



SWA NEWS

November 2019



WELCOME TO A NASCOE NEW YEAR

Marla Hammer SWA Executive

September 1 kicks off the new year for NASCOE. Your new officers and executives hit the ground running.

The NASCOE Executive Committee, Legislative Committee, and National Chairs converged on beautiful Savannah, GA on September 18, 2019 to pool ideas, plan for the year ahead and engage in business and decision making to set NASCOE on the right path for the year ahead.

National Chairs shared their ideas and plans for their respective areas and the Execs and Officers were able to discuss hot topics and challenges facing membership as well as handle business. Serving members is a pride point for this group, so membership needs to utilize them! Meeting minutes can be found on NASCOE.org.

A variety of topics was discussed at Org meeting but two of the most time-consuming items included staffing and the NASCOE dues process.

Staffing/workload: Have you seen the footage from the House Ag Committee Hearing on September 19, 2019? Or the Senate Ag hearing on October 17, 2019? If not, check out both recordings via the email sent out by NASCOE Legislative Chairs on October 28! NASCOE has been hard at work! NASCOE acknowledges member concerns regarding lack of staffing and NASCOE is making strides in making others aware of the shortcomings. NASCOE has been telling the story and others are now asking the hard questions. Unequivocally, this issue is at the top of the list of concerns NASCOE is working on.

Challenges centered around dues: A solution for dues submission is in the testing phases. VEEM may be used to electronically process dues and therefore remove the challenges associated with dues collection NASCOE and state associations were experiencing. Stay tuned for more info.

During the Org meeting, the Exec Committee and National Chairs were treated to a tour of the host site for the 2020 National Convention. The hotel is expansive and luxurious, the location is unbeatable (wait until you see the view out the bay windows in the lobby!), plenty of charming shops and restaurants are within walking distance to keep people occupied and satisfied, and GACOE is planning a convention that will have people talking for decades! I can't wait to share it with you! Registration and hotel reservation information coming soon! See you in Savannah!

October 21-22nd, 2019, the NASCOE Executive Committee was invited to Washington, DC to engage in a Resource Management Meeting with other employee associations and the Deputy Administrator of Field Operations, Peggy Browne (and staff). Employees spent the first day reviewing work load analytics (HOW we input or time) and the

optimally productive office model (OPO- what the model says each office needs regarding number of staff). Six SED's from across the nation shared the tactics they are using, in addition to utilizing the data from the OPO, to improve delivery of programs with the limited resources available. DAFO asked the employee associations to provide feedback on what additional criteria might need to be considered when discussing staffing levels and office locations. Tuesday morning's discussion centered around the concerns and suggestions employee associations brought to the table. NASCOE stressed the importance of adding additional staffing as well as transparency regarding staffing needs according to the model. It was stressed by DAFO that SED's were given the direction to share the workload analytics as well as the OPO staffing number down to each individual office by the deadline of October

30. If your state has not shared the workload analytics or the OPO by the time you read this, please reach out to leadership in your state association or to me. Tuesday afternoon, the group was updated regarding the implementation of new accountability practices.

Following the Resource Management Meeting in WDC, NASCOE leadership traveled to Dallas, TX where a NASCOE Leadership Development Program took place on Friday, October 25, 2019. Approximately 129 aspiring leaders and mentors engaged in training and discussion on the following topics:

- Building and Enhancing State Association Leadership
- Organization and Administration- How, Where and Who to Identify and Recruit Members
- Duties and Responsibilities of National Positions
- NASCOE's History, Mission and Accomplishments
- FSA County Committee- Foundation of NASCOE Existence
- Building and Fostering Advocacy and Outreach with Partners and Stakeholders
- NASCOE's Legislative Initiatives, Tools, and Successes

Attendees were met with an icebreaker activity on Thursday evening followed by high energy presentations on Friday in an electric, positive atmosphere. Hats off to the coordinators: Lynsey Brooks, Ashley Dalton, Neil Burnette, and Donny Green! Participants went away with an expanded knowledge of all NASCOE does for employees. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The future of NASCOE was in that training and hopefully some fires were lit! Now to further the conversation within each aspiring leader's respective state in order to keep the momentum going! What's next for the SWA?

NASCOE will continue to keep an eye on the Continuing Resolution that ends November 21.

Members are encouraged to get online at NASCOE.org to submit concerns or suggestions for review at the pre-negotiations meeting in January 2020.

Negotiations will be held early next spring in WDC.

The All-West Rally will be held in Deadwood Falls, SD on May 14-17, 2020.

I am excited to represent the Southwest Area! If I can assist you in any way, please reach out, to me or your state association leadership. We are here to serve you. See you soon!



Tracy Wilson

SWA Alternate Executive

SWA Negotiations Consultant

Hello SWA!!! I am super excited about serving you as your Alternate Executive and look forward to working alongside an all-star lineup that makes up our area leadership! Marla has truly loaded the bases.

For those of you that I have not gotten to meet yet, I would like to introduce myself. I am a Program Technician out of Harper County in far Northwest Oklahoma just as you go in to the panhandle. My husband Jimmy and I live on his Grandpa's farm where Jimmy runs a small cow/calf operation. We have two grown sons, Wade and Weston, and a Daughter in Law, Taylor. And now for the best part of life, I have two grandchildren, Kasen and Kally, that make the world go around.

Although I was not raised on a farm, I grew up in an agriculture community and had the opportunity to spend quite a bit of time visiting family and being a farm girl from time to time. When Jimmy and I got married I was relocated from being a town girl to a country girl and quickly learned to drive the muddy roads and began working for ASCS Office where I had a crash course on learning a whole new language. I have now been with the agency for 30 years and have to say that I truly love my job and the producers that I serve. Sure, there are days that it would be easier to break and run, but those same days are what drive me to be more and do more so that I can use those experiences to build a better work environment for each of us and improve the services that we provide our producers.

In addition to serving as your Alternate Executive, I am currently serving as your SWA Negotiations Consultant. I have served in this capacity the last two years and have to say that being part of the negotiations process has without a doubt been the greatest experience. It is truly where the rubber meets the road. It is where our membership provides their ideas and concerns and entrusts the negotiations team to carry their message to our national leadership. Each of us work every day with the tools we are given or know of tools that we need to get the job done. We are the ones who are trained (or not trained) on the programs that we are given to administer. It is YOU that knows what works and what doesn't, and it is YOU that knows what it would take to "fix" it. I encourage each of you to take a few minutes to jot down a note when you

identify an issue or concern and when time allows submit those items via the NASCOE website under Negotiations. I know that each and every one of us are extremely busy and finding the time to do this will not be easy, but it truly is worth your effort and really is the only way that we know what we need to do to represent you. If you struggle to put your issue and resolution into words, don't sweat it, I would be glad to help you, just send me an email or give me a call and we will work together to make sure that your voice is heard.



Nancy Ensminger **SWA Legislative Chair**

I am very honored to serve as your SWA Legislative Chair. I have been serving as your Membership Chair since 2017. I truly enjoy being involved with an employee association that works so tirelessly for their employees' benefits and betterment. The connections and relationships that I have made are invaluable.

The Legislative Committee had an extremely productive meeting during the 2019 Organizational Meeting in Savannah GA. We had the opportunity to share our goals and expectations for the year. During one of the Legislative Committee breakout sessions, we submitted a proposal to the Executive Committee to change the PAC promotion by discontinuing the cups and adding a back pack and a padfolio as new promotional items with the new slogan "PAC it UP". Our plan is to launch the new PAC promotional items at the 2019 NASCOE Leadership Training in Dallas, TX, October 24th-26th.

The committee plans to present a meeting with the "first timers" at the 2020 NASCOE Convention in Savannah as an initial step in the education of new convention attendees, and we will also focus on promoting the PAC to the expected large attendance of the Georgia delegation.

We believe that building stakeholder relationships will be a worthy endeavor so it will be among our top priorities. We also hope to provide state associations a step by step process on how to develop stakeholder relationships with state and national industry partners who share similar agricultural interest and concerns. We plan to develop a congressional contact list by state that focuses on members of the House and Senate Ag and Appropriations Committees.

I am anxious to work with my state legislative chairs to establish goals for the coming months.

Please take time to look at the clips from the House and Senate Ag Committee hearings to see how NASCOE and Congress are working together to address staffing concerns with USDA.

<https://nascoe.org/2019/10/28/congressional-agricultural-hearings-october-28-2019/>



LaCresha Dale SWA Programs Chair

Wow I think everyone woke up and started sending in some great suggestions! The Southwest Area has submitted 8 suggestions since July. We have a wide variety of subjects submitted such as improvements with CARS maps, CRP, MFP and business file. Please watch the NASCOE website for responses on these various issues.

Just a few hints on the programs process:

- The best and most efficient way to make submissions is with the Program Efficiency Form via the NASCOE website. There are super simple instructions included in this newsletter!!!
- Put as much detail and facts in the request as possible. WDC like to see examples as well.
- Please leave the venting to co-workers
- Check the Programs site before making a submission. It could have already been submitted and answered.
- Have patience with the process.
- Don't get discouraged or frustrated if WDC does not "fix it" the way you think it should be done.

As always, I look forward to receiving any great ideas and suggestions you might have.

**NASCOE can take your
PROGRAM EFFICIENCY SUGGESTIONS
directly to the National Specialists!**

Have a solution to a program or software problem or inefficiency?

- 1** Visit nascoe.org and submit your idea through the Program Efficiency Submission Form.
- 2** A state, area, or national programs chairperson may contact you for further clarification of the problem/solution, and will keep you informed of their communication with WDC!
- 3** Once the National Programs chair has consulted with the National Office, the response will be shared on the NASCOE website.

Programs suggestions can be submitted on work time and NASCOE has the ability to work on these ideas year-round, not just at negotiation time. Send in your ideas as soon as you think of them. NASCOE wants to see prompt results when it comes to your ideas for how we can improve the way we do business!

Congressional Agricultural Hearings — October 28, 2019

FSA County Office Employees are facing challenging times. You are administering more programs from various software platforms than ever before. You face these challenges head on each day with fewer employees than we have ever had. NASCOE understands you are struggling to meet the daily demands of providing an ever-increasing array of programs while maintaining the same quality of service your customers expect and deserve.

Your NASCOE team has worked diligently with the FSA Administration to increase staffing in field offices. We supported the development of a work

measurement tool to support our case for additional staffing, however the administration continues to withhold the full results of the workload model. Members of Congress have also requested on multiple occasions and been denied this information from the Department.

NASCOE continues to work with concerned members of Congress to provide additional funding for FSA salaries and expenses. Congress has responded and provided their support. They are concerned about the American Farmers who depend on you to deliver the farm programs passed by Congress to help keep rural America strong. Due to these concerns, both Houses of Congress have recently held hearings on the 2018 Farm Bill Implementation. They have asked the tough questions regarding FSA county offices being properly staffed so employees have the ability to administer these farm programs.



Maryanne Webster **SWA Benefits/Emblems Chair**

My name is Maryanne Webster, I currently work in the Elko/Eureka County FSA office in Nevada. I am a Program Technician. I have worked for FSA for 18.5 years. I have worked in all programs and farm loan. I started my career in the Lake County FSA Office in Oregon and moved to Nevada in the beginning of 2013. I grew up on a small ranch with horses, cattle and sheep. I was involved in 4-H and FFA, I started out with showing registered sheep from Cal Poly University when I was 9 years old and continued to show horses and sheep until I graduated from high school. I worked as a volunteer for the sheep program until my oldest son was old enough to participate in 4-H and then I became a 4-H leader for pigs and sheep for 5 years until we moved to Nevada. I also serve as the Nevada NASCOE president and I have been a member of NASCOE since 2001. I have two sons, one that is a Junior in college at the University of Montana Western in Dillon, MT and the other one is currently in his senior year of high school. My husband is an underground gold miner here in Nevada and that is what brought our family from Oregon to Nevada.

Attached is the new Working Advantage flyer and then please see below



Dear Members of the NASCOE,

In our continual dedicated efforts to always serve our members with maximum value **we are excited to announce that we have just partnered with LiveStreamingFitness.com as our "official" online healthy lifestyle resource!**

Why did we do this? Because you and your family matter to us! We believe that every one of you should have affordable access to resources like fitness, nutrition and cooking to serve you and your family in living your healthiest life. To this end, we searched high and low for a resource that is easily accessible, highly effective and very affordable to help all of our members and we found exactly what we went looking for. **LiveStreamingFitness.com is an on-line healthy lifestyle platform that includes live streaming and on demand fitness, nutrition and cooking shows available 24/7 in a safe and interactive community of professionals and individuals promoting the best version of a healthy you.**

On top of that, **WE NEGOTIATED ON YOUR BEHALF...**a membership like this normally costs \$99 per year. But, because the NASCOE went to bat for our valued members, we negotiated a greater than 50% discount. **For**

only \$49 per year, with your NASCOECARES promo code, you will have full access to these amazing resources! Also, get EXTRA FREE MONTHS if you hurry and enroll before December 1st; your membership will be valid through the entirety of 2020!

Check out the information below to enroll and let's get started living our healthiest lives together!

Save an extra \$10*
Promo code: welcome10off
*Valid on purchases of \$100 or more, through 1/01/20.

working
ADVANTAGE

Build Lasting Memories with Family and Friends

What is Working Advantage?

Having fun, getting away, and saving money are important for your well-being.

This cost-free benefit provides you access to thousands of exclusive travel and entertainment discounts, so you can make the most of your time away from work.

How Do I Become a Member?

- Visit workingadvantage.com and click *Become a Member*.
- Use your company code or work email to create an account.

Not by a computer? Use your phone camera or QR scanning app to access the site:

Company Code: 146590089

Movie Buffs - Travel Bugs - Thrill Seekers - Entertainment Enthusiasts - Sports Fanatics
There's something for everyone with savings on:

Hotels Theme Parks Concerts Sporting Events Movie Tickets		Rental Cars Gift Cards Broadway Shows Vegas Shows & More!
	Retail Restaurants Spas Sightseeing Tours Activities	

Need help? 1-800-565-3712 - customerservice@workingadvantage.com





Angie Bierman SWA Membership Chair

Happy November y'all! My name is Angie Bierman and I am your SWA Membership Chair! I am happy to be back in the swing of helping with membership. Looking at the dues report, the SWA is doing great with having turned in 1st quarter dues. Thank you for that! Soon I will be touching base with each of the state chairs to make sure you have an idea of what your role is as a state membership chair (in case you are new to this position). I want to make sure you are comfortable with what you're doing! Without membership, we don't have an association!!

The big thing coming down the pike is a new version of the membership database. Theresa Holmquist, our National Publicity Chair, has been working diligently to get a list put together but it is not complete. It will come with information, but some blocks may not be filled in. This is where our job starts! Each state membership chair will be tasked with “filling in the blanks”. The information we plan to have on the database will include things such as: first/last name, “preferred name” (if you don’t use your legal name... ie: Angela, but I go by Angie), home email address, cell phone number, payroll deduction/dues paid by check. **As we begin this process, please convey the importance of getting home email addresses** Situations such as the furlough last year are a great reminder of why

having home email addresses is important. NASCOE can share valuable information quickly this way. I will share more information as soon as I have it.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or comments!!



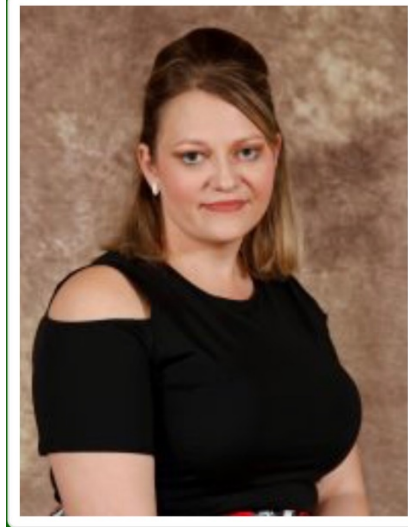
Morgan Limmer
SWA County Office Advocacy
Committee (COAC) Chair

Happy Fall y'all, although the past few days in Texas have felt more like Winter. I am Morgan Limmer and a county executive director in Colorado County, Texas. I have been with FSA for almost 10 years. I started with FLP in 2009 then transitioned to the COT program in 2012. I have been involved with TASCOE since day one. I was TASCOE president and vice president, benefits chair and currently membership chair. I am excited to serve as SWA chair of the County Office Advocacy Committee (COAC), formerly the NAFEC Committee.

I am sure many of you have noticed the recent name change from NAFEC to COAC. NASCOE leadership has decided to change the focus of the committee slightly. The mission of the COAC is as follows: *To protect, enhance, and provide continual education for the farmer-elected committee and county office system for the betterment of NASCOE's membership, county office FSA employees, and the agricultural communities we serve while working independently, but cooperatively, with the National Association of Farmer-Elected Committees (NAFEC).* Because of the recent name change and the slightly different focus, the committee is still evolving. The approved duties and responsibilities of the COAC will be incorporated in the NASCOE Duties and Responsibilities handbook soon.

With the committee name change, it is important for state presidents and executive committees to review their respective bylaws, as they may require an amendment if standing committees are in place. Please be on the lookout for future information from the COAC and as we approach COC elections, I encourage each of you to stress the importance of the COC and NAFEC.

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to ask.



Julie Goetzman SWA Awards and Scholarship Chair

Howdy SWA! I am Julie Goetzman, both the SWA & National Awards and Scholarship Chair from Texas. I am excited to start my third year of serving as the SWA Chair.

The Scholarship, Distinguished Service Award and Sick Leave Award deadline is January 15, 2020. All application processes are now online, and the link should be available on November 15, 2019. For scholarships this year, each area will have a winner with a monetary value award.

Be sure to check out the Awards and Scholarship Handbook online for more information on each category.





Brenda Toft SWA Publicity Chair

Well 2019 is about in the books and here we are getting ready to jump into 2020. Time seems to just go faster every year.

As FSA employees, we are all busy serving our producers and implementing the programs USDA provides. The demand on all of us and our offices seems to create many emotions for us constantly.

NASCOE has given all of us an opportunity. It allows us to have a voice. It provides us with updated information keeping us informed and goes to the hill for us to make sure our needs are being taken care of.

This is where you come in. We need your information. We need your email addresses so we can keep you updated. Please send your state membership email addresses to Marla Hammer and me so we can make sure that you are up to date on everything NASCOE is doing for you.

I also want to invite you to offer any suggestions of what you want to see in our newsletter. We want to make sure that we provide you with the information you need. If it matters to you, it matters to us!



Southwest Area: A Year in a Glance



Southwest Area: A Year in a Glance

