

**Arctic Co-ops recognized for developing leaders across Far North over five decades**



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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA, July 2011 -- Overcoming distance, and differences of language, culture and accessibility, Arctic Co-operatives Limited, as a service federation, has succeeded in bringing governance and employee education to its network across the Far North, gaining the immense respect of its peers at the Association of Cooperative Educators.

The association honored the federation at its annual Institute banquet, this year held at the University of Winnipeg on July 28.

Brendan Reimer, Prairies & Northern Territories coordinator for the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, says that the cooperative federation has been an inspiration to others in Canada showing what can be accomplished by working together. After being forced to new permanent communities by the government, the Inuit, Dene and Métis in the Arctic and Northern Quebec created co-ops for provisions and trade to get fair value for their goods, such as furs and art.

The first cooperative in the Arctic was established in 1959 and 52 years later Arctic Co-operatives Limited has 31 member cooperatives across Nunavut and the Northwest Territories operating business units that include retail stores, hotels, cable services, petroleum operations and art.

In addition, the Arctic Co-operative Development Fund, created in 1986, is a revolving loan that has provided more than \$488 million to cooperatives for their growth, and is a model for other cooperative development funds.

"Arctic Co-operatives Limited has truly been a leader and innovator in creating democratic economic models and building community capacity in northern Canadian communities," says Reimer. "The organization is very proud and open about the fact that it is a cooperative, owned and operated by member co-ops." He adds that the cooperatives' dedication to leadership development and board training, "leaves a legacy of stronger cooperatives, empowered people and more vibrant communities."

Co-op managers used to attend the Co-operative College of Canada in Saskatoon for education and training until the mid-70s, after which Arctic Co-operatives Limited brought training programs into remote and isolated communities. The federation created culturally appropriate materials, including documents translated into Inuktitut, and today continues to work with member co-ops on training initiatives for their employees and directors.

Understanding their broader role of building capacity in their communities, Arctic co-ops are also exploring financial literacy training for their members and leaders at the local level. The federation is looking at delivering the material through classroom sessions and the co-op-owned cable system.

Four others were honored for their contributions to cooperatives and education at the ACE Institute held July 26-29 at the University of

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Arctic Co-operatives Limited Awarded Winnipeg. Monica Adeler, an instructor at the University of Winnipeg, received the new John Logue ACE Award recognizing those who connect educational resources to practical solutions to benefit communities. The University of Winnipeg was recognized for its assistance to ACE during its Institute. Also recognized by ACE is SEED Winnipeg Inc. Executive Director Cindy Coker for inspiring volunteers and employees on both sides of the Canada/U.S. border. José Julián Ramírez Ruiz of the Liga de Cooperativas de Puerto Rico is named the 2011 outstanding young cooperative educator for overseeing the use of radio and print media as well as other methods to reach and teach cooperative members across Puerto Rico.

ACE members are educators, researchers, communicators, and students and developers of cooperatives and credit unions, primarily in Canada, United States and Puerto Rico. An annual Institute, held in a different city each year, allows members to learn from one another and their host region, and highlights new learning about cooperatives and credit unions.

Learn more at [www.ace.coop](http://www.ace.coop). More information on the 2011 ACE Institute is posted in English, French and Spanish on [www.2011ACE.com](http://www.2011ACE.com).

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