

The County Agent



A publication of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents

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6584 W. Duroc Road • Maroa, IL 61756 • (217) 794-3700



2026

PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND AWARDS PROGRAMS

&

COMMITTEE DIRECTORY

**ANNUAL MEETING &
PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT CONFERENCE**

**Denver, Colorado
July 8-12, 2026**



OPEN COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR POSITIONS 2026 - 2028

When you read through the Special Edition of The County Agent, it is obvious that committee work and related activities is the essence of what it takes to achieve NACAA's mission. Historically NACAA has been fortunate to have committed, hard working members fill those leadership positions. This year as every year there is an opportunity for members to expand and share their leadership and professional improvement skills by applying for committee positions that are open. Becoming active in the NACAA committee structure will provide you with a wealth of both professional and personal growth. Give serious consideration to any of the state and national committee positions that are available.

The application submission is available on the NACAA web site at the link noted below. The deadline for submissions is **March 15, 2026**. Position recommendations will be made at the Spring Board meeting and upon Voting Delegate approval, terms will begin at the conclusion of the 2026 AM/PIC.

<https://www.nacaa.com/leadership-application>

Council Chair Openings	Open to General Membership	
Extension Development Council Chair		3 year term
National Committee Chair Openings		
Ag Economics & Comm. Dev.	National Chair	2 year term
Animal Science	National Chair	2 year term
Recognition & Awards	National Chair	2 year term
Research & Education Posters	National Chair	2 year term
Agricultural Issues	National Chair	2 year term
Early Career Development	National Chair	2 year term
Sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resources	National Chair	2 year term
Extension Development Council	Region Open To Application	
Agricultural Issues - Vice Chair	North Central and Southern	2 year term
Early Career Development - Vice Chair	Southern and Western	2 year term
Leadership & Administrative Skills - Vice Chair	North East and Western	2 year term
Teaching & Educational Technologies - Vice Chair	North Central and Southern	2 year term
Professional Improvement Council	Region Open To Application	
Ag Economics & Comm. Dev. - Vice Chair	North Central and Southern	2 year term
4-H and Youth Programming- Vice Chair	North East and Western	2 year term
Agronomy & Pest Management - Vice Chair	North Central and North East	2 year term
Animal Science - Vice Chair	North East and Western	2 year term
Horticulture & Turf Grass - Vice Chair	Southern and Western	2 year term
Sustainable Agriculture & Natural Resources - Vice Chair	North East and Southern	2 year term
Program Recognition Council	Region Open To Application	
Communications - Vice Chair	North East and Western	2 year term
Research & Education Posters - Vice Chair	North East and Southern	2 year term
Recognition & Awards - Vice Chair	North Central and Southern	2 year term
Scholarship - Vice Chair	North Central and North East	2 year term
Search for Excellence - Vice Chair	North Central and Western	2 year term

President's Corner

Don't Let the Words "Can't" or "Won't" Stop You

In agriculture, folks learn early that can't and won't are two weeds that grow fast if you let 'em. Can't whispers that you're not able and won't stomps its foot and says you're not willing. Neither word has ever fixed a gate or brought in a harvest. Life in agriculture teaches you that progress starts the moment you quit listening to excuses and start putting one boot in front of the other. When you pull those two little troublemakers out by the roots, you make room for better words, like can, will, and watch me. And once those take hold, there's no telling how far you'll go.

I often hear agents say, "I can't be on a committee," or "They won't select me." My response is always the same: How do you know until you try? I remember being told, when I applied for the Achievement Award, that I did not have enough years of service and should not expect to receive it so early in my career. Had I accepted those comments. Had I believed the "can't" or "won't", my trajectory within NACAA might have been very different. Whether those limiting voices come from others or from within ourselves, we must learn to push past them. When we choose courage over doubt, we often discover that we are capable of far more than we ever imagined.

For years, the inside cover of The County Agent magazine has carried the message, "We Need You!" The phrase isn't decorative. It's a call to action for both new and seasoned members to consider leadership roles, committee involvement, and active participation in strengthening our association. So don't let the words "can't" or "won't" keep you from applying. Whether you've been a member for six months or twenty-six years, NACAA leadership is ready to welcome you. We value commitment, energy, and a desire to serve our state and national associations. If leadership sparks even a small interest in you, follow that instinct.

Applications for open committee and council positions are due March 15, and we strongly encourage you to apply.



JJ Jones
NACAA President

As we look ahead to the next AM/PIC, take time to reflect on the accomplishments of the past year.

Consider submitting:

- Award applications
- Abstracts for oral presentations
- Poster session entries

The deadline for these submissions

is also March 15. You cannot present or win if you do not apply, and we want to see your best work showcased on the national stage.

If you're unsure how to apply, NACAA provides step-by-step online resources, and the national office is ready to assist.

Whether you're preparing a Communications Award entry or applying for Search for Excellence, the tools are in place to guide you through the process.

Don't forget to take advantage of the NACAA 365 Webinar Series, available year-round. These free sessions highlight award-winning programs, innovative technologies, and professional development topics delivered by your Extension colleagues and agricultural industry partners.

As we move toward the 2026 Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference in Denver, I hope you will commit to being fully engaged through program submissions and participation in professional development opportunities.

Your involvement strengthens NACAA. Your leadership shapes our future. Your presence enriches our conferences and our shared experience.

Together, let's continue building an NACAA that thrives on fairness, inclusion, opportunity, and service. The possibilities ahead are endless, and every member plays a vital role in turning them into reality.

We look forward to seeing you in Denver and to building the future of NACAA, together.

APPLYING FOR 2026 NACAA AWARDS PROGRAMS

The General Application process is found on-line at

<https://www.nacaa.com/award-application>

and for the majority of the awards listed in this publication, on-line applications are mandatory.

Note: 1) NACAA policy states that all first place national winners and all national finalists must register and attend the AM/PIC to receive their award.

All program entries must be in possession of respective committee state chair by March 15, 2026, except where noted. Applying earlier is encouraged.

Current members of the NACAA Board may **not** enter the professional improvement programs with the exceptions of DSA and AA. State chairs, regional vice chairs, and national chairs may participate in the programs which their committees are administering according to criteria determined by the NACAA Board of Directors. Contact NACAA Vice President Tyrone Fisher for further details at tfisher@ncsu.edu.

Attendance Requirement

NACAA policy states that all Achievement Award (AA), Distinguished Service Award (DSA), National Finalists, National Winners, and Poster Session Presenters must register for the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference and attend the designated ceremony to receive their award (minimum 1 day registration fee). Decisions on requests for non-attendance and excused absences will be made on a case by case basis by consultation among the respective National Committee Chair, in concert with the National Committee Vice Chairs and the NACAA Vice President. Excuses may be granted to AA, DSA, National Finalists, and National Winners for extreme personal or family illness; circumstances which would seriously

jeopardize their job; or similar extreme situations. The intent of this requirement is that awards are inclusive of cash, plaques, and certificates. In the event a national winner does not receive an excused absence from attending the AM/PIC, the national winner's award will be presented to the next ranking National Finalist who attends the AM/PIC. If none of the National Finalists attend the AM/PIC, a national winner award will not be presented.

In the event a national finalist does not receive an excused absence from attending the AM/PIC, the national finalist award will be forfeited. If a national finalist award is forfeited, there will be no replacement from lower ranking entries.

Note: The National Winner who is asked to make a program presentation at the AM/PIC is eligible for a reimbursement of the AM/PIC registration fee. In case of a team presentation, the value will equal one registration.

ON-LINE RESOURCES FOR COMPLETING AWARD APPLICATIONS

Are you unfamiliar on how to apply for awards or presentations on-line? If you're needing assistance with this process - please refer to a newly created "How do I apply for an award" which can be found within Awards FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) found at:

<https://www.nacaa.com/awards-faq>

The direct link to begin an award application can be found at:

<https://www.nacaa.com/award-application>

There is not a separate "Quick-Start" guide for Presentations - but the process is fairly similar to the Award process listed above. To submit a presentation you can easily begin that process by going to:

<https://www.nacaa.com/presentation-application>

For Award submissions, once you have completed the award application on-line, an automatic email will be sent to your State Chair responsible for reviewing your application. If for some reason you don't have a State Chair assigned from your respective state, an email notification will be sent to your State President notifying that a State Chair has not been identified in the system, and one will need to be assigned.

State Chairs are responsible for selecting "State Winners" in order for your award application to continue the review process at the Regional and National level.

If at any time throughout the award submission process you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact NACAA at exec-dir@nacaa.com or by calling 217-794-3700 for assistance. The National office has the ability to review what you have entered and help identify what the problem may be with your submission.



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Submit articles and photos to Greendell Publishing at the address listed above.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
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CALL FOR PRESENTERS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT SESSIONS - 2026 NACAA AM/PIC

PURPOSE:

To provide NACAA members an opportunity to make an oral presentation at a recognized national professional improvement meeting.

To provide NACAA members an opportunity to share successful Cooperative Extension educational programs.

To provide to the NACAA membership professional improvement presentations that will enable them to be a more knowledgeable Cooperative Extension professional.

ELIGIBILITY:

NACAA members in good standing must submit an on-line abstract of their proposed presentation to the following committees: Agronomy and Pest Management; Agricultural Economics and Community Development; Animal Science; 4-H & Youth Programming; Natural Resources/Aquaculture; Horticulture & Turfgrass; Sustainable Agriculture; Agricultural Issues; Early Career Development; Administrative Skills Development; or Teaching and Educational Technologies.

Author(s) agree that submitted article(s) have not been published or are not currently under consideration for publication in other journals.

The NACAA Vice President along with the Professional Improvement Council/Extension Development Council Chairs will determine the number of accepted presentations.

The committees will have full authority to accept or reject a proposed presentation upon evaluation of the title and submitted abstract. Rejection of a proposed presentation by the Committee will be final. Presentations will be made on Thursday-Saturday of the 2026 AM/PIC.

RECOGNITION:

Peer reviewed papers will be selected for presentation and authors will receive a certificate and will have paper published in the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Proceedings.

ENTRY:

The application process for making a presentation at the 2026 AM/PIC will be handled on-line at <https://www.nacaa.com/presentation-application> Please follow the instructions on-line for submitting a presentation application. All submissions must be completed by March 15, 2026. See page 11 for abstract example and format that must be followed.

Abstract Review	Points Possible
Title	
Writing Format – Does the abstract follow the sample format?	5
Grammar – Rate the level of correct use of grammar?	10
Punctuation – How well is correct punctuation used?	10
Abstract: Statement of Issue – How well does the abstract clearly describe the issue that needs to be addressed?	15
Methodology - How well does the abstract demonstrate the procedures to complete project?	10
Impact – Are results clearly stated? Did results lead to action?	15
Extension Education – Describe dissemination of information. How well does the abstract demonstrate how this information was used to educate the clientele/public? OR Research - Does the abstract show the data and results of the research? How well does the abstract show the conclusion and application of the research?	15
Topic Applicable to Other Regions – Would this project be plausible for use in other regions?	10
Interest Level – Does this abstract show an issue that is of interest to the clientele/public?	10
Total Points	100



Guidelines for the SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE PROGRAMS

ELIGIBILITY

All NACAA members in good standing with their state associations are eligible. Team entries are permitted. All team members need not be current members of NACAA. However, only NACAA members will receive award recognition. Please indicate the members of the team that are non NACAA Members. State Search for Excellence Chairs are eligible but must follow established guidelines. Application must be submitted by a current NACAA member.

ENTRY

Submitting entry electronically is mandatory for all Search For Excellence Award Programs (see NACAA web site). Complete **on-line** application form and submit with entry that should not exceed 1200 words. Entry should reflect program activities and accomplishments **within the past three years**. Members are encouraged to apply for multiple Search For Excellence Awards, however **members can only enter the same program in ONE Search for Excellence Category**.

Entry should be organized and will be evaluated on the following criteria: Educational Objectives, Program Activities, Teaching Methods, Results, Impact Statement, and Evaluation. The score sheet for all Extension Programs is located on page 5.

Attach **no more than three (3)** supporting documents. Abstract is required with application (350 word maximum). Abstract totals do not count in the 1200 words. If team entry, team member names on the abstract must be the same as on the application form. See page 11 for abstract example and format that must be followed.

AWARDS

Donors are being solicited for these awards. If adequate donor funds are secured, the National Winner will receive up to \$500 and three National Finalists up to \$250. These cash awards are not cumulative. The Executive Program Committee reserves the right to adjust awards based on the availability of donor funds.

The National Winner will present his/her program during the NACAA AM/PIC. Length of presentation should be 15 minutes maximum. Consult AM/PIC Program for time and location. Tickets will be required for Brown Bag Luncheon (if offered). Inquire for tickets through on-line registration process.

In the event of a team winning entry, one cash prize in the amount indicated along with an appropriate certificate/plaque will be given only to NACAA members of the team.

All entries will be judged with a designated number of abstracts selected for publication in the AM/PIC Proceedings.

DEADLINE

Entry must be in possession of your Search for Excellence Committee State Chair by March 15, 2026.

State Chairs should send all state entries, with the winning entry designated, to their region Vice Chair by April 1, 2026.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN 4-H AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

PURPOSE

To recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension youth development program(s) for 4-H and other youth.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN CROP PRODUCTION

PURPOSE

To recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in crop production.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, FORESTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

PURPOSE

To recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in environmental quality, forestry and natural resources.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN CONSUMER OR COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

PURPOSE

To recognize a NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in horticulture.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN FARM AND RANCH BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE

To recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in farm and ranch business management.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

PURPOSE

To recognize an NACAA member who has developed and carried out an outstanding extension educational program in livestock production.

continued on page 5

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN YOUNG, BEGINNING, OR SMALL FARMERS/ RANCHERS

PURPOSE

To recognize NACAA members who have developed and carried out outstanding Extension educational programs for Young (<35 years of age), Beginning (< 10 years management experience), Small Farmer/Ranchers (<\$250,000 annual agricultural sales).

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To recognize members who develop and implement outstanding educational programs in sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agriculture is defined as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: satisfy human food and fiber needs, enhance environmental quality and the natural resources base upon which the agricultural economy depends, make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls, sustain the economic viability of farm operations, enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE IN AGRICULTURAL AWARENESS & APPRECIATION

PURPOSE

To recognize NACAA members or team of members for outstanding use of Public Relations in Daily Efforts that improves the understanding of agriculture in their communities.

**Distinguished Service Award
(DSA), and Achievement Award
(AA) applications are due
January 15, 2026.**

**Hall of Fame Award Submissions
are now being handled by the
NACAA President-Elect and are
due March 15, 2026**

<https://www.nacaa.com/award-application>

NACAA SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE SCORE SHEET

- ___ 4-H and Youth Programming
- ___ Crop Production
- ___ Livestock Production
- ___ Farm and Ranch Business Management
- ___ Consumer or Commercial Horticulture
- ___ Forestry & Natural Resources
- ___ Young, Beginning or Small Farmers/Ranchers
- ___ Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
- ___ Agricultural Awareness and Appreciation

Area:	Points
Educational Objectives	20
Program Activities	10
Teaching Methods	10
Results	20
Impact Statement	20
Evaluation	20



NACAA HALL OF FAME AWARD

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the NACAA Hall of Fame Award is to recognize NACAA individuals for demonstrated commitment, dedication and effective leadership in job performance as an outstanding educator, consideration for association involvement at both the state and national level, and outstanding humanitarian service. This award recognizes NACAA members with sustained and distinguished careers.

This award will be presented annually to one person from each of the four NACAA regions. The NACAA President-Elect reserves the right to reject any applicant if minimum standards are not met.

ELIGIBILITY:

All current and life members of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents are eligible, except previous winners. The candidate must have previously been awarded the Distinguished Service Award (DSA).

NOMINATION: (CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEARS)

Each state association has the opportunity to nominate one applicant from their state association to be forwarded to NACAA President Elect. The nomination process at the state level will be determined by each state but the award deadlines will align with the standard submission deadline of March 15th.

Nominations are to be essays of not more than 500 words describing the activities listed in the criteria section. Nominations are to be accompanied by the application form (on-line submission), an uploaded letter from the state president (or vice president if the president is the nominee) verifying the state association's support of the nominee and that the nominee is a member in good standing of both the state and national associations. The nomination submission should contain 2 uploaded testimonial letters from clientele who have knowledge of the educational programming efforts. Nomination materials must be submitted on-line. A one-page bio-summary must also be completed (previous award winner bios can be found published in the Award Banquet program booklet - 2025 link: <https://www.nacaa.com/uploads/userfiles/files/2025%20AMPIC%20Program%207.pdf>)

CRITERIA:

• **40% Demonstrated commitment, dedication and effective leadership in job performance as an outstanding educator.**

Quality of Extension Programs includes the scope, innovation and appropriateness of the nominee's program to the identified needs of the people and community within his or her assigned area or state.

• **30% Association involvement at the State and National level.**

Involvement includes length of membership, committee assignments, offices held, AM/PIC attendance, and special assignments.

• **30% Humanitarian activities and leadership outside of normal Extension programming.** Humanitarian activities may span any length of time and involve any type of service to one's community beyond the normal call of duty.

Examples: Volunteerism (Red Cross, civic organizations, hospital, EMT, church, youth organizations, crisis teams, etc.); Leadership (Civic organizations, community action groups, church, schools, crisis teams, boards, etc.); Personal (Acts of heroism, care of foster children or elderly, philanthropy, etc.)

A cash award of up to \$1300 is to be awarded if donor funds are available. The winners must register for the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference and attend the Annual Banquet to receive their award.

• One winner from each region will be recognized at the **Saturday, DSA Awards Banquet - July 11, 2026.**

• All state winner applications received by the established deadline (March 15) will be reviewed and judged by the NACAA Regional Directors and Vice Directors.

For 2026 - once again this award is being sponsored by the Pipeline Ag Safety Alliance.



2026 Service to American/World Agriculture Nomination Form

DEADLINE: March 15, 2026

ATTENTION Western Region NACAA Members. You or your state has the opportunity to nominate an individual to receive the Service to American/World Agriculture Award from NACAA for their contribution to agriculture.

PURPOSE:

To recognize a U.S. citizen who has made a major contribution to American/World Agriculture and is so recognized by peers and the general public. Recipient is expected to attend the 2026 Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference to accept the award, and will receive appropriate expenses to attend the annual meeting.

GUIDELINES:

1. Nominations are encouraged by any member of NACAA in the eligible region. Nominees must be residents of the region hosting the annual meeting and must have the President approval of your

State County Agent Association. The recipient of this award will be from the Western Region in 2026.

2. The nominee may be a public official, lay leader or other professional individual who has made a significant contribution to American and/or World agriculture, but not limited to, Cooperative Extension and/or research.
3. Entries must be received by March 15. This award submission is now handled online thru the award application portal.

Currently the online application process only allows NACAA members to apply for awards, however we realize that candidates for this award may very well be non-members of NACAA. Please contact Scott Hawbaker at exec-dir@nacaa.com with the name of any non-member you wish to be nominated, and your candidates name will be added to the online system in order for an application to be submitted.

Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award

The Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award is dedicated to the memory of Dan Kluchinski to encourage Early Career Development. Dan was a Professor at Rutgers University for 29 years with his career progressing from Mercer County Agricultural Agent, to Agriculture and Natural Resources Department Chair and Associate Director of Extension. During his career, he served in many State and National roles with NACAA including State Chair, Regional Vice-Chair, and National Chair of several committees including the Futuring Committee and the Early Career Development Committee. In addition, he served as the Northeast Regional Vice Director (2002-2003) and Director and the National Extension Development Council Chair (2004-2005). Dan was instrumental in the formation of the North East Association of Agricultural Agents (NEACAA) and served as their first president. Dan received the Distinguished Service Award in 2004 and was selected for the Hall of Fame Award in 2018 posthumously.

Award Criteria

- Two scholarships of \$500 will be available each year.
 - One applicant shall be selected from the Northeast region and one applicant selected from one of the other regions (North Central, Southern, or Western).
 - If no application is received from the Northeast region then two applicants from the other regions may be selected.
 - If all applicants come from one region, both scholarships may be awarded to that region.
 - Preference will be given to NACAA educational events (ex. AMPIC, ELC, and PILD). Other educational event applications will be considered with justification of early career development benefits.
 - Applicants must have 10 years or less Extension service at time of application and must be NACAA members in good standing with their State Association and may receive the award twice.
 - The online award application shall include a description of the training event including sponsoring institution, location, dates, and itinerary, justification of the training and how the knowledge gained will be applied (maximum of 500 words), and a budget.
 - Applications will be judged and funded based on completeness, plan for training, how it will be used and applied post training, and availability of funds.
 - Applications must be submitted on-line by March 15
 - Recipients will be notified by May 1.
 - National Board of NACAA, or any Trustee of the Foundation are not eligible to receive the Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award. State, Regional and National Chairs for Early Career Committee and Extension Development Council Chairs are eligible to apply.
- Training must occur within 12 months of award notification.
 - Funds will not be reimbursed for training occurring prior to approval by the NACAA Vice-President and selection committee.

Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award funds will be reimbursed by the NACAA Educational Foundation when submitted with proof of attendance to the NACAA Vice-President within 30 days of the event and must include a 500 to 1000-word educational experience report describing how the experience will improve the participant's early career development. The report will be published in the County Agent Magazine.

Selections shall be made on an objective & nondiscriminatory basis, regardless of race, color, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or religion of the applicant.

The Dan Kluchinski Memorial Scholarship Award shall be presented during an AM-PIC Opening Session or General Session.



COMMUNICATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM

PURPOSE

To recognize NACAA members who excel in communicating programs and ideas to their clientele.

ELIGIBILITY AND JUDGING CRITERIA

Members of NACAA in good standing with their state association are eligible to enter, including team entry members. Extension editors and/or other paraprofessional Extension Communication specialists are not eligible. Only one entry per class per individual. All classes are open to entries from one or more NACAA members with the exception of Class 2 - published photo and Class 5 - personal column, which are open to individual entries only. Entries must have been created with major input from the member. Materials must have first been made available to the public between March 15 of the year prior to the award and March 15 of the award year.

Entry materials that have already been state, regional, or national winners are not eligible again. First place national winners may not repeat in consecutive years in the same category. Communications Committee Regional Vice-Chairs, Council Chairs and National Chairs are not eligible to participate in this program unless they are one member of a team entry with another person as the primary entrant[CS3.1]. For state committee chairs serving on the Program Recognition Council (PRC) Committees:

a. When a PRC committee chairs DOES NOT apply for an award program(s) that their committee is in charge of, the state chair will go through the normal selection process and forward the top place winner from the state to their regional chair.

b. When a PRC committee chair DOES submit an application for an award program that their committee is in charge of and the state chair is selected as the state winner, their application along with the second place state application will be sent on to their regional selection committee to verify and agree with the state ranking. The regional selection committee has the final authority in selecting the state winner.

Please note that NACAA policy states that the National Winner and National Finalists of the Communications Contest must register for the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference and attend the designated ceremony to receive their award (minimum 1 day registration fee) or the award will be forfeited.

ENTRY

Electronic submission **must be** made for all 13 categories. However, categories 8 (Video Recordings), 12 (Learning Module/Notebook) and 13 (Bound Book) may require materials being sent (mailed) to State Chair if file is too large to submit electronically or if unavailable in PDF format. Even in these cases there must be an electronic submission of an abstract and entry information. Maximum file size for submissions is 25MB. Refer to NACAA website for directions on submitting entries electronically.

Note: NACAA will do everything possible to safeguard entry materials. However, it is recommended that members duplicate valuable entry materials in case materials are lost.

ABSTRACT

Each entry must have an abstract. Include member's name, state and county (team entries should list all NACAA members who contributed to the entry); a short summary that includes objective, purpose (why, when,

how, audience, audience number and results); and how the entry was prepared (i.e. recorded, edited, printed, or duplicated professionally or by field staff on field office equipment), how distributed and how many were distributed, program impacts and outcomes. The abstract should include the member's contribution to the final product. Abstracts for all regional and national winners will be published and posted on the NACAA website. **See page 11 or NACAA website for abstract example and format that must be followed. The abstract is written as a single paragraph.**

CATEGORIES

1. **Audio Recordings** - One presentation not to exceed 15 minutes. Recording can be a complete program or segment of a radio program, podcast, etc. to be judged. Member(s) must have been a major contributor to the presentation or conducted the interview(s). In the abstract, indicate date and time(s) used, station(s) where program aired and where recorded (agent's office, station, etc.). Submit electronic entries using MP3 file or provide link (URL) in the abstract where recording is located on the web. 10 MB maximum file size.

2. **Published Photo** - ONE black and white or color photo taken by a member that tells a story (this is to be one photograph, not a collage of photographs). The photo may be artistically manipulated, or elements may be added to provide clarity if it is all in the final, single published photo. All manipulations to the photo must be performed by the applicant. Include a copy of one media outlet where published (newsprint, webpage, newsletter, etc. as a pdf scan if photo was published in print or link to the online location if posted on a website—judges must have unencumbered access to the published photo). In the abstract indicate the context, target audience, date published, and impacts (number of viewers, clicks, etc.). May also include if it has been published in other publications—no additional links, please. Submission must include the original photo in jpg format. ONLY the photo will be judged.

3. **Computer Generated Presentation With Script** - Computer Generated Presentation with Script - Maximum of 50 slides with script can be submitted. Upload in PowerPoint or PDF format. Presentations created with Adobe Presenter, web conferencing or similar software and published online as recordings should be submitted under this category. Please do not submit video recordings of the presentation. Include the URL in the abstract. 25 MB maximum file size.

4. **Event Promotional Package** - Submit up to three (3) methods (include only one item for each method, e.g. only one flyer (not a collage), or only one social media post (not a series)) used by a member to advertise an Extension event (an event may include more than one workshop). Examples may include, but are not limited to: mailers and postcards, radio recordings, paid ads, social media accounts, video recordings, and press releases). All items need to be submitted in pdf or mp4 format or as links to online sources. In the abstract include the author's contribution to each piece and how each piece was used to promote the event. Items used in the event package may not be submitted in a separate entry. (Ex. Press releases.) How each item was created is NOT required in abstract. The abstract should provide event goals and impacts.

5. **Personal Column** - Submit PDFs of original copy for two columns for two different dates. Also submit scanned copies of the final published articles. In the abstract indicate the dates of publication. 10MB maximum file size for each.

6. Feature Article - A feature article is an article where the member is a guest writer for a publication. While it may be the same publisher where a personal column appears, it must not be just another issue of the regularly scheduled personal column. Indicate in the abstract the date of publication. Submit PDF of original copy of one article. Also submit scanned copy of the final published article.

7. Newsletter - Submit PDFs of two different issues of a newsletter written and/or compiled by one or more members. Non-members may be a part of a team entry (i.e. NRCS). It may contain several unrelated topics. Entry may be a portion of a multi-county, area extension newsletter or multi-agency newsletter. In the abstract, indicate audience to whom newsletter was sent, and the dates and number distributed, and how distributed.

8. Educational Video Recordings - One educational presentation that one or more members contributed to or produced, not over 15 minutes long. It can be a segment of a longer program. If video is longer than 15 minutes, the portion to be judged **MUST** be indicated in the abstract. Abstract must be submitted electronically and should include information on the audience, purpose, date first posted, and how the presentation was used. In the abstract, provide link (URL) where video is located on the web (i.e. YouTube) or upload an MP4 file. Applications will be scored based on details of members' contributions to the final product as described in the abstract. There is a 25 MB maximum file size for uploaded files.

9. Fact Sheet - An educational piece on a single subject not to exceed four page numbers (8.5" X11"). In the abstract, indicate audience, purpose and number distributed. A PDF of the final product is required. 25 MB maximum file size.

10. Publication - An educational publication on one or more subjects that is five pages or more (8.5" x 11"). In the abstract, indicate intended audience, purpose and number distributed, agent/educator's role in the development, writing and production. Submit as PDF or include URL in the abstract. 10 MB maximum file size for uploaded files.

11. Website/Online Content - Entry will consist of abstract and URL address for the website/online content. Material must be publicly accessible content that doesn't require a password. Person submitting should be the person primarily responsible for content, design and maintenance of the site/online content. Examples of online content include wikis, blogs, social media sites, etc.

12. Learning Module/Notebook (includes either a notebook form learning module or online learning module) - Entry will consist of total materials written and compiled as learning/teaching aids for specific Extension Programs, (i.e. Master Gardener Notebook). Entry materials can be of several media (print, audio, video, etc.). Significant portions of the entry material should be the work of the entrant(s). The abstract must be submitted electronically with the module/notebook being mailed to State Chair by deadline **if electronic version is unavailable online or if file is too large to submit electronically (10MB)**. If available online, indicate the URL in the abstract.

13. Bound Book/eBook - The entry will consist of a bound book or ebook on one or more subjects that is more extensive than 11 - Publication. The primary author must be a member in good standing. In the abstract, indicate the intended audience, purpose, number printed or accessed and the agent/educator's role in the development, writing and production of the book. The abstract must be submitted electronically with the bound book being mailed to State Chair by deadline **if electronic version is**

unavailable online or if file is too large to submit electronically (10MB). If the book is available online, indicate the URL in the abstract.

AWARDS

Awards in each of the thirteen (13) categories are as follows:

- National Category Winner - Certificate and cash if donor available.
- 3 National Category Finalists - Certificate and cash if donor available.
- 12 Regional Category Finalists - Certificate
- State Category Winners - Certificate from State Association

Donors are being solicited for these awards. If adequate donor funds are secured, the National Winner will receive up to \$500; and three National Finalists up to \$250. These cash awards are not cumulative. In the event of a team winning entry, one cash prize will be presented to the lead entrant of the application. The Executive Program Committee reserves the right to adjust awards based on the availability of donor funds.

Four entries in each category will be selected as National Finalists. The National finalists will be notified in May of their status by the National Communications Chair. The National Winner will not be announced until the Communications Award Luncheon at the AM/PIC. Please note that NACAA policy states the National Winner and National Finalists of the Communications Contest must register for the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference and attend the designated ceremony to receive their award (minimum 1 day registration fee). In the event a national winner (as deemed by the judges) does not receive an excused absence from attending the AM/PIC, the national winner's award will be presented to the next ranking National Finalist who attends the AM/ PIC. If none of the National Finalists attend the AM/PIC, a national winner award will not be presented. In the event a national finalist does not receive an excused absence from attending the AM/PIC, the national finalist award will be forfeited. If a national finalist award is forfeited, there will be no replacement from lower ranking entries.

ABSENCE POLICY

Decisions on requests for non-attendance and excused absences will be made on a case by case basis by consultation among the respective National Committee Chair, in concert with the National Committee Vice Chairs and the NACAA Vice President. Excuses will be granted for National Finalists and National Winners for extreme personal or family illness; circumstances which would seriously jeopardize their job; or similar extreme situations. The intent of this requirement is that awards are inclusive of cash, plaques, and certificates.

DEADLINE

Completed entry must be posted to the NACAA website by March 15, 2026 and any support material in the Video, Learning Module/Notebook and Bound Book classes that could not be submitted electronically must be in possession of your Communications Committee State Chair by March 15, 2026.

State Chairs must have winning entries selected/approved on the NACAA website by April 1. Regional Vice Chairs must have Regional Finalists selected/approved on the NACAA website by April 15.

SCORECARD FOR THIS AWARD PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE ON-LINE at <https://www.nacaa.com/uploads/userfiles/files/2023CommunicationScorecards.pdf>

CALL FOR PAPERS FOR THE POSTER SESSION

PURPOSE

To showcase NACAA members' work by giving them the opportunity to present posters at the Annual Meeting/Professional Improvement Conference. The AM/PIC poster session provides an opportunity for authors to discuss with fellow members how they identified an educational or research need in their community and how the need was addressed and the observed results.

This award program has two categories to recognize NACAA members:

Applied Research - gives individuals an opportunity to present a poster on applied research they conducted.

Extension Education - gives members an opportunity to present a poster on new or different educational methods or technologies they have used.

ELIGIBILITY

An NACAA member in good standing must submit an abstract to which they have been a contributing investigator. A member can only be the senior author (the first name appearing on the poster) on one poster in each category each year. A member *can be a junior author* on additional posters in the same category.

One of the authors listed on the poster application and/or actual displayed poster must be registered for the AM/PIC (minimum of 1 day fee) and be in attendance at the "Meet the Authors" session during the AM/PIC. The attendance requirement will be verified; poster(s) not meeting the attendance requirement as stated above will be removed from the poster display area and the abstract will not be published in the proceedings.

Posters that have already been state, regional, or national winners in prior years are not eligible again.

ENTRY

Complete the on-line application process found at <http://www.nacaa.com/posters> "My Poster Submissions"

No hard copy applications will be accepted. **The on-line submission must be completed by March 15, 2026.**

Members can choose to enter their poster as display only at AM/PIC or to be judged for a possible award and recognition.

Please make sure to choose the appropriate selection when submitting your poster application!

Your three entry choices available online are:

1) This poster is being submitted for judging. **I will** display it at the AM/PIC if not selected as a State winner. Your abstract will be published in the proceedings. A pdf (max of 10MB) of your final poster entered for judging must be submitted along with your abstract. If pdf is larger than 10MB, then it must be sent directly to your state chair.

2) This poster is being submitted for judging. If NOT selected as a State winner, **I will not** display it at the AM/PIC **and my** abstract will not be published in the proceedings. A pdf (max of 10MB) of your final poster entered for judging must be submitted along with your abstract. If pdf is larger than 10MB, then it must be sent directly to your state chair.

3) This poster is being submitted only for display at AM/PIC. Poster is not to be judged, but the abstract will be published in the proceedings.

Note: All posters, whether being judged or not, must be on display at the AM/PIC by 5pm Sunday.

Abstract and poster guidelines and requirements can be found at: <https://www.nacaa.com/guidelines>

JUDGING

Judging will be at the State, Regional, and National levels. Only the 12 Regional Winners for each category (Applied Research and Extension Education) will be judged at the Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference (AM/PIC).

Judging criteria for Applied Research and Extension Education posters can be found at: <https://www.nacaa.com/uploads/userfiles/files/2021NACAAposterscorecard.pdf>

AWARDS

Awards for each category (based upon funding) will be presented during the NACAA AM/PIC Poster Session Awards Breakfast. All participants in the poster session (display only or judged) are invited to attend the awards breakfast.

Best Contributed Poster	\$500 and a certificate w/holder & Ribbon
Second Place	\$250 and a certificate w/holder & Ribbon
Third Place	\$150 and a certificate w/holder & Ribbon
National Finalists	Certificate & Ribbon
State Winners	Certificate

RECOGNITION

Authors will have their peer reviewed abstract published in the NACAA Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Proceedings (ONLY IF THE POSTER IS DISPLAYED AT THE AM/PIC) on the website located at: <https://www.nacaa.com/am-pics>

DEADLINES

March 15th - (NACAA entry deadline) – all poster abstracts due. If the poster is submitted for judging, a pdf of the final poster is due and should be uploaded (max file size 10MB) on the NACAA application site. If the pdf is larger than 10MB, then it must be sent directly to your state chair.

April 1st - State chair approves poster abstracts submitted from their state.

May 1st – State Chairs submit pdf of state poster winners to Professional Excellence Committee Chairs for national finalist judging.

June 5th - National finalists are announced. Twelve finalists (3 per region) for each category will be judged at AM/PIC (24 total posters).

Posters must be hung by 5 pm on Wednesday at the start of the AM/PIC for the abstract to be included in the proceedings and for National Finalists to be judged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT

NATIONAL CHAIR - BRIAN HALLER

Ph: (501) 268-5394

Email: bhaller@uada.edu

ALL ABSTRACTS SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION - MAXIMUM WORD COUNT 350

Sample FORMAT FOR All NACAA ABSTRACTS.

The abstract is written as a single paragraph. Submitting an abstract with multiple paragraphs will cause the abstract to be rejected.

Search for Excellence in Livestock Production

TURNING A PROFIT WITH BEEF CATTLE

Covington, C.*¹

¹ Area Livestock Agent, Mississippi State University, Port Gibson, MS, 39150

The purpose of this educational program was to increase the individual profitability of the cow/calf producers in Mississippi. I accomplished this task by working with beef producers in identifying their effective production practices, diagnosing their inefficiencies in production, and prescribing corrective measures to ensure their maximum profitability through the optimum utilization of their farm resources. In order to achieve the overall goal of profitability, several smaller goals needed to be met. I utilized multiple program activities and teaching methods, recognizing that different producers learn in different ways. These educational activities included 129 newsletter/circular letters, 131 newspaper articles, and 135 group activities that reached 1,725 producers over the past three years. The producers participating in the program indicated the value of the information they gained from these educational activities in the form of savings or increased profits to their operations at over \$7.5 million. However, the increase in knowledge by these producers is a much more valuable indicator of its true success and effectiveness.

CALL FOR PAPERS TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE 2026 JOURNAL OF THE NACAA

PURPOSE:

To provide NACAA members an opportunity to publish in a recognized national professional improvement format.

To provide NACAA members an opportunity to share successful Cooperative Extension scholarly work such as on farm research demonstrations, applied research, and related Extension activities.

To provide the NACAA membership with additional professional improvement opportunities that will enable them to become a more knowledgeable Cooperative Extension professional.

ELIGIBILITY:

NACAA members in good standing must submit an electronic abstract and full article by following the entry rules listed below. Articles are to be submitted on-line (no hard copy/paper versions will be accepted).

Topics can include research, case studies and innovative ideas that would promote scholarship and professionalism in Extension.

The Electronic Journal Committee will have full authority to accept or reject a proposed article based upon reviews. Rejection or acceptance of a proposed article by the Journal Committee will be final. The Chair of the Journal Committee is listed on the Committee Leadership page.

Author(s) agree that submitted article(s) have not been published or are not currently under consideration for publication in other journals.

RECOGNITION:

Peer reviewed articles will be published on the NACAA website www.nacaa.com/journal.

ENTRY:

Abstract, and proposed article must be submitted online at <https://www.nacaa.com/journal-application> by March 15 for the Summer edition or by September 15 for the Winter edition. See abstract example. The on-line entry form has designated areas to enter title, author, institution and address, additional authors, and then the main manuscript. You will need to upload the manuscript in a **Microsoft Word file**.

Manuscript Specifications:

Maximum of 4,000 words plus tables, graphics and abstract
First letter of words in title should be capitalized
Literature citations should follow the American Psychological Association style guide: <http://www.apastyle.org/>
In the abstract, Scientific names should be italicized with the genus name Capitalized and the species designation lowercased.

Individual or Group NACAA Scholarship Application Process

Scholarship applications must be completed electronically at
<https://www.nacaa.com/scholarship-application>
Criteria for Awarding Scholarships

1. Application must be approved electronically by the State Scholarship Chair or his/her designee before proceeding to the next level for review.
2. Member vestment will be \$100 to qualify for up to \$1,500 scholarship and a vestment of \$200 (an additional \$100 contribution to the scholarship fund) to qualify for an additional scholarship awards from \$1,501 to \$3,000 (no more than \$1,500 in any one year will be awarded). Each participant must have made this contribution before the end of the previous year's AM/PIC (July 21, 2022). (Check with your State Scholarship Committee Chair to confirm this prior to submitting an application. (If one person within the group has not contributed \$100 by the deadline, it disqualifies the entire group).
3. Award is for individual or group professional improvement which may include advanced degrees, graduate credits, tours, seminars, research or other specialized training. Scholarship may not be used to attend the NACAA AM/PIC.
4. Study or training must start within 12 months of the AM/PIC where scholarship is awarded or before the next scheduled AM/PIC. The study or training cannot be initiated before application is approved by the Scholarship Selection Committee and the Trustees of the NACAA Educational Foundation.
5. Applications will be judged and funded based on completeness, plan for training, how it will be used/ applied post training, and availability of funds.
6. Scholarship funds will not be awarded until 30 days prior to study or training begins. It is the recipient's responsibility to advise the National Scholarship Chair if impending date of educational activity changes.
7. Report must be made to National Scholarship Chair within 30 days after the training is completed. An Educational Experience Report of 500 to 850 words be submitted by scholarship recipient along with expense documentation that follows the educational objectives set forth by NACAA and the Educational Foundation.
8. Recipients will be selected by the Scholarship Selection Committee with final approval of the Trustees, NACAA Educational Foundation.
9. No scholarship will be awarded a person, if as a result of such grant, any member of the Scholarship Selection Committee, National Board of NACAA, or any Trustee of the Foundation shall derive a private benefit, either directly or indirectly.

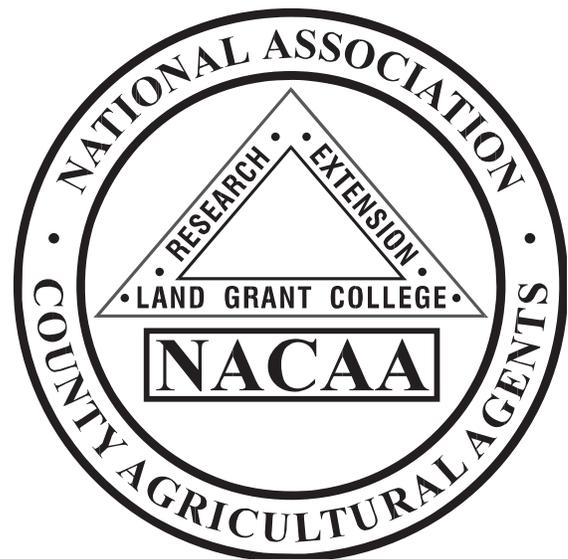
10. Selection for Scholarships shall be made on an objective & nondiscriminatory basis, regardless of race, creed, color, gender, sexual orientation, or religion of the applicant.
11. Each applicant must be a NACAA member in good standing with their State Association for the past two years. For application period (1) applications must be submitted by June 1. Scholarship Committee State Chair must approve the applications for their state by June 15. Applications must be approved by the Regional Vice Chair by July 1.

For application period (2) applications must be submitted by December 1. The State Scholarship Committee State Chair must approve the applications for their state by December 15. The Regional Vice Chair must approve applications by January 1.

For the December 1 applications, applicants will be notified by January 20 of the following year. No professional development activity can take place before notification by the National Chair with the exception of a formal educational class that begins in early January.

12. The scholarship committee will prioritize scholarship applications received in a calendar year. Applicants submitting only one scholarship in any given year will be given greater consideration for scholarship funding than those who have submitted an additional scholarship in a calendar year.

FOR GROUP APPLICATIONS - All group scholarship applicants must meet criteria, including address, home and office phone, contribution of \$100 to the NACAA Scholarship Fund by the end of the previous AM/PIC, whether they received a previous scholarship and if so, how much.



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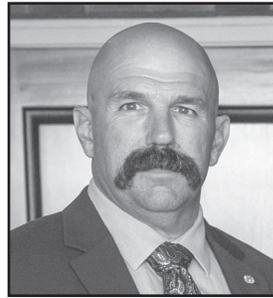
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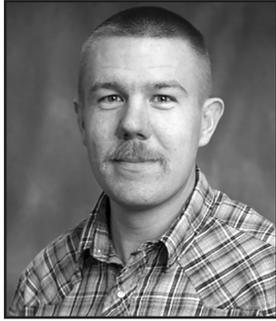
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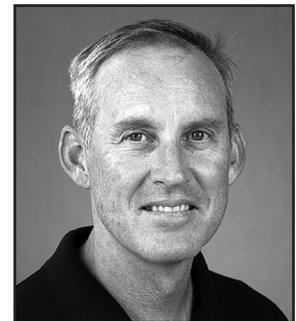


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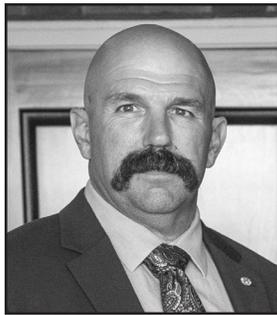
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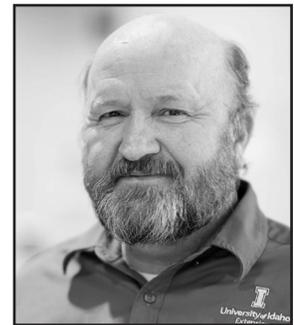
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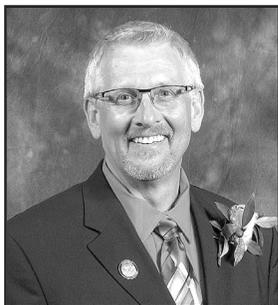
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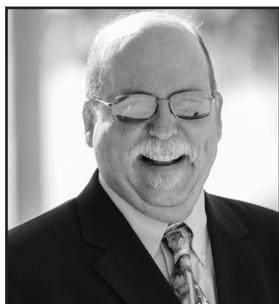
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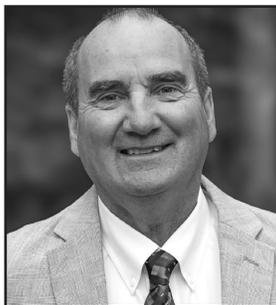
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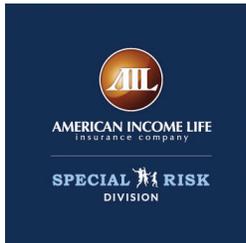
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2026

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2027

St. Paul, Minnesota.....September 12-16

2028

Atlanta, Georgia.....August 6-10

2029

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April, 2026

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Mail Date: March 20, 2026

June, 2026

Open Topic

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October, 2026

Annual Meeting Recap

Deadline for articles: August 15, 2026

Mail Date: September 1, 2026

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