**SOUTHWEST AREA REPORT**

**BY: DARVIN COLLINS - SWA REPRESENTATIVE**

Howdy my rowdy RASCOE friends! I hope retirement is treating all of you very well as we approach our 2025 NASCOE Convention in Whitefish Montana. I am looking forward to our next extended three week RV camping trip which will end in Whitefish, Montana on Saturday June 21st for our NASCOE Convention. Along the way we’ll explore Southwestern South Dakota, Wyoming, and Yellowstone National Park.

Our 2024-2025 year in RASCOE has been busy and productive for our National RASCOE Team. In January HR 82 2023 Social Security Fairness Act passed and became law. This legislation getting across the finish line was a product of years of blood sweat and tears of NASCOE and RASCOE’s legislative efforts. Our members and spouses have already reaped the benefits of this legislation. In early April, the All South Rally was held in Wichita, KS. We had a very productive and successful Rally with our RASCOE President, Becky Zirpel, and SEA RASCOE Representative, Sheryl Blakley in attendance. Thank You to all the fine folks with KASCOE in making the 2025 All South Rally possible and a great success.

If you are a retiree but have not joined RASCOE, I would encourage you to join the rowdy crew of RASCOE. Annual dues are $25.00 and Associate dues are $15.00. State RASCOE Associations may also charge a small state dues fee in addition to the RASCOE fee of $25.00. If retirees in your SWA state have not established a state RASCOE association, and you are interested in doing so, please contact me at Darvin.collins28@gmail.com or text or phone me at 903-721-2404.

I would like to express my concern regarding legislation in the US House of Representatives which would reduce FERS retirement benefits for future retirees across the federal government. Although this does not affect retirees that have already retired, this legislation will affect future retirees, and I believe drastically damage our agency’s ability to recruit and retain qualified personnel to staff our county and state FSA offices. Secondly, a reduction of FERS benefits for employees who have worked for years under the current rules of retirement would in my mind be a breach of trust between the employer and the employee. I would urge all members of RASCOE to contact your US Representative and Senators and let them know how you feel on this issue. Mary Behm, RASCOE Vice President has crafted an excellent letter to address these concerns. You can find this letter on our TXRASCOE Facebook Group Page also.

In closing, I would like to thank our RASCOE President, Becky Zirpel and our entire RASCOE Executive Board for their work and support during our 2024-2025 RASCOE year. It’s been a privilege to be along for the ride and serve our FSA retirees in the Southwest Area.

Sincerely Submitted,

Darvin Collins, SWA RASCOE Representative