

# DID YOU KNOW?



## Interesting Facts & Anecdotes from your District Operations and Member Services Committee

June 2014

### Did you know?....

The soil stewardship observance was actually started in 1946 by the publishers of Farm and Ranch Magazine to set aside one Sunday to remind their congregations of man's duty to be good stewards of the land. It was only celebrated in a few southern states. It was received so well that additional states asked to be added. The publishers suggested to NACD in 1954 to make it a nationwide observance, and the first [Soil and Water Stewardship Week](#) began in 1955. It now includes student education as well as local places of worship. The year 2015 will mark the 60th national observance with NACD, so start planning now!

The first Earth Day was observed in 1970.

Passwords and security procedures should exist to access computers, vendor and employee files, and financial information. All computer accounting information and individually identifiable data about employees and persons who receive district funds should be kept private and secure.

District boards may grant authorities to individual district officials relating to such functions as staff supervision, obligating funds, being a spokesperson for public presentations or media, signing documents, etc.

Districts should clearly identify and adopt policies, duties, and procedures for each officer.

Of the more than 300 million people in the U.S., only two million farm.

A few good rules for good meetings:

- No debate on business requiring board action should be allowed until a motion is made. A brief explanation of a subject may be helpful if the Chair approves.
- The Chair should recognize board members before making a motion or speaking to a motion.
- The Chair is responsible for keeping the discussion limited to the issue currently being considered.
- No board member should speak to a motion a second time until every other member who desires to speak has had an opportunity to do so.
- Every board member is responsible for acting professionally. Actions to be avoided include finger-pointing, blaming, putting others down, excessive anger, accusations, introducing irrelevant information, or other tactics to control the meeting, distract others, derail progress, avoid responsibility, or defuse accountability.

As an employer of record, a conservation district is required by law to post certain information at a readily visible site in the office. These postings provide information on both state and federal laws. The state association office and state NRCS office might be helpful to identify the postings you need.

Districts may not use "secret ballots." All decisions must be public.

An advisory board, committee, task force, or other official group established by the board to deliberate on recommendations or complete board-delegated actions must comply with public meetings law. As such, they are "governing bodies."

The rules governing open meetings (e.g., notices, minutes, and public voting) are intentionally difficult. The business of conservation must be a very public process.

Usually if "information" is "owned, used, or retained" by a public body (conservation district), it is subject to public-records law.

Annual reports should not contain advocacy or political statements.

One bushel of corn can sweeten 400 cans of pop.

Making every Did You Know? statement be completely accurate for all states is impossible. The DOMS Committee requests your understanding. We also invite you to find out what your state and local laws and policies say about any particular item.

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