



# NEBRASCOE

## NEWS

Nebraska Association of FSA County Office Employees

August 2017

## NASCOE Myths: Debunked

### A Message From Your President-Jessi Colgrove

The NEBRASCOE Board of Directors has been working to debunk some of the more common myths about NASCOE membership. In past issues of the NEBRASCOE newsletter I discussed “but I don’t want my membership dues to pay for you to go on trips” and “something happened that upset me”. This time we will focus on a common misconception: “I don’t need to pay dues because I get the same benefits as members”. Illinois IASCOE President Debbie Staley wrote an amazing analogy called “Home on the Riverbank” that explains why everyone should be a member. This article is used with her permission and blessing.

“Picture this: You purchase a quaint little home on the riverbank. You love your home and most of the time the river rises and falls without notice. However, one day your home is threatened by a flood and a team rushes to the aid to save not only your home, but the homes of everyone that lives on that riverbank. There are many helping, including neighbors, community members, even strangers who came from other areas to help all who are affected however, YOU choose to sit on the porch...admiring their hard work.

You of course, are benefitting from their hard work even though YOU did not contribute to it.

Let’s be honest, don’t you want to be a part of the work and not a porch potato? Your home is like your career, the river rising and falling is much like our benefit issues that come up in Washington, some are noticed and, again, many are not. NASCOE is much like the workers; there are many involved, some you know and many you do not know. Regardless, there is a team of volunteers putting in long hours, phone calls, many miles in travel and other ways to calm the waters or sandbag the issue and potentially

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### Officers

President-Jessi Colgrove  
Vice President-Lisa Wiese  
Secretary-Mona Fassler  
Treasurer-Shanna Waterman

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<http://www.nebrascoe.com>  
<https://nascoe.org>

Email: [nebrascoe@yahoo.com](mailto:nebrascoe@yahoo.com)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

2018 NASCOE Convention  
August 1-4, 2018  
Sioux Falls, SD

## NEBRASCOE Mission

NEBRASCOE strives to maintain and improve the confidence, esteem and respect of the public for FSA Committee Employees. NEBRASCOE employees are dedicated to providing outstanding service to the farmers of this great state.

## Follow NEBRASCOE on Facebook and On-Line

By Joni Johnson,  
Membership Chairperson



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

NEBRASCOE has two ways for employees to catch up on association news and information.

Go to our website at:

[www.nebrascoe.com](http://www.nebrascoe.com) for information about scholarships, rallies and conventions. Order FSA apparel and cookbooks and read our member association meeting minutes and newsletters. And for reminders and updates, follow [NEBRASCOE](#) on Facebook.

Both the website and Facebook pages are interactive and monitored, so questions and concerns will be received and addressed as soon as possible. For more information on the website or Facebook page, contact [joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov](mailto:joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov).



## NEBRASCOE Member Spotlight

### Anne Rexroth, Program Technician, Cheyenne County

As a new member of the agency and NASCOE I'd like to introduce myself. I am Anne Rexroth, PT in Cheyenne County and I have been with the agency since November of 2015. I attended the University of Wyoming and graduated with a degree in Veterinary and Animal Science. My interest has always been in agriculture. I was raised on a purebred Gelbvieh ranch in northeast Colorado where my upbringing was centered around cattle shows and ranch life. I have lived in Cheyenne County for the past 12 years and call Gurley home. Prior to working full time I spent time remodeling a turn of the century house in Gurley which has become a labor of love for the last seven years. I finally finished the house before I had my second daughter in December 2016. I have two girls, Josette (8) and Libby (6 months), and any spare time that we have are spent with them. My husband, Ryan, works in Sidney also, driving a cement truck for Milestone Ready Mix. Ryan has interest in farm ground around Gurley that was his grandfathers. We spend any spare time with close family and we love our life with our daughters.

## Thank You NEBRASCOE!

I would like to thank the entire NEBRASCOE group for a job OVERLY WELL DONE!!! The 2017 NWA Rally was a huge success and I am so very appreciative of all the time you put into it. I know how much work something like this takes and I want everyone to know that the effort and commitment did not go unnoticed. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

I hope our jump team effort was a huge success for NEBRASCOE and that your membership will continue to grow and remain strong. It has been such an amazing ride as Area Executive and I can't thank NEBRASCOE enough for making me feel so welcome and for all the support they have shown me over the past two years. I am forever grateful. I look forward to seeing you in St. Charles and if not there then hopefully in Bellingham for the 2018 Rally!

Thanks again,  
Jenae Prescott  
NWA Executive



## Legislative Update

By Linda Robb, Legislative Chair

-Budget discussions continue, no new information is available at this time.

-There has been a lot of concern over reports that there may be changes coming to retirement annuities, nothing has been presented to the hill at this time (as of 7/1/2017). Hunter Moorhead, NASCOE Legislative Consultant is keeping a close eye on this and will go into action once or if it appears. This is exactly why we need a consultant in WDC to be there to keep us informed of possible changes and assist with putting together a plan for items that effect our employees when they are presented in WDC.

-Legislative Outreach – this outreach plan is being put in place to add muscle to our cause as FSA employees. Each state will be working to help identify members that are active in Legislative activities through other organizations such as “Farm Bureau” . This two pronged approach will benefit both organizations as we work together on common causes. Anyone with ties to organizations and would be willing to assist working on these common issues please let me know so we share information to these groups.

-If anyone has any concerns they would like presented to the NW Area for consideration, please email me at [lm@bwtelcom.net](mailto:lm@bwtelcom.net) so we can present them for action.

## NASCOE Recognizes Deceased NEBRASCOE Members

The 2017 National Convention was held in St. Charles, MO. During the convention, a memorial video was presented to honor and remember FSA's NASCOE members who have passed away in the last year. It is a very special way to remember the deceased members of our NASCOE family.

Earlier this year, the NEBRASCOE board decided that we would like to do the same for our NEBRASCOE family. With that in mind, the names of Nebraska's NASCOE members or associates who passed away in the last year were submitted for inclusion in the memorial video.

Margaret Nannen  
Otoe County PT  
34 Years FSA Service



Lynette Straka  
Madison County PT  
28 Years FSA Service



If you know of someone who was not included on the list, please contact Joni Johnson at [joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov](mailto:joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov) or [jonijohnson0926@gmail.com](mailto:jonijohnson0926@gmail.com) and she will make sure they are in next year's memorial video and a future newsletter article.

*“Some people come into our lives and quickly go.  
Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our  
hearts, and we are never, ever the same.”*

*- Flavia Weedn*

# Get To Know a NEBRASCOE Member

## Long Tradition of Farming in Nebraska and the Midwest

By Angie Teboe

Iye udo<sup>n</sup> egitho<sup>n</sup>! Ponca izha wawitate Wau No<sup>n</sup>de I<sup>n</sup>gthu<sup>n</sup>huto<sup>n</sup>. Waxe izha wawitate Angie Teboe. Usni Ponca bthi<sup>n</sup>. Nudo<sup>n</sup>ho<sup>n</sup>ga go<sup>n</sup>tha Cedar County bthi<sup>n</sup>. O<sup>n</sup>bathe wibthaho<sup>n</sup> iye.

Greetings! My Ponca name is Woman Whose Heart Thunders. My English name is Angie Teboe. I am a member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. I am the County Executive Director for Cedar County and a member of NASCOE. Thank you for letting me speak with you today.

I have had the pleasure of being involved with agriculture since childhood, growing up on a crop and livestock farm in Pierce County. I am honored to have worked for FSA for the past 8 years. Not only has farming in Nebraska been a fourth generation tradition on my father's side, but has been at least a 300 year tradition in Nebraska and at least 1000 years in the Iowa and South Dakota for my mother's side, my Ponca side. There are currently Ponca still farming in Nebraska, traditional and modern farming. Ponca Gray Corn (aka Ponca Blue Corn) is still planted in Nebraska.

We, Ponca, had large scale gardening aka small scale farming of primarily corn, squash, and beans, which we planted in the rich river bottom ground. We supplemented our crops, with foraged plants, fish, and wild game as well as biannual bison hunts. We also harvested salt in the Lincoln, NE area. The land, water, and resources are held in high regard and our connection to it is essential to our identity as Ponca people. As part of treaties with the U.S. government, we, Ponca, incorporated modern farming like those of the settlers around the Ponca reservation near Niobrara, NE.

In 1877, our Ponca people were forced to leave Nebraska for Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. When our chiefs saw the Oklahoma ground that was supposed to be a fair trade to our lands in Nebraska, they refused as it was nowhere the rich and plentiful ground of Nebraska. However, we were moved there, regardless. Some Ponca remained in the Niobrara area illegally and through the death of Chief Standing Bear's son and the subsequent

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federal trial which declared Natives as people in eyes of the law, our Ponca people are now split into two groups: the Maste Ponca (hot – Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma) and Usni Ponca (cold – Ponca Tribe of Nebraska).

This past May, we, Ponca, held a remembrance walk of that forced removal. We walked 280 miles in 12 days from Niobrara, NE to Barneston, NE and stayed close to the trail we would have taken when forcibly removed from Nebraska in 1877. We were able to pay our respects to the Ponca that died along the trail and have a very small taste of what the removal felt like. I completed 8 days and 180 miles of the walk. I was able to take in our beautiful Nebraska land and watch the planting season progress. All the towns we stopped and camped in were very hospitable and we greatly appreciated their kindness.

I encourage you to visit the following informative places about the Ponca Removal: Ponca Tribe Museum – Niobrara, NE; Antelope County Museum – Neligh, NE; Standing Bear and Ponca Tribe Historical Marker – Interstate 80 Rest Area Milford, NE; and the Chief Standing Bear Trail - 19.5 mile walking/biking trail from Beatrice, NE to Barneston, NE; as well as online at the virtual Ponca Removal Trail: <http://www.chiefstandingbear.org/> and the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska website: <https://www.poncatribene.org/>. A big shout out to fellow FSA employee and NASCOE member, Jessi Colgrove, Gage County CED, for completing the last day of the walk with me!

Just as my Ponca people value and respect the land, animals, and resources of Nebraska, our current farmers and ranchers in Nebraska do also and I am privileged to be a part of that through the humble task of administrating FSA programs. I extend my thanks to you, my fellow FSA employees, for your part in being caretakers. Wibthaho<sup>ni</sup>!



**COMING SOON!!! A special edition NEBRASCOE newsletter highlighting just how “Historically Awesome” the 2017 NASCOE National Convention was in St. Charles, MO!!!**



# A Note From Your Treasurer

By Shanna Waterman

NEBRASCOE is working to be more transparent for our membership. We want you to know where your money is going! The NEBRASCOE accounting ledger is posted on the NEBRASCOE website monthly. I have started writing a note about each line item. While NEBRASCOE sometimes does pay for hotels and mileage, meals and entertainment functions are always the responsibility of the attendee. NEBRASCOE does make efforts to pay for a portion of the travel expenses, however delegates incur expenses they cover themselves as well. The ledger also shows expenses and income from the Northwest Area Rally. If there is anything else you would like to see on the ledger or have questions about NEBRASCOE's accounting, please contact me.

## NASCOE Myths: Debunked

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work for something new in all of our interest. The point here is we are ALL recipients of the hard work, big and small! Being a part of the work is good for you and good for NASCOE. **Membership is the Strength of our Association!!** Benefits were never a given for our predecessors and as a member, you have the assurance that the state and national leadership and its members are constantly monitoring discussions that could affect the benefits that we currently value."

Please consider this analogy and don't be a porch potato. Help us to help everyone, especially as we face uncertain times under a new administration.

Reminder: Be sure to pay your dues  
via check or FSA-444 before  
September 1 to be entered in  
a drawing for \$50!  
Two winners will be chosen at random!



## From the NEBRASCOE Cookbook

### Perfect Dill Pickles

- Pickling cucumbers
- 6 1/2 c. water
- 1/2 c. salt
- 3 c. vinegar
- 1 tsp. powdered alum
- 1 Tbsp. Sugar
- Dill
- Cloves of garlic

Boil this for 15 minutes. Pack cucumbers in jars with lots of dill. Put in a clove of garlic per jar as well. Add 1 Tbsp. Sugar to each quart (do not boil sugar). Pour the boiling vinegar brine over cucumbers. Fill to top of jars and seal tight. Set the jars in boiling water to come over tops of jars. Cover. Turn the burner off and let stand till cool, then remove.

Submitted by Geralda Heikes, Cedar County

If you would like to purchase a NEBRASCOE Cookbook please contact your District NEBRASCOE Rep!





# NEBRASCOE Membership Down in 2017-2018

Joni Johnson, NWA Membership Chair

Summer is a busy time, both in our FSA offices and at home; so I just wanted to get a reminder out to all county office employees that our new fiscal year for NASCOE started July 1, and as such, NASCOE/NEBRASCOE dues should be paid at this time. Our NEBRASCOE membership is down a bit from where it was last year from 68% to 62%.



Last year 201 of the 296 county office employees were NASCOE/NEBRASCOE members as compared to the 184 members we have at this time. Nearly 11% of our membership in 2016-2017 has now retired with only 2% of our new employees joining NASCOE.

A reminder letter and NASCOE/NEBRASCOE information packet was distributed to each office earlier this year. If any office didn't receive the letter and packet, please contact me at [joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov](mailto:joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov) or [jonijohnson0926@gmail.com](mailto:jonijohnson0926@gmail.com) and I will get that information to you. If you have questions about NASCOE/NEBRASCOE, contact any board member.

It's not too late to renew your NASCOE dues or become a new NASCOE member. Dues can be paid by check for the entire fiscal year or by filing an FSA-444 to have dues reduced from your salary on a per pay period basis. Checks can be mailed to:

NEBRASCOE TREASURER  
c/o Shanna Waterman  
Pierce County FSA  
210 East Main St, Ste 3  
Pierce Ne 68787-1346

Salary reductions on an FSA-444 can be e-mailed to the STO ([FSA-NE-HRPROCESSING@ne.usda.gov](mailto:FSA-NE-HRPROCESSING@ne.usda.gov)) with a CC to [joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov](mailto:joni.johnson@ne.usda.gov). All dues are based on the grade of an employee on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Amounts are listed in the chart below.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Dues per PP</u>	<u>Dues for 2017-18</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Dues per PP</u>	<u>Dues for 2017-18</u>
Grade 4	\$2.52	\$65.47	Grade 8	\$3.86	\$100.49
Grade 5	\$2.82	\$73.25	Grade 9	\$4.27	\$110.99
Grade 6	\$3.14	\$81.66	Grade 10	\$4.70	\$122.23
Grade 7	\$3.49	\$90.74	Grade 11	\$5.17	\$134.29
			Grade 12	\$6.19	\$160.96



# North West Area Rally Wrap-Up

By Joni Johnson and Anne Kelley, NEBRASCOE Delegates

The 2017 North West Rally was held in Lincoln, NE on April 27-29. Please read below for the details.

Chris Beyerhelm, Acting FSA Administrator attended the Rally in Lincoln and touched on Budget/ Staffing, Programs/Software, IT, Personnel/Training and other miscellaneous items.

Cash Awards are staying. The amounts were less this year than last year; but the cash awards process will be staying in place. Awards are budget-driven so availability of 'spot awards' will depend on budget. We were at 98.5% of our staffing ceiling prior to the hiring freeze (11,800 employees) with a budget of \$1.6 Billion (\$1 Billion is Salaries)

Within FSA there is a need to make people want to stay in their job and to make them feel valued. Through the recent Viewpoint Survey it was reported that 60% of FSA feel their supervisors don't have honesty and integrity.

Updating handbooks is a work in progress. It is the goal of WDC to keep offices up-to-date on program provisions/procedure, not only with Notices, but ultimately with up-to-date handbooks.

ARS is our workload delivery system and it needs to be tweaked. Work is needed to hone a process to analyze workload and to deal with the complexity of producers and operations. With this in mind, employees should be very diligent and detailed in their ARS reporting so that ARS reflects true areas/ programs worked each day/each pay period throughout the year. That is important when budget/ funding is determined. It is also very important to record all hours worked—and hours worked beyond normal tour of duty should be recorded as credit time, comp time, etc. It's the only way to record the number of hours required to complete the work we do throughout the year and it effects programs and funding tremendously. We continue to get the job done and that is hurting "our story" to tell Congress that we need more budget to hire more people. As long as we continue to get the job done then Congress won't be able to see that we are struggling.

Refreshing Computers: WDC plans to 'refresh' computers every 3-4 years. They want to inventory what is in each office and see what is needed (laptop vs desktop) depending on how/where the employee is working. One size does not fit all and smarter IT purchases will be made.

By the end of the fiscal year IT is planning to have a Dashboard to monitor IT issues up and down the line so that if there are problems they can be identified and addressed more quickly.

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# North West Area Rally Wrap-Up

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PT Counter Skills is in the development phase right now. The need to train Program Technicians was voiced in employee surveys.

Farm Bill: WDC is in the information-gathering and ideas stage of the new farm bill. They're working to decide what programs to keep as is; what programs to tweak and keep and what minor programs are not feasible to keep due to the budget.

Steve Peterson, Division Director for Production, Emergencies and Compliance Division, also joined the meeting and spoke at the rally about the following:

Changes looked at for new Farm Bill:

ARC/PLC – using NASS vs RMA production to set yields?

CRP – nation is nearing the 24 million acre cap – as we near the acre cap, what changes will be made?

ELAP – should funding for this program be increased?

Re-iteration that Receipt for Service is here to stay for as long as it stays in statute language.

LFP has issued \$6.2 Billion in payment since it started (as of April 2017).

NAP-Buy-Up coverage may not continue in the next farm bill.

Other NASCOE items discussed were:

**PROGRAMS:** 102 program ideas/suggestions, across the country, were submitted during the year. Submitting suggestions is an on-line process and can be completed on the NASCOE website.

**MEMBERSHIP:** The Northwest Area has 75 percent membership in NASCOE.

**BENEFITS:** Dillard Financial Solutions Inc. is in the sixth year of its contract as the exclusive benefits counselor for NASCOE. Work is in progress on a “Quick Guide to Benefits”. A reminder was given for NASCOE members to review and use Working Advantage ([www.workingadvantage.com](http://www.workingadvantage.com)). A NASCOE ID # is needed to access the account. Contact a NEBRASCOE board member to get the ID#.

**AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIP:** Nominations for awards and applications for scholarships were submitted on-line for the first time this fiscal year. Members are encouraged to review scholarships available and submit applications timely. Members are also encouraged to submit nominations of NASCOE members for Distinguished Service Awards in three categories (Service to the Community, Service to FSA and Service to NASCOE). (See the NEBRASCOE website for a list of this year's Scholarship and DSA recipients.)

**CANDIDACY ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Candidates for NASCOE Election announced their candidacy for NASCOE President, Vice-President, Secretary and NWA Executive. Elections will be held during the National Convention.

**CONVENTION & RALLY UPDATES:** The 2017 National Convention will be held in St. Charles, MO from August 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>. The 2018 National Convention will be in Sioux Falls, SD from August 1<sup>st</sup> thru 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Details will follow when available. The 2018 NWA Rally is being planned for Bellingham, WA in mid-April 2018. Details will follow when available.

# North West Area Rally Wrap-Up Pictures



Left to Right: Wes Daniels, NASCOE President, Dennis Ray, NASCOE Vice President, Chris Beyerhelm, Acting FSA Administrator, Steve Peterson, Division Director for Production, Emergencies and Compliance Division



Left to Right: Gage County FSA Office, 25 Years of Continuous NASCOE Membership; Greg Chewakin, NASCOE 3000 Hour Sick Leave Award



Left to Right: Tim Divis, Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Service to FSA/Agriculture, Larry Evans, Distinguished Service for Community Award; Coleman Forst, 2017 Open Continuing Education Scholarship Award, Tigh Renken, 2017 Traditional Scholarship Award