

NWA December 2, 2011 Conference Call Report
By Larry Olsen, NWA Executive Director

The NASCOE Executive Board had a conference call Friday December 2, 2011 to discuss and make decisions on many items. The first was the planning of a Legislative Conference. The Executive Committee decided to have a "Full" NASCOE Legislative Conference, February 6 thru February 9, 2012. The Full Conference would include inviting all State Associations to attend. The 6th and 9th will be travel days. Tuesday Feb. 7 will include an in structural program session with the NASCOE Legislative Committee and NASCOE Consultant Robert Redding. Wednesday Feb. 8 will be Capitol Hill visits to State's Congressional Members. Wednesday evening will be individual Area wrap up meeting to submit Key contact reports, report cards, and general discussion of Hill visits. All states participating in the legislative Conference will receive \$750.00 to help with expenses of attending the conference. The remaining expense will be the responsibility of the State Association. If a State Association needs additional assistance they would need to contact the Area Exec. For the NWA that is me. The NASCOE Legislative Committee would also like to see as many NAFEC members attend as is possible. The Legislative Co-Chairs plan to have more information out to everyone in the near future. The dates are set Feb. 6-9, 2012 so start looking for airfare deals. I will get the hotel information out as soon as possible. The rate will be \$183.00 per night (government rate), which is far cheaper than last year.

The failing of the Super Committee has put the farm bill back into a normal farm bill process, going through the House and Senate Ag Committees and will go to sequestration and full debate on the floor. The failure of the Super Committee sets the stage for automatic reductions to take effect in the 2013 FY. For the Ag Bill this would mean a 12 + Billion reduction. Certain items are exempted in this reduction amount. Food Stamps, CRP, and possibly Crop Insurance would be exempt from this reduction. Mr. Kevin Wooten from North Carolina has been appointed by NASCOE President John Lohr as a Co-Chair to serve with Dan Root (existing Co-Chair) to the Legislative Committee. Congrats to Kevin. NASCOE CO-Legislative Chair Terry Stehr from PA accepted the buy-out and has retired. A big thanks for all Terry has done for NASCOE and the Legislative Committee and Good luck to Terry in his retirement.

The Executive Committee discussed PAC (political action contributions) Promotions. The Executive Committee would like to be able to do a PAC presentation for every State and Area Rally if at all possible. Charla Daly, SEA Legislative Chair is updating a print promotion and a power point presentation. Charla may also be able to attend a State Convention, State gathering, and/or Area Rally to help promote participation in the PAC. If a State is interested in having Charla for a PAC promotion, please contact

me. The Executive Committee is developing a plan to contact every member that has not contributed to the PAC. Charla Daly is working very hard on this for all of NASCOE. We will need everyone's help on this. The PAC is very important especially now.

NASCOE was planning to help do a big push for membership with NAFEC (National Association of Farmer Elected Committees) in January in time for the Organizational Meetings. Since AO-1528 and its revision along with budget issues, Counties in some States may not be having Organizational Meetings, NASCOE has a new plan. Chance Fenoglio, SWA Legislative Chair, is emailing the NAFEC promotional material to the Execs for distribution to all State Presidents. We hope that all CED's can have this information by Wednesday in advance of their COC ballot counting meetings. The material should be posted to the NASCOE website. That would make it easy for us to notify everyone to go there to get it in time for these meetings. As we move forward, NAFEC will be an instrumental part of keeping and strengthening the COC delivery system.

Annette Hyman, NASCOE Secretary, has received around 60 Negotiation Items in the last two days. That is great news, but we really would like to have many more. **The board decided to extend the date of submission of negotiation items until December 15, 2011.** The process is simpler now than ever and is completely done online. The online submission process is on the NASCOE website. I am asking everyone to please submit your ideas online to the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org and then let our Negotiation Consultant, Jill Lorang from Montana jill.lorang@mt.usda.gov or edencows@3riversdbs.net know that you submitted an item. Jill will be working very hard on all the negotiation items for us and will represent the NWA well. The items will need to be compiled and ready for discussion at the Pre-Negotiation Meeting January 15th and 16th of 2012. With the holidays coming up all our ideas will need to be submitted by the 15th of December to give Annette Hyman enough time to put together for the pre-negotiations session. State Associations can use government email to put out reminders on negotiations information. Visit the NASCOE website www.nascoe.org to submit a negotiation item. With everything that has gone on this past year I am sure we can all think of something that could be submitted. The Negotiations process is part of the labor relations agreement with management and one of the most important things that NASCOE does. This is our chance to let management know what does not work, what is perceived to be unfair, how the agency can be improved, and basically make management be accountable..

During the 2011 Negotiation Meeting in WCD, Deputy Administrator of Field Operations, Mr. Mike Wooden stated that he would support CED's requesting to get trained and certified to deliver FLP in the county office. I would like to get some feedback on this

issue. I would encourage all CEDs in the NWA to express their feelings to me on this issue or through their State Association President. There are some individuals that think this would be a big step towards job security in the future. There are others that do not want any part of this, please let me know your thoughts in the NWA. NASCOE also wants to know your feelings on pursuing either a change to the FLM eligibility (some type of training requirement) for vacant CED positions and/or a change to the CED eligibility (no initial training requirement same as FLMs that apply for CED positions) for vacant FLM positions. Let me your thoughts on this issue also.

The vast majority of the CO employees that took the VERA/VISP were NASCOE members. Friday December 2, 2011 a new VERA notice came out. It will be very important that we continue to try and grow our membership. It is going to take all of us working together to strengthen the COC system, work with our Legislative team on farm bill and policy issues, take care of our benefits, and many more issues that will face us in the near future. It is an honor to represent the NWA on the NASCOE board, as it is a privilege to serve with the other members of the Executive Committee. Please keep me updated on any concerns, questions, or other issues that you may have.

News in the Area includes the recent retirement of David Unruh. David was a CED in Washington State and the President of WAASCOE Association. David took a VISP. Kathy Modin was recently elected President and Betty Snell Vice President to WAASCOE. Congratulations to both Kathy and Betty. David was an asset to FSA as well as WAASCOE. He has always been very active in NASCOE and at one time was Co-Benefits Chair of NASCOE. Prior to moving to WA, he was in California and was very active in CHASCOE. Best wishes to David Unruh and all NASCOE members in the NWA that have retired through this process or in general. They will all be missed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry Olsen,
NWA Exec