



National Cooperative Business Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2004

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North Dakota Sen. Byron Dorgan Honored for Long-Standing Support of Cooperative Business

Washington, D.C.—North Dakota Senator Byron Dorgan today received a National Cooperative Business Association Honored Cooperator Award for long-standing support of cooperative business.

Making the presentation in the Hart Senate Office Building, Bill Patrie, rural development director for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, called Dorgan “an unrepentant advocate of cooperatives” who “has been there” whenever needed by co-ops of all types.

Support of co-ops is “not a fad” for Dorgan “but a lifetime commitment,” added Patrie, who also serves as director of the Dakotas Cooperative Development Center. “He gets it. He understands that co-ops are about member ownership. And he knows what they mean to communities.”

A mix of North Dakota and national cooperative organizations and businesses, led by NCBA, presented the award to the second term Senate Democrat. Cooperatives are businesses owned and democratically controlled by their members—those who use their services or buy their goods—rather than by outside investors.

Support for Rural Cooperative Development Grants Program

Dorgan was cited specifically for rallying Senate support for \$7 million in funding for the Agriculture Department’s Rural Cooperative Development Grants program in the coming year. The program, slated by the Bush Administration for a \$1 million cut, provides grants to approximately 20 cooperative development centers around the country that help start new cooperatives in rural areas.

NCBA President Paul Hazen said Dorgan understands “perhaps better than any other member of the House or Senate what it means to operate a business as a cooperative and why it matters so much to cooperative members.”

“We wanted to show our appreciation for his tireless efforts to ensure that cooperatives are available to all who want to belong,” Hazen said.

Sponsoring the award in addition to NCBA, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and the Dakotas Cooperative Business Development Center were Land O’Lakes,

Inc., CHS Inc., CoBank, Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative, American Crystal Sugar Company, North Dakota Farmers Union and CooperationWorks. CooperationWorks is a national network of cooperative development centers.

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Headquartered in Washington, the National Cooperative Business Association represents cooperatives across all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, food distribution and retailing, childcare, credit unions, housing, healthcare, energy, and telecommunications.