

NASCOE Now

Your News Bulletin

April 4, 2007

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

Trice Smith

The 2006 NASCOE Legislative conference was attended by more than 200 NASCOE members who sacrificed time from their busy schedules to visit “the Hill” with a variety of NASCOE concerns and proposals. NASCOE is not in the business of writing Farm Bills but we do consider ourselves knowledgeable in understanding what works and what does not in the administration of Farm Bill programs. Our main position paper for the conference was the result of steps taken recently by your NASCOE leadership. With the current budget situation NASCOE leadership understands agencies must become as efficient in program administration as possible. NASCOE’s position paper on Conservation implementation was our first attempt in pointing out to Congress where efficiencies could be made. NASCOE members should be proud of their leadership for the decision to reach out to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and come to common ground on the administration of conservation programs. The meeting of NASCOE and NACD is somewhat of a historical event for both organizations and at this time future meetings are being planned to work towards this common goal of providing a better local delivery of conservation programs. Watch for updates on the movement of the 2 groups in future reports from President Dan Root.

S. 944—introduced by Senator John Thune from South Dakota. Requires an independent review of the efficiency and effectiveness of all headquarter offices prior to any county office closures. This would include STO offices, WDC, Kansas City and Salt Lake City.

H.R. 1649—introduced by Rep. Stephanie Herseth from South Dakota. This bill is the House version of Thune’s bill but basically is asking that office closures be halted until one year after the enactment of the new farm bill.

Rep. Jerry Moran of Kansas is asking the House Ag Committee to investigate the computer problems at FSA, causing late payments.

Senate passed its version of the emergency supplemental spending bill. This includes almost \$4B for Agriculture disaster spending for crop losses in 2005-2006. The bill will now be conferenced with the House version that passed 2 weeks ago. The Administration has announced its opposition to both bills because they contain a withdrawal date from Iraq. If the final bill is vetoed a new bill will need to be written.

The House passed nearly \$3 trillion budget on Thursday last week. Included in the agricultural part the bill was a \$20 B reserve fund. This reserve fund would be for the 2007 Farm Bill. The

Senate has a \$15 B reserve fund component. Most likely this reserve would be used if “pay-go” is initiated for an increase in an Ag program. Pay-go was passed earlier this year and is where if Congress wants increased spending somewhere in allocations they must decrease in another area to make up for that increase.

The Congressional Research Service released a report on March 22 titled Farm Bill Proposals and Legislative Action in the 110th Congress. This is a very good report which includes items that would make an impact on the 2007 farm bill. It summarizes budget and trade constraints, preliminary hearings in the House and Senate, Farm bill proposals by the Administration and major commodity groups, and congressional actions. It makes for some quick and interesting reading on the Farm Bill. Google congressional research service and you should be able to get the report.

Benefits

Becky Zirpel

One of the things that we talked about at our meeting with HRD while in WDC during Legislative Conference was Wellness and that it would be nice to have information at our fingertips about dieting, exercising and just all around wellness. It was mentioned by someone that we use to get a wellness newsletter and wondered what ever happened to this. Juliet McBride, FFAS EAP Program Manager has given me some information that is available to everyone. I feel that we may get this information, but do not take the time to check it out. Juliet is going to help make sure that EAP is promoted more at the State and local level. I will attempt to do the same by letting you know that you can go on line and that the web sites listed below has a wealth of information.

First I have a question for all of you: can you come up with say 50 uses for a white paper bag? Think about it and have fun with it, be creative, be a kid. In Volume 9, Issue 3 on the EAP web site it talks about "Creating Happiness" To be happy and less stressed, be creative. Great article.

Now check out the web site and click on news center under related topics at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/hrdapp?area=home&subject=wpsv&topic=eap>. This gives you an EAP newsletter. Click on the other items on the page.

Through the EAP employees can receive 3 free counseling sessions per situation. You can contact the EAP by calling a toll free number (1-888-290-4327, TTY 1-800-697-0353). Assistance is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I know of some that have utilized this and have been very please with the help given to them.

Fedsources has a great website whereby everyone can obtain a lot of information (i.e., self-help information for employees, family members, and workplace). The website is listed below. The employee's just logon, follow registration procedures, and enter the password "FedSource." Employees may access this information at www.GuidanceResources.com. I found some fitness and wellness.

Another great website is www.ResourcesOnline.com.

AWARDS – SCHOLARSHIPS – EMBLEMS

Herb Sorley

I would like to take this opportunity to give a “special” thanks to all the Area Chairs for our DSA awards program. I know there has been a lot of communications between the Chairs and their states within their area and that is what makes our program successful. The Area Chairs are:

Debbie Sweet	NW Area
Steve Morrison	MW Area
Patti McDowell	NE Area
Jeanie Setser	SE Area
Darvin Collins	SW Area

In addition, I would like to say “thanks” to all those that took the time to judge the nominations. I know from experience that selecting A WINNER can be a very difficult job.

I would take this opportunity to announce the Area winners from each Area and they are as follows:

NW Area

Service to Community	Mike Goetzinger – South Dakota
Service to FSA/Agriculture	Carla Mentzer – South Dakota
Service to NASCOE	Larry Olsen – South Dakota

MW Area

Service to Community	Diana Collier – Illinois
Service to FSA/Agriculture	Jean Finch – Iowa
Service to NASCOE	Rosalyn Kahl – Iowa

NE Area

Service to Community	Craig Miner – Vermont
Service to FSA/Agriculture	Eva Delp-Cole – Maryland
Service to NASCOE	Melodie Bailey – West Virginia

SE Area

Service to Community	Rosie Hale – North Carolina
Service to FSA/Agriculture	Ida Faye Cutler – North Carolina
Service to NASCOE	Larry W Duty – Virginia

SW Area

Service to Community	Jim Bob Solsbery – Texas
Service to FSA/Agriculture	Tamara Thomasson – Oklahoma
Service to NASCOE	Ruxton (Rusty) Williamson – Texas

Congratulations to each one of you for all of your accomplishments. I do know from what the Area Chairs have told me, that there were a LOT of excellent nominations submitted. If I have the count right there were 45 total nominations.

I would also let you know that judging for the Area Scholarship winners is now underway and we have a lot of applications throughout the country that will be judged in the next couple of weeks. Once that judging is complete we will let you know who the Area winners are and begin judging for the national winner.

Debbie has told me that she and the Area Emblem Chairs are working on some new items for the NASCOE store and that those things will be on the web shortly.

REMINDER!!!!!!!!!!

There is still time to nominate someone for an Extra Mile Award for doing a special job in their community, church, school, or etc. Just send the nominations to your Area Awards Chair and they will take it from there.

We also have available Certificates of Appreciation for those members that you would like to recognize. We also have the Professional Improvement certificates available and sick leave certificates. Let your Area Chair know what you need that they will take care of you.

Publicity

Cindy Peterson

Another round of the NASCOE Publicity Contest is winding down and the Area winners have been selected. As usual, there were many entrants and all are deserving of recognition. Communication through the NASCOE/State Affiliates system is constantly improving and growing. The use of paper and electronic newsletters, websites and bulletins has been doing a great job of "getting the news out there".

Our sincere thanks go out to all the Contestants, Judges and Alternate Judges, as well as, all the Area Publicity Chairs.

And the winners are:.....drum roll please.....

Southwest Area

Best Newsletter:	Texas
Best Website:	Texas
Best Single Issue:	Texas/September 2006
Humor:	Oklahoma: Loading Cattle
Human Interest:	Oklahoma The First Timers Award

Southeast Area

Best Website:	South Carolina - Anita Bryant, Webmaster
Best Newsletter:	Arkansas - Nancy Chlapecka, Editor
Best Single Issue:	Arkansas/Summer Issue - Nancy Chlapecka, Editor
Best Feature Story Human Interest:	Awareness By: Elaine Harris from South Carolina
Best Feature Story Humor:	On Father Time By: Jim Crow, CED from Arkansas

Northeast Area

Best Website:	West Virginia, Melodie Bailey, Web Master
Best Newsletter:	Delaware/Maryland, Carole Hill Editor

Best Single Issue: West Virginia/April issue – Melodie Bailey, Editor
Best Feature Story Human Interest: Who Needs Sun to Have Fun!, Stacey Karnes, Author
Best Feature Story Humor: No Entry

Midwest Area

Best Website: Wisconsin
Best Newsletter: Iowa
Best Single Issue: Iowa/September 2006
Best Feature Story Human Interest: Grandma Fran, IL, Charlene Neukomm
Best Feature Story Humor: Polly PT – Part 20, Iowa, Roseanne Woerner

Northwest Area

Best Website: North Dakota, Nicki Miranowski, Web Master
Best Newsletter: North Dakota – Pauline Everson, Editor
Best Single Issue: North Dakota, November, 2006
Best Feature Story Human Interest: Patriotism with Pride, Gloria Covert, North Dakota
Best Feature Story Humor: On the Road Again, Sandy Rudolph, North Dakota

Remember the real winners of the Publicity Contest are the members of NASCOE. We are informed, educated, assisted and entertained by the efforts of all our Publicity contributors.

Some answers to “What can you do with a White Paper sack”. Now did you think outside of your box and come up with some creative ways to use a white paper sack? How about some of the following:

(Chefs hat - Garbage sack - gift bag - puppet (if decorated) - lunch bag - wrapping paper - for hyperventilating - Easter basket - decoration - dried flower vase - to make noise with (blow it up and pop it) - envelope - lantern over a light -paper dolls - paper doll clothes - Catch insects with - toy for a pet – a shade - for storage of all kinds of things - place flower bulbs in for the winter - May Day basket - make a card - Halloween Mask – crab bag – store un-ripened fruit – a book marker – cushion for packing –a place mat – a fan)