

NASCOE Now



NASCOE President's Update

Prepared by John R. Lohr

February 17, 2012

Thank you for all the recent support you have shown to your NASCOE leadership team. We have labored over balancing the interests of the rather diverse needs of our membership and hopefully have advanced NASCOE positions on office closings and the farm bill that almost everyone can get behind.

This week, legislative Co-Chairs Dan Root and Kevin Wooten prepared a very good summary of last week's conference in Washington. Your state association's president should soon be distributing this summary.

Hopefully, we can all avoid the trap of getting into a media debate with our detractors on these issues. Remember your fellow members last week delivered the cost savings and efficiency facts in the Informa study to the most important place, the decision makers in the U.S. Congress. NASCOE is carefully monitoring the situation and is prepared to respond appropriately.

Things you can do at home:

- Political Action Committee (PAC) – We really need members who do not have the opportunity to attend conventions or rallies to sign up. Check the legislative tab on our website for the current PAC sign-up promotion and procedure. If you need help getting enrolled, contact someone on the legislative committee. They will be glad to help.

With only a few dollars a pay period from a majority of NASCOE members we would have one of the largest agricultural PACs. **This is the single most important thing you can do right now to help.**

- National Association of Farmer-Elected Committees (NAFEC)—Every FSA county office employee should join NAFEC as an associate member and convince their local COC to become regular members. Again, enrollment information is on the website along with detail about the promotion currently underway.

Anyone who cares passionately about continuing a county committee-centered FSA delivery system needs to get involved with NAFEC.

Benefits in Jeopardy This Year

By Tony Augustine, MWA Legislative Chair

This year there are a number of legislative proposals that would seriously jeopardize your salary, benefits and retirement if they are passed by Congress. It is likely there will be even more bills throughout the year. Since this is an election year, federal employees will be used as a scapegoat for deficit reduction and election year politics throughout the year. Here are the current pieces of legislation that would affect the benefits of federal employees.

- HR-3630- This bill is in conference committee between the House and Senate. The changes included in this would continue a COLA freeze for a third year, eliminate the FERS annuity supplement for those retiring before age 62 effective in 2013, increase your contributions to both FERS and CSRS by an additional 1.5% of your salary, and change for new hires from a high 3 to a high 5 average salary for retirement computation. Employees with less than 5 years service would contribute even more toward their retirement (4% total) with a 30% decrease in the size of their retirement annuity.
- HR-3029 would require a 10% reduction in federal employment by 2015 allowing only one employee to be hired for every three employees that leave federal employment.
- HR-3813 Already passed in the House, this bill requires 1.5% more employee contribution toward their retirement, it eliminates the FERS annuity supplement for those retiring after 2012 and for new hires and others with less than 5 years service, retirement is based on a high 5 average salary and 4% of salary employee contribution toward FERS retirement but the retirement annuity is only 70% as large as the current formula.
- HR-7- As part of a larger package, this bill incorporates the provisions in HR-3813 to fund other parts of the bill (see above).
- HR-3835 requires one additional year of freeze on COLAs.
- HR-3844 requires a freeze on step increases through 2012.
- S-2065 requires an additional two year freeze on COLAs and a 5% reduction in staffing through attrition.

Not all of these bills will be passed and signed into law; perhaps none of them will, but in order to prevent as much damage as possible it is necessary for you to voice your opposition to these proposals to members of Congress. CAPWIZ and the NARFE Alerts are the best tools we have to quickly get our voice heard by Congress. Without sending the messages, you only further Congress's idea that you are overpaid and have too many benefits. Only by sustained and overwhelming opposition can you make a difference in the outcome. If you do nothing to oppose these bills, then you will lose more.

There is a recently issued CAPWIZ Alert HR-3630 and so far 1234 employees have taken action by sending the message opposing the bill. If you care about your pay, your benefits and your retirement, you need to send the CAPWIZ message to Congress right away and keep sending every Alert as soon as they are issued. For every member that takes no action, we all lose more. Don't let that happen!



The NASCOE Store

www.nascoeblemsonline.com

With many Conventions and Rallies coming up soon, please make sure and order your Emblems packets at least 4 weeks in advance of your event. Our plan now is to help you cover the shipping expenses as we did last year. Era Jarrard, owner of the NASCOE Store will send many items that will sell for just 25 cents each (chocolate smelling pens, Frisbees, etc) and some close-out items for a great price to help cover the cost of shipping. If you have any questions on the best methods to use for Emblems sales at your convention or Rally, please let me or your Area Emblems Chairperson know. You can find links to all of us by visiting www.nascoe.org and clicking on Emblems.

NEW!! Check out the new YARD SALE GOING ON at the NASCOE Store!
Unbelievable prices! First come first served - so hurry and score big on the savings today!

Many items are also selling for 10% off! This won't last long so please treat yourself NOW to putting fantastic fabrics on your body and 10% cash back in your pocket!

We are here to help you dress for success!

www.nascoeblemsonline.com

Happy shopping everyone and please remember that with every purchase you make you are contributing to the NASCOE Scholarships!

Tom Oasen, NASCOE ASE Chairperson



Words from the Membership Committee....

“Each generation goes further than the generation preceding it because it stands on the shoulders of that generation. You will have opportunities beyond anything we’ve ever known.” –Ronald Reagan

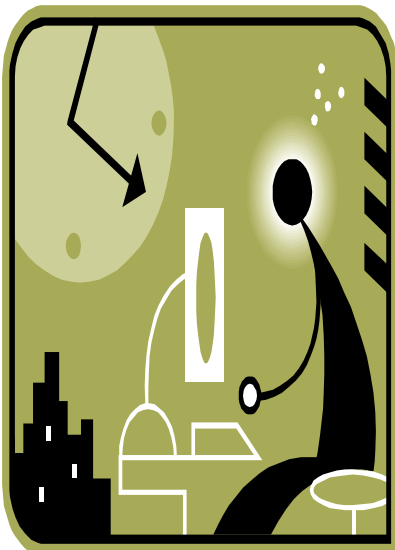
By now, everyone is well aware of all the recent changes to FSA employment including office closures, VERAs, VSIPs, and hiring freezes. This makes me wonder, what does the future hold for those of us who are still young in our career with FSA? That is where NASCOE comes in. NASCOE represents FSA and its employees to assure successful operation of the Farm Service Agency and promote fair salaries and benefits for FSA employees. It is more important than ever to strengthen our membership in NASCOE— not only in numbers, but in knowledge and participation. I have been an FSA employee for almost three years now but a NASCOE member for just one year. Before becoming involved with NASCOE, I wasn’t really aware of who they were or what they did. I have to admit, I still do not know everything there is to know about NASCOE but I am learning from faithful, long-time members and from getting involved in attending the legislative conference and the national convention.

NASCOE not only helps to shape what we do as FSA employees but acts on our behalf in the face of those making decisions in Washington DC. It is our job to pass on the significance of this vital role to the next generation. It is not enough for those of us who are members to promote NASCOE to younger employees to just get them to join NASCOE, we must work to get them involved and instill in them how important this organization is and what it does for its employees.

As I continue to learn and be more involved, I want to personally challenge every member of NASCOE to first get involved yourself, and then encourage the “new-comers” to follow your lead. Let’s give the next generation the opportunities Reagan spoke about by giving them a solid foundation we build today.

Thank you,

Sandra Schoonhoven
SWA Membership Chairperson



TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK – Both the NASCOE Members Continuing Education Scholarships and the traditional NASCOE Scholarship applications are due in less than two weeks (February 20) to your State Scholarship Chairpersons. Check out the website for the easy to use applications and required information at www.nascoe.org

Sam's Club Benefits Available to NASCOE Members

Submitted by Eric McCartney, NEA Benefits Chair

Most FSA employees are already well aware of the obvious benefits that NASCOE has to offer its members. There are several other benefits though, that you may have heard of but not quite sure how they work, or maybe you have not heard of them at all.

Since becoming Northeast Area Benefits Chair, I have received several questions from members about the benefits offered through Sam's Club. Here is a review of the membership process.

NASCOE members may take advantage of Sam's Club benefits by going through a few short steps. Starting at the NASCOE website, please click on BENEFITS and from there go to the MEMBERS ONLY page. There you will register for a user name and password. Your state's Membership Committee Chairperson must verify that you are a NASCOE member in good standing. Once this is completed, you will receive your user name and password within 2 to 3 days. When you visit your local Sam's Club to obtain your membership, you must present proof of NASCOE membership along with a Sam's Club Membership Certificate which is available under the Members Only page. Please remember, do not access the Members Only page from your government computer.

Another benefit listed on the NASCOE website that you may not be aware of is the Cell Phone Discount Information. All contact information has been updated. This benefit must also be accessed through the Members Only page using your user name and password.

Also available from the Benefits page is NASCOE Travel, amusement park discounts, and computer discounts from Dell and H-P. You are encouraged to check the Benefits page frequently because discounted products change on a regular basis.

When you have questions on the NASCOE benefits available to you, you are encouraged to contact your Benefits Committee Chair. They will be more than willing to assist you.

EMBLEMS Discount:

Times have been a bit shaky for a lot of FSA employees lately, but for all you who still have a job, support NASCOE by ordering at least \$50 worth of products at www.thenascoestore.com and enter the GIFT COUPON code AJOB and receive \$5 off your order.

Some of your NASCOE people have just returned from Washington where they met with a lot of important people on your behalf. Help NASCOE out by ordering because NASCOE gets 8% of all online sales. 8% of \$50 is \$4; that doesn't sound like much today, but \$4 times 25 orders is \$100. Right now everything is reduced by 10% until the end of February, so it's an excellent time to order and get an additional \$5.00 off.

We'll be watching for your orders. Go to www.nascoeemblemsonline.com and browse our products.

thenascoestore.com Staff



NEW CATEGORY - YARD SALE

We're marking products down to Yard Sale Prices and moving them to this new category. You need to watch this Category closely and order because these items should go quick! These do not have the 10% OFF

SPECIALS FOR THE WEEK:



ITEM 21610-1 (Clearance Item)

Carabiners/keychain strap

\$1.00 Each this week

(And, remember, another 10% off 'til 2/28/12)



ITEM 1103-17 (Clearance Item)

Market Tote Bag

\$10.00 Each this week

NEW ARRIVALS FOR 2012:



Ladies 3/4 Sleeve Denim
(Item NA2012-2)
\$24.00



Ladies Short Sleeve Denim
(Item NA2012-2)
\$22.00



Ladies 3/4 Sleeve Blouse
(Item NA2012-3)
\$26.00



Men's Long Sleeve Twill Shirt
(Item NA2012-4)
\$26.00



Unisex Spring Short Sleeve Tee Shirts
(Item NA2012-5)
\$14.00

WE HAVE ADDED ITEMS TO THE CLEARANCE AND THE ONE-OF-A-KIND CATEGORIES.



WE HAVE A NEW PHONE NUMBER.
THE NUMBER IS 706-864-3886.
PLEASE Change!