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For Immediate Release

**Two new IL student run CU branches
aim to increase saving by teens**

Joliet, IL., September 12, 2008 --- A unique partnership between government, education, and an Illinois credit union aims to turn today's tech-savvy teenagers on to the old-fashioned habit of saving.

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies launching JT Credit Union took place at Joliet West High School and at Joliet Central High School on September 3, and 5, 2008, respectively. JT Credit Union is a collaboration between Prairie Trail Credit Union, Joliet Township High School District 204, Will County Regional Superintendent of Education Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, and Will County Treasurer Pat McGuire. The credit union and high schools are located in Joliet, Illinois, a southwest suburb of Chicago.

Staffed by students, supervised by JT faculty and mentored by a Prairie Trail Credit Union professional, JT Credit Union is open during lunch hours two days a week at each campus.

"This is a unique opportunity for our students to learn financial literacy within the school environment. The program is a great example of the relevant educational opportunities that are provided within our career academies," said JTHS Board of Education President Jeff Pierson.

"We are as excited about opening these branches as the students are. Our goal is to help teach students the basics of money management and bring the value of mainstream banking to life by giving each student a solid foundation on which to make financial decisions for their future," said Matthew Thraen, President/CEO of Prairie Trail Credit Union. "The school-based branches are a unique opportunity for the students working in JT Credit Union and all the students at JT Central and West who now will have access to basic money management skills including budgeting and saving."

JT Credit Union is the first student-run credit union to open in a Will County high school. Nationwide, 200 credit unions operate student-run branches in over 700 schools.

Prairie Trail Credit Union received a Financial Independence and Revitalization Effort (FIRE) grant from the Illinois Credit Union Foundation (ICU Foundation) to defray JT Credit Union start-up costs. The purpose of the FIRE program is to provide assistance to credit unions to expand their ability to build and maintain viable communities by providing credit and financial services to residents and businesses in low-income and underserved areas of Illinois. Grants of up to \$15,000 are available to credit unions to provide a variety of membership programs.

The ICU Foundation is a not-for-profit charitable organization, which promotes the self-help ideals of credit unions. During its 30 years of service to Illinois credit unions, it has awarded more than \$2.6 million in scholarships, community service grants, assistance for small credit union development, emergencies and natural disasters, limited income credit unions, and community involvement projects.

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Prairie Trail Credit Union's youth programs in 2007 won first place in the Desjardins Youth Financial Education competition sponsored by the Illinois Credit Union League (ICUL) and the Credit Union National Association (CUNA). Prairie Trail's youth programs include the Star Savers Youth Club, the CU Succeed Teen Program, Bank-at-School at Lynne Thigpen Elementary School, Junior Achievement at St. Jude's School, National Credit Union Week activities, and participation in Reality Stores at local high schools.

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Note 1: The Illinois Credit Union League (ICUL) is the primary trade association for credit unions in Illinois, which provides members with information, legislation and education. Membership is open to any credit union operating in accordance with the Illinois Credit Union Act or the Federal Credit Union Act. There are 434 credit unions in Illinois with more than 2.7 million members.

Note 2: Prairie Trail Credit Union is an affiliated credit union of ICUL with more than 12,000 members and \$62.1 million in assets. With offices in Joliet, Frankfort and Plainfield, Illinois, the credit union is open to anyone living or working in the suburban Chicago counties of Will, Grundy, Kendall, and parts of Kane, DuPage and Cook.