again down the road...

Deputy Administrator for Field Operations Steve Connelly will also be leaving us January 20<sup>th</sup>. Steve has also been very pleasant to work with and has been a phone call or e-mail away when I needed to ask questions or voice a concern. Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs John Johnson will be leaving us also. We appreciate having the opportunity to visit with John over the years on program issues. Best wishes for each of these three as they move into the next phase of their involvement in American Agriculture.

**Acting Positions** - My understanding is that DAFLP Carolyn Cooksie will be Acting Administrator and I look forward to getting to know Carolyn more and working with her. You may not know this but Carolyn also started with us in a county office, and worked her way up to her current position. John Chott will be Acting DAFO, and we look forward to continuing to work with John. At this point, I don't believe anyone knows when these positions will be filled. It could be on January 20<sup>th</sup> or several months from now. Brad Karmen will be Acting DAFFP. It is good that we have career employees familiar with our work filling in as Acting. It is also my understanding that STCs were not reappointed by the current or (as a courtesy) by the incoming transition team, the acting SED or any newly appointed SED becomes the STC acting until new appointments are made.

**Take Home Pay** - You may see a difference in your pay for pay period 26. Although open season changes, health premium changes, etc., don't take place until pay period 1, tax withholding changes will show up in pay period 26 since it is paid in the new tax year. State taxes vary by state, but if you haven't changed your withholding status most will probably see a decrease in federal

tax withholding resulting in slightly higher take home pay. COLA, changes in health premiums, etc. will be reflected in future pay periods.

**Additional FB training** - Several folks have asked about additional Farm Bill training. I don't look for any to be scheduled until sometime after January 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Grievance Board Members** - 22-PM, Part 10.5, Para. 464.4, provides the structure for state Grievance Boards and also what actions can be grieved. I encourage each State President to review the handbook and work with your STO to establish or update the Grievance Board Members for your state.

**Staff Ceilings** - 2009 Staff Ceilings are currently funded at the same rate as 2008. Since we are operating under a continuing resolution, final budget or extension of continuing resolution may affect this.

**WebTA & Activity Reporting System** - The postponement of implementation of WebTA from PP01 to PP03 provides for implementation when adequate personnel will be available to assist with any issues we encounter in the county office. It is my understanding that the Activity Reporting System will be tested in the original pilot sites as soon as possible, with the target for full implementation prior to the EOY. The ARS replaces our old Workload/Work Measurement system. It will be some time after implementation before enough data has been collected to provide accurate national data.

**During the past couple of weeks a couple of program payment processing problems were reported to WDC. Both issues were promptly addressed by WDC and KC staff.**

**1) Issue with Commodity Loan Disbursements** - Several issues with loan disbursements were identified and reported - delays in payments showing up in NPS, commodity certificate redemptions not working, etc.

**2) Issue with Program Payment Assignments** - A concern about program payment assignments going through NFC was identified, and WDC is working with KC to resolve the issue. When a producer has an assignment of payment, a Treasury check is mailed to the assignee and a transaction statement is also mailed but they do not arrive at the same time. The Treasury check has no identification of the producer so the assignee has no way of knowing where the money should be credited. Once the transaction statement arrives, they can match it up by the dollar amount. If you have one or two this isn't necessarily a huge problem, but, if you have several it is a problem.

Thanks to WDC and KC staff for their prompt attention to resolving these and other issues. Thanks also to Cliff Fussell, SEA Exec for working with WDC and KC to explain the details of the issues!

**Last, I hope each of you had a wonderful Holiday Season! The next few weeks and months will be a time of change for all of us. NASCOE is your association and your elected leaders are here to assist you in this transition time. If you have a question, concern, and or suggestion, please contact me, your State President, or your Area Exec.**

*Bonnie*

## Use Your Email Client to send e-mail to a cell phone

Your email client can call your cell phone! Now, you might wonder why you'd bother, but it's a convenient way to send phone numbers, short messages, reminders, and other important stuff to your cell phone so you can store it or share it. For instance, you might send a new client's phone number and address to your cell phone, just in case you get lost or stuck in traffic.

Of course, you don't have to use your email client to send e-mail to just your own cell phone. You can send e-mail to anybody, as long as their cell phone supports Short Message Service (SMS). Fortunately, it's a truly simple process:

1. Create a new e-mail message.
2. In the To text box, enter the cell phone number using the following syntax: *10-digit-number@carrierdomain.com*
3. Create a message of 160 characters or less. Or attach a .jpg file, if the cell phone is also a camera phone.
4. Send the e-mail.

Below is a list of the major carrier domains:

Alltel	@message.alltel.com
Cingular/AT&T	@txt.att.net
Nextel	@messaging.nextel.com
Sprint	@messaging.sprintpcs.com
SunCom	@tms.suncom.com
T-mobile	@tmomail.net
VoiceStream	@voicestream.net
Verizon	@vtext.com

If you don't know the cell phone's service carrier, visit [whitepages.com](http://whitepages.com) or [phonenumber.com/reverse-phone](http://phonenumber.com/reverse-phone), and enter the 10-digit cell phone number using the reverse lookup feature. If you're lucky, it'll list the carrier. If the carrier's domain isn't listed above, check its Web site.

Keep in mind that text messages aren't always free. The recipient might be charged for the message.

# NAFEC

## National Association of Farmer Elected Committees

### Membership Application/ Renewal Form

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP:

PHONE NUMBER:

E-MAIL:

Would you prefer to have the newsletter sent electronically to you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Are you submitting an FSA-444 to your County FSA office for automatic dues withholding?  
Yes\* \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please remember to send your personal information to NAFEC or have your FSA office do so.

\_\_\_\_\_ Committee member...\$35

\_\_\_\_\_ FSA employee or Associate member...\$20

\_\_\_\_\_ \$3.00 per meeting (444 dues withholding only)\*

\* Please check with your staff to set up your 444

If paying by check, please make payable to NAFEC

Please send membership information and/or questions and comments to:

Tom Ardoin, Secretary / Treasurer  
NAFEC  
P.O. Box 400  
Pine Prairie, LA 70576  
Phone / Fax: 337-599-2783  
Mobile: 337-831-0671  
Email – [tntardoin@centurytel.net](mailto:tntardoin@centurytel.net)

To view the latest NAFEC Newsletter go to [www.nascoe.org/NAFEC/htm](http://www.nascoe.org/NAFEC/htm)  
Look for **NEW** NAFEC Newsletter!

## NASCOE Awards, Scholarship and Emblems Items

Hello everyone!

I hope all of you have had the chance to read the electronic version of the Winter edition of the NASCOE Newsletter. If not, please check it out.

Just a few reminders for this edition of NASCOE Now:

1. Persons interested in applying for the NASCOE Members Scholarship have only until January 15<sup>th</sup>! Get your application on the NASCOE Web site ([www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org)) and submit it to your Area Scholarship Chairperson (contact information is also available on the web site) by January 15<sup>th</sup>!
2. Remind your children that are eligible to apply for the NASCOE Scholarship program (High School Seniors or full time college students up to the Bachelor Degree level) to submit their NASCOE Scholarship application (available on the NASCOE web site) to your State Scholarship Chairperson (or Area Chairperson if your State does not have a Scholarship Chairperson), by the deadline set by your State (most States have a deadline of February 20<sup>th</sup>, as the original and 5 copies **must to be submitted to the Area Chairperson by March 1<sup>st</sup>**).
3. Distinguished Service Awards (Service to NASCOE, FSA-Agriculture, or Community Service) nominations must be submitted to the State Awards Chairperson by February 1<sup>st</sup>! As I mentioned in the last newsletter, please look at the nominations from the winners last year to help you write the perfect nomination for a deserving NASCOEites!
4. The NASCOE Store ([www.nascoeemblemsonline.com](http://www.nascoeemblemsonline.com)) is offering some fantastic deals this winter with many items at 30% discounts and free items when you place an order over \$50.00 thru January 15<sup>th</sup>. A great deal for you and a great deal for the NASCOE Scholarship Program as every dollar of commissions paid to NASCOE goes into the Scholarship account! Get this economy going and spend some money on yourself!
5. ***Certificates:*** NASCOE Appreciation, Extra mile, 1,000, 1,500, 2,000 and 2,500 hour Sick Leave, Professional Improvement certificates, etc., all need the NASCOE President's and NASCOE Secretary's signatures. Please send me your requests with the names of the persons and award certificate you want to give them at least a month in advance of your event so I have time to get them signed and sent to you. I will take a bunch with me to the NASCOE Pre-Negotiation meeting next week to have Bonnie and Darlene sign, so I have a supply on hand, but when they run out, I will need to get more (hence the one month in advance request I am asking for).

Take care everyone and until next time, I wish all of you the very best and look forward to seeing all of you in Gatlinburg for NASCOE's 50 year "Birthday" celebration!

Tom Oasen, NASCOE ASE Chairperson



**Jeanne Monday, Membership Chair**

**Your NASCOE Membership – are you taking full advantage of it?**

Are you a NASCOE member? For those of you who are members, you probably know about most, if not all, of the benefits and opportunities afforded through your membership. I hope that you take part in that membership and actively participate in your state association.

For the members out there that may be the *new kids on the block*, there are many benefits and opportunities that NASCOE does not want you to miss out on. If you joined NASCOE at the invitation of someone in your state association but you really do not know what that membership represents, listed below are some highlights of NASCOE membership.

**Affordable benefits offered through JM Marketing for members**

**CANCER & INTENSIVE CARE POLICY**      Long Term Care Protection  
**Life Insurance ACCIDENT & DISABILITY COVERAGE**    Dental Coverage

**Discounts obtained by NASCOE for its membership**

**Travel discounts through YTB Travel**      **Discounts on cell phone service**

**Recognition and honors by NASCOE for its membership**

*Distinguished Service Awards*      **Scholarship Awards**      *Member Scholarship Program*  
program to recognize members      open to a member's      awarded to members  
on their achievements      dependent child entering college      taking credit courses

**Membership Awards for 5, 10, 15, etc years of 100% membership**

**What NASCOE has accomplished as an organization representing its members**

**Life Insurance**      **Retirement**      **Leave Earnings**  
**Annual COLA increase**      **Family Friendly Sick Leave**      *Leave Share*  
**Exclusive representation of County Office Employees with FSA Management**

These topics are just a few of the many reasons that membership in NASCOE is advantageous. There is a wealth of information on NASCOE's website which gives more detail on all of the above, and the additional, benefits of **YOUR membership in NASCOE.**

***NASCOE thanks you for your support!***

# *50 YEARS OF NASCOE*

*Come celebrate with us in TN*

*August 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2009*

*Park Vista Hotel*

*Gatlinburg, TN*

*Make your reservations early and check out [tascoe.com](http://tascoe.com) for the hotel link and tour information. Room rates are \$104, group code is nascoe.*

*Registration and activity information will be coming soon! Plan to stay for the banquet. We have special things planned for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary party and a hot band will be playing!*

Visit [www.tascae.com](http://www.tascae.com) for more info!

#### Form changes

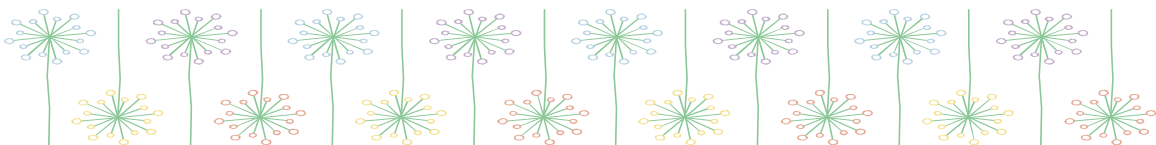
Did you notice that there were some changes just recently to the CCC-926? The form date did not change and there was no wording changes but some shaded areas were removed due to duplication, faxing and printing problems causing those shaded areas to be unreadable.

This change was not accomplished because of any action taken by the Programs committee. This occurred because an alert, attentive, dedicated and adventurous employee in Nebraska noticed the problem and utilized something that is available to every employee. She submitted a comment directly to WDC using the "Send Comments" link provided on the forms web site. Within just a few days of bringing this issue to their attention, the issue was resolved and the form updated.

On most pages on the forms web site, directly under the USDA logo, there is a "Send Comments" link that goes directly to the forms staff in DC. I am not suggesting that this option replace the use of the Programs Committee, I only want to point out that this option exists and that in certain instances, can be very effective. However, I would also caution not to use this as a tool to be abused. In this particular instance, the problem was directly affecting how we communicate effectively with our producers and that the design of the form was causing issues. The solution was easy and quickly implemented.

As we use various forms on a daily basis, and may from time to time discover that certain aspects of those forms might prove to be beneficial if changed or modified slightly, keep this option in mind. But let's not abuse the option provided by the link on the forms site. If you are questioning the design or format of a particular form or proposing changes for a form that are more in-depth and would require substantial modifications, I would suggest that bringing your concerns through the programs committee is the more appropriate and more effective avenue to take.

Bill Putnam, Programs Chairman



***PUBLICITY NEWS!***

***IMPORTANT DEADLINES*** January 1 –December 31 Contest Year

**2008/2009 Publicity Contest**

January 21	State Newsletter/articles/Website nominations to Area Publicity Judges
February 11	Area judges send score sheets to Area Publicity Chairpersons
February 25	Area Chairperson notifies Area winners. Area winners immediately send newsletters to National judges
March 18	National judges complete judging and send score sheets to the National Publicity Chairperson.
March 31	Written Notification to National Winners.

See the 2008/2009 Publicity Handbook for all rules and regulations...Go to [www.nascoe.org](http://www.nascoe.org) click on Publicity Tab.

## Vilsack Hearing Set, Ag Outlook, Farm Bill, and Lamy

Posted By [Keith Good](#) On January 6, 2009

### *Vilsack Hearing Set*

Bloomberg writer [Alan Bjerga](#) reported yesterday that, "The Senate Agriculture Committee will hold a hearing next week on the nomination of former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack to be U.S. Agriculture Secretary.

"Senator Tom Harkin, the committee's chairman, scheduled the hearing for **Jan. 14**, according to an e-mailed statement released today by the Iowa Democrat's office."

The Bloomberg article noted that, "Vilsack was elected Iowa's governor in 1998, the first Democrat to win the office in 32 years. He was re-elected in 2002 and is now an attorney at the Dorsey Trial group in Des Moines, Iowa. The state ranks second to California in agricultural production and is the top producer of corn and soybeans, according to government statistics."

AP writer [Mike Glover](#) reported yesterday that, "Harkin, an Iowa Democrat who chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee, **predicts an easy confirmation for Vilsack.**"

Mr. Glover added that, "Though Vilsack hasn't had a broad history with agricultural issues, his appointment has stirred little opposition and **his confirmation is likely to be routine.**"

