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## **Director of RMFU co-op development center Bill Stevenson wins the 2017 William J. Nelson ACE Award**

Denver, Aug. 2, 2017 — A leader in Denver's Community Wealth Building Network received the 2017 William J. Nelson Award recognizing those who add significant value to the Association of Cooperative Educators.

Bill Stevenson, director of the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative Development Center, was recently honored at the annual ACE awards banquet at Regis University, Denver. ACE is comprised of educators, researchers and leaders of cooperatives across North America and the Caribbean. They meet in a different city each year.

"Bill was the cornerstone for the 2017 ACE Institute conference as it took shape in Denver," says past ACE President William Nelson, for whom the award is named. He further remarked that Stevenson has the enthusiasm and energy that are needed to inspire new cooperative entrepreneurs and their mentors.

Since becoming director of the Cooperative Development Center in 2011, Stevenson has helped the center grow and create many ventures in Denver and rural areas of Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. He is also an executive committee member of the Community Wealth Building Network of Metro Denver. Stevenson was president of CooperationWorks!, the national organization of cooperative developers, and chair of the National Farmers Union Foundation from 2009-2013.

Stevenson thanked other cooperators in Denver and at the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union for being hosts of the 2017 ACE Institute.

Joining Stevenson as a new ACE award recipient is Community Wealth Building Network of Metro Denver, one of the most dynamic and innovative local economic and social development organizations in North America. Nat Locke, a graduate student of Hamline University of Minneapolis, was also recognized for helping create educational programs including the Cooperative Empowerment curriculum, and Luc Morin, executive director of Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario, for encouraging new Francophone cooperators in Ontario, Canada.

For more than sixty years, ACE has helped bridge geographic, cultural and language divides to share education about cooperation. Its 2017 Institute theme was Passing along Passion for Democratic Principles, focusing on new methods of education, platform (Internet) cooperatives, next generations and democratic processes. Helping support the conference were CoBank (presenting sponsor), the CHS Foundation, The Denver Foundation, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, La Coop fédérée of Quebec, the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, GROWMARK, Inc., Vancity credit union of Canada, The Cooperative Foundation, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and many more. Additional information is at [www.ace.coop](http://www.ace.coop).

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