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North Dakota Co-ops Serve as Foundation for Stability in Uncertain Times *Gov. Hoeven signs North Dakota Co-op Month Proclamation*

Mandan, N.D., October 14, 2009 – For what is becoming an annual gathering of good news for North Dakota's various cooperatives, more than 80 North Dakota cooperative employees, managers, consumers and public officials attended a formal press conference and luncheon Tuesday in honor of North Dakota Co-op Month.

For the third year, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, North Dakota Association of Telecommunication Cooperatives, Basin Electric, Farmers Union, North Dakota Farm Credit Council, Mid-America Credit Union Association and Cenex Harvest States hosted a press conference and luncheon to focus on the positive impact North Dakota cooperatives have on local, state and national economies even during a down-turned economy.

Nationwide, October is designated Co-op Month. As part of the press conference, North Dakota Gov. John Hoeven signed a proclamation declaring October as Co-op Month in the state. Keynote speaker, Dr. Gregory McKee of the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, presented an overall look at the positive economic impact North Dakota cooperatives have on the state based on a recent study he conducted.

"There are a total of 510 North Dakota cooperatives operating in 218 cities and towns. These cooperatives have a collective Membership of 531,000, which is approximately the population of North Dakota," McKee said. "These cooperatives have 8,100 employees and pay \$325.9 million in wages. These same cooperatives have operating budgets of \$1.6 billion, fixed assets of \$1.1 billion and paid out refunds of \$284.5 million in 2008."

McKee said cooperatives exist in nearly every aspect of business, including electricity, telecommunications, credit unions, finance, information technology, agriculture, healthcare, housing, food retail, childcare, arts and crafts, education and transportation.

"In the U.S. cooperative sector, there are at least 29,285 companies with more than 350 million members and total revenues of \$514 billion," McKee said. "Nationally, these cooperatives have 856,310 full-time employees and pay out annual wages of \$25 billion."

McKee added that despite the state of our economy, North Dakota's and the nation's cooperatives have served as a steady foundation for growth and employment.

Following the results of McKee's study, speakers representing various North Dakota cooperatives gave examples of how their respective organizations were positively influencing and shaping the economies in which they operate. Speakers included David Crothers, North Dakota Association of Telecommunications Cooperatives; Dennis Hill, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives; Ron Harper, Basin Electric; Vern Dosch, National Information Solutions Cooperative; Woody Barth, North Dakota Farmers Union; and Dana Bohn, Farm Credit Services Council.

About NISC

National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) is an information technology company that develops, implements and supports software and hardware solutions for our Members/Customers. We deliver advanced solutions, services and support to more than 510 cooperatives and other public power entities and independent telephone companies in 47 states, one U.S. territory and Canada. NISC is an industry leader providing Information Technology (IT) solutions for consumer and subscriber billing, accounting, engineering and operations, e-solutions, automated mailroom services, bill printing, third-party integration as well and more than 75 other IT solutions.

NISC has facilities in both Lake Saint Louis, Mo. and Mandan, N.D. and employs more than 760 professionals between the two locations. Additional information about NISC can be found at www.nisc.coop.

Press Conference

To view a video of the event, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IDwmevTV48>.

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