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For Immediate Release

### **Illinois credit unions show support for Living Lands & Waters, environment**

East Moline, IL., September 16, 2009 – Credit unions from throughout Illinois recently presented a check for \$500 to Chad Pregracke of Living Lands & Waters and showed their support of environmental causes by facilitating a discussion with local business leaders about the topic.

The check presentation, as part of the Illinois Credit Union League's (ICUL) annual Chapter Leaders Conference hosted by the Illinois Quad Cities Chapter of Credit Unions, was facilitated by Ray Rogers, chapter chairman and staff auditor, DHCU Community Credit Union in Moline.

"The goal of credit unions and our chapter is to serve our community," said Rogers. "Chad is living proof that one man, if given a chance, can make a difference."

Chad Pregracke in 1998 founded Living Lands & Waters to help clean up the Mississippi River. He was determined to take up this mission after noticing that the condition of the rivers was getting worse due to the accumulation of trash on the shorelines while working as a commercial shell diver, a commercial fisherman, and barge hand during the summers.

Pregracke, who was also joined for the presentation by his mother, KeeKee, reflected on his journey, from when it started with a small loan from a credit union in the Quad Cities to where it is today as a \$1.3 million relief organization that travels all over the country with several employees and a fleet of several barges and workboats. Thousands of volunteers have helped with community cleanups, Riverbottom Forest Restoration, and Adopt-a-Mississippi River Mile programs.

"Credit unions helped me get my start and now 10 years since the organization's beginning, we had our most productive, rewarding year," said Pregracke.

In light of on-going efforts to increase environmental awareness among businesses and citizens, the theme of this year's conference was "Credit Unions...Naturally Better." Topics centered around promoting chapter activities and events as they relate to environmental issues.

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The conference also included a presentation by members of the local business community on "How Credit Unions can help their Communities Go Green." The panel consisted of Joe Payne, associate managing editor at the Moline Dispatch and publisher of *Radish Magazine*; Doug House, general manager of municipal service for the City of Moline; Mark Schwiebert, previous mayor of the City of Rock Island; and Tony Fuhrmeister, store director of Hy-Vee in Silvis. Each panelist discussed the green initiatives their organizations are involved in and how credit unions can get involved in discussing these projects with their own local communities.

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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 416 credit unions in Illinois with more than 2.7 million members.

**Note 2:** As one of ICUL's 25 chapters across the state, the Illinois Quad Cities Chapter of Credit Unions serves credit unions and credit union officials in western Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island counties. There are 11 credit unions within the chapter boundaries that serve 204,300 members and hold more than \$1.8 billion in assets.