



July 30, 2014

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FSA SUPPORT EMPLOYEES

USDAConnect – <https://connections.usda.gov/>

MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

NASE strives to:

- promote the betterment of the Farm Service Agency through improved service to the public
- Improve our programs
- Establish a cooperative relationship at all levels of the Agency
- Help accomplish the mission of USDA and FSA
- Improve support staff effectiveness
- Improve morale, esprit-de-corp, and efficiency
- Promote self-motivation, self-education, and career enhancement
- Promote the social, economic, civic and personal welfare of support employees

NASE – REMEMBER, NOT JUST FOR FARM LOAN PROGRAMS ANYMORE

First not one person commented on the fact that I had the year of last week's edition as 2018. Getting way ahead of myself

Good News, NASE has been asked to provide input into non-statutory, non-regulatory things on a more frequent basis. If a form needs to be adjusted or a word is misspelled or even the wrong word seems to have been used, we have been asked to provide this information immediately to the National Office. We have provided information and we have been heard. Keep it up; send in your suggestions, comments and concerns.

Also something NASE has asked for on several occasions was information from SCIMS whereby county offices would be able to print labels or files or envelopes or mail merge documents. Farm numbers and operator information is also available. The National Office and Kansas City have been able to provide the data to make this possible. GIS coordinators in each state have been busy getting the information out to their respective clients (field employees). As I understand it, the information is NOT live data but fresh data will be available once a month for updating.

Notice the new FLP applications with email addresses. NASE had asked for this information to be added and we received it.

Marilyn Jo McMullen
PO Box 1774, Bozeman, MT 59771-1774
406-599-8181 (cell)

mjomcmullen@aol.com or marilyn.mcmullen@mt.usda.gov



Wear **red** on Fridays to show support for our troops at home and abroad.

National Convention NACS/NASE Joint Session

CONVENTION NEWSLETTERS

Two newsletters have been issued by the National Association of Credit Specialists about the NACS-FSA 2014 convention. These have both been posted to the NACS web site under the News section and from a link on the home page under Recent Posts. You may also use the following links to go directly.

[NACS-FSA Convention News](#)

[NACS-FSA Business Meeting News](#)

2014-2015 NASE Board

Marilyn McMullen

Montana
President

Angela Biester

Nebraska
Vice-President

Heather Culwell

Kansas
Secretary

Rhonda Hoffman

Nebraska
Treasurer

Cindy Porter

Nebraska
Past President

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Jill Monson

California
Zone A Representative

Teresa DeLaCruz

Texas
Zone B Representative

Barb Painter

Illinois
Zone C Representative

Beth Perkins

Louisiana
Zone D Representative

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NASE Website

Out of the mouth of babes!

Introducing Heather Culwell, NASE Secretary

I started my career with FSA in May, 2010 as a temporary Program Technician in the Kansas State Office. After 8 long, grueling months of not knowing if my position would be extended, I applied for and was offered a full time, permanent position as a Farm Loan Program Technician in Saline County Kansas. Earlier this year I applied for a Farm Loan Officer Trainee position and was fortunate enough to be selected for the Atchison County Kansas location.

Although I don't have children, I'm a huge animal lover. I currently have two Italian Greyhounds, Addison and Evie Jean; one cat, Wendell, who just showed up on my doorstep, and a big beautiful quarter horse named Charlie Brown. If I had it my way...and a larger yard, I'd have a few more dogs, some chickens, another horse or two, and maybe a couple cows...and I guess a husband someday. Unfortunately, I'll have to keep them on my dream list for a little while longer.

I am extremely honored to be a member of NASE. The best part, other than the camaraderie and friendships I have developed with FSA and RD members across the nation, is the opportunity to have my voice heard. I have had one on one discussions with National Office Officials such as Juan Garcia, Candy Thompson, Chris Beyerhelm, Nikki Chavez, Bill Cobb...and the list goes on. They truly care how the decisions they make or the projects they administer affect the programs we deliver and the producers that we serve.

I look forward to working with and for my fellow NASE members in the year ahead. It's our responsibility to make sure the staff in Washington D.C. hear our voices, especially in such an unpredictable time where we are expected to do more with less.

Heather Culwell

913-833-5460 ext. 1228

heather.culwell@ks.usda.gov

ZONE REPRESENTATIVES

The nation is divided into four zones and each zone has a representative that acts as a liaison between the Executive Board and the membership. More about the specific states in each zone can be found on the NASE website at the [Zone Information](#) page. For additional information about NASE please do not hesitate to contact any one of these representatives.

Zone A – The western portion of the US is represented by Zone Representative Jill Monson from California.

Zone B – The central states are represented by Teresa DeLaCruz from Texas.

Zone C – The north eastern states are represented by Barb Painter from Indiana.

Zone D – The south eastern states are represented by Beth Perkins from Louisiana.

NASE does currently have a website - NASEFSA.ORG. This website will be receiving some updates and will be a work in progress for a while. Please bear with us while we get things modernized.

My five year old great-granddaughter has been such a refreshing joy in our lives and we are always surprised on what comes out of her mouth. As we were driving through town very slowly, in tons of traffic, going by many road closed or detour signs she commented. "Oh, all this road destruction!" Then just before bed she gave me 45 cents "for taking such good care of her".

COMMITTEES

In the next week or so I will be getting in touch with those of you who serviced on committees or those I know have expressed an interest in servicing on a committee to get the 2014/2015 committees set. At the same time I will be asking each of you to fill out a profile to find out more about each of you and what you may be interested in. If you do not hear from me and are interested in one of the committees, please let me know of your interest. The standing committees we have and a brief description of each are:

Tanya McIlravey
South Dakota
Information
Technology
Committee

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE –

This committee will solicit input from all members as to changes that would improve the automation activities in the FSA field offices. Committee members will research for validity, clarity and edit as necessary all resolutions submitted, and present any resolutions at zone or convention. Member, as requested, will work with the National Office and Finance Office as liaisons to review items for various automation projects.

Cathy Rakes
Nebraska
Farm Loan
Committee

FARM LOAN COMMITTEE –

This committee will be alert to all farm loan program concerns expressed by individual members and or states and bring these concerns and/or suggestions forward to the NASE board. They will assist in writing appropriate resolutions, validate and edit resolutions from the field in the farm loan arena. This committee works closely with the IT Committee on automation issues affecting the farm loan programs.

Jill Uffelman
Montana
Farm Program
Committee

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Other committee
chairpersons to be
introduced in next
week's edition of
the NASE Weekly
Update.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Volunteers needed!

This committee will solicit members for leadership roles with the association. They will compile a slate of eligible members willing to serve as national officers and present them to the general membership at or before the national convention.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE –

This committee will review personnel procedures and practices for performance appraisals, desk audits, and job descriptions/classification. This committee will be alert to all personnel concerns expressed by individual members and/or states and assist in writing appropriate resolutions.

RESOURCE COMMITTEE –

This committee has two major responsibilities: membership and awards.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE –

The primary purpose of this committee is fund raising to support the organizations mission.

BY-LAWS COMMITTEE –

This committee coordinates suggestions made regarding BY-LAW changes. Every NASE has a responsibility to review the By-Laws and when appropriate make recommendations for changes to best suit the organization.

Mental Health is an Important Issue in the Workplace

Mental health is an important issue in the workplace. It is a state of well-being in which an individual achieves his or her own potential, copes effectively with the normal challenges of life, and is able to work more efficiently and productively. To support Federal efforts, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management and U.S. Department of Health & Human Service's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration released a memorandum to Heads of Executive Department and Agencies, highlighting the importance of ensuring the workforce has access to the appropriate resources. The memorandum also included fact sheets for supervisors and employees. The fact sheets highlight key resources to increase awareness and access to services when needed. Below are links to the memorandum and employee fact sheet.

Memorandum: <http://www.chcoc.gov/transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalID=6193>

Employee fact sheet: <http://chcoc.gov/files/opm-samhsa-staff-fact-sheet.pdf>

10 tips Nutrition

Education Series



This weekend [make being active a priority](#). A great way to stay motivated is to find a fitness buddy! Keep each other engaged and try something new like hiking, kickboxing, canoeing, or yoga – the possibilities are endless.

Making Good Mistakes

//Government Executive

Promising Practices

ART PETTY | JULY 30, 2014 |

The true test of your leadership character isn't measured by the absence of mistakes, but rather by the mistakes made in pursuit of growth and learning *and* how you conduct yourself once you've made a mistake.

Show me a mistake-free leader, and I'll show you someone hiding from the real issues confronting the business: people and strategy.

[Read More...](#)

How to Get the Most from Your Social Security Benefit //

Tammy Flanagan

Last week we explored the benefits and disadvantages of [purchasing an annuity using the proceeds of your Thrift Savings Plan](#). This week, I'd like to consider another another question. Steven A. Sass, program director of the Financial Security Project, an initiative of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College, puts it this way in a briefing paper: "[Should You Buy an Annuity From Social Security?](#)"

In the paper, Sass describes the three traditional methods of receiving income from retirement savings: investing the principal in bank deposits or U.S. Treasury bills to preserve savings and live on the interest; investing in stocks and bonds and drawing out a portion as income; or buying an annuity. A fourth option, suggests Sass, is to delay claiming Social Security retirement income until age 70 and use your retirement savings to

provide the income needed during the earlier years.

Social Security retirement benefits can be claimed anytime between the ages of 62 and 70. The full retirement age for someone who is 62 in 2014 is 66. That means, for example, that if your full benefit would be \$2,000 per month at age 66, but you choose to claim the benefit at 62, it would be reduced by 25 percent, to \$1,500. On the other hand, if you delay claiming the benefit until you're 70, it would be increased by 32 percent, to \$2,640.

[Read full article »](#)

Congress puts pressure on OPM to release final phased retirement rule

By [Dena Levitz](#)
Federal News
Radio

The Office of Personnel Management's [delay in solidifying](#) a phased retirement program for federal workers is drawing scrutiny from Congress.

Two letters sent from the Hill recently call for OPM to explain why it's taking so long to release final phased retirement regulations and demand a revised timeline for action. It has been two years since Congress [passed legislation](#) granting OPM the power to establish a phased retirement program. Phased retirement will allow federal employees, with approval from their agency, to partially retire and draw half of their earned retirement benefits while continuing to work part-time.

By January of this year, OPM was supposed to have published final regulations around implementation. But the fact that this hasn't happened yet is "delaying the anticipated start of phased retirement by nearly five months and counting," according to the [July 2 letter](#) signed by six members of Congress.

[Read full article »](#)

USDA Announces Grants to Help Veterans and Minority Farmers Get Started in Agriculture

Partnerships Continue USDA Efforts Supporting New Farmers and Build Greater Diversity in American Agriculture

WASHINGTON, July 29, 2014 — Today, USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden announced the availability of over \$9 million in outreach and technical assistance for minority farmers and ranchers and military veterans that are new to farming and ranching. The funding, provided through the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program, also known as the 2501 Program, will enable community-based organizations and other partners to work directly with these groups to successfully acquire, own and operate farms and ranches and equitably participate in all USDA programs. [Read More. . .](#)

Security Awareness

Your speedy response to an incident can make the difference between an isolated security event and full network exposure. By recognizing and reporting incidents, you are one of many people working together to defend against active attacks as part of the incident handling process.

ITS Incident
Handling
July 2014

In this month's issue of the Focus On Security Newsletter, we look at how the incident handling process works across ITS. This process involves several steps, including incident prevention measures to prevent attacks where possible and incident response measures to limit the impact of an attack if it does occur. Throughout this process, multiple ITS groups work together to share information and form a cohesive incident response team.

[Focus On Security Newsletters](#)