

Nebraska Cooperative Council

134 S. 13th Street, Suite 503, Lincoln, NE 68508-1903

PHONE: 402/475-6555 FAX: 402/475-4538

E-mail: ncoopc@nebr.coop Website: www.nebr.coop

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Ed Woeppel, Education & Program Director

PH: 402/475-6555 Email: edw@nebr.coop

Governor Signs Proclamation for Cooperative Month

LINCOLN, NE--A proclamation recognizing October as Cooperative Month was signed by Governor Pete Ricketts on September 10.

Cooperative Month has been celebrated nationwide and in Nebraska for many years to call attention to the economic benefits which come from cooperative businesses.

The proclamation signed by the Governor recognizes Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives and rural electric and telephone cooperatives and the important role that cooperatives play in the lives of many Nebraskans.

In 2019 agricultural cooperatives served the needs of approximately 64,000 Nebraskans in 404 rural communities across the state and directly employ over 5,300 people statewide. Last year, Nebraska's agricultural cooperatives re-invested nearly \$157 million in facilities and equipment to serve farmers and ranchers while also returning over \$50.7 million in cash patronage and cash equity redemption payments to their farmer and rancher owners. In addition, Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives contributed \$1.8 million to local fire departments, local school and youth organizations, local and statewide FFA and 4-H chapters and provided numerous scholarships to help rural Nebraska students continue their educations.

Rocky Weber, President & General Counsel of the Nebraska Cooperative Council, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary as the state's only trade association devoted exclusively to advancing, protecting and promoting the cooperative business model, stated: *"The Governor's proclamation of October 2020 as Cooperative Month in Nebraska is a welcome acknowledgment of how important Nebraska's cooperative system is to the economic fabric of all Nebraska, rural and urban. While grocery, value-added and financial services cooperatives are well known in urban areas of the state, the rural expansion of electrical and telephone utilities was made possible by rural residents forming cooperatives to build and own the services which they continue to maintain today. Farmer ownership of Nebraska's farmer owned agricultural cooperatives have allowed generations of Nebraska farmers and ranchers to compete in both the national and global marketplace by pooling their business and their resources. The cooperative principles of member economic participation through democratic control, farmer governance and a focus on their members' mutual benefits through local return of profits, local investment in facilities and equipment, and the support of rural communities are the cultural foundation of Nebraska's cooperative system. Even in the most challenging of times, Nebraska's farmer owned agricultural and utility cooperatives remain steadfast in serving the needs of their owner/patrons and the communities they serve."*

The Nebraska Cooperative Council, a statewide trade association representing all types of agricultural cooperatives, coordinated arrangements for Governor Ricketts to sign the proclamation.

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