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For Immediate Release

**Local Credit Union Executive named Employee of the Year**

Joliet, IL., April 24, 2009 – Ann O’Neill, Joliet credit union executive, recently received the 2008 Spirit of Service Employee of the Year award from the Illinois Credit Union League at its 79<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Chicago.

Jointly sponsored by the Illinois Credit Union League (ICUL) and ICUL Service Corporation, the Spirit of Service award recognizes the real unsung heroes -- credit union volunteers who contribute extraordinary efforts on behalf of their individual credit unions and communities. O’Neill was honored for demonstrating the credit union movement’s “people helping people” philosophy as executive vice president for Prairie Trail Credit Union.

As a dedicated credit union employee since 1984, O’Neill has realized the need for financial literacy in area schools. She has been critical to the development of JTCU, which are student-run branches at Joliet West and Joliet Central high schools that opened last fall. These locations are a unique opportunity for the students to have access to basic money management, including budgeting and saving. The branches have become a win-win-win partnership for the schools, students and the credit union.

In addition, O’Neill has seen a need for members, who have experienced financial difficulty. She supports credit union services such as “Fresh Start Checking Account” and “Fresh Start Credit Builder” – programs that give members a second chance at establishing good credit. She has also supported the training and certification of nine staff members to become financial counselors. O’Neill and the staff continue to find ways to meet the savings and lending needs of its members in both good and bad economic times.

O’Neill is highly respected in the credit union movement and also a highly respected leader in many community organizations. She has received her Certified Credit Union Executive (CCUE) designation, and is past chairman and treasurer of the Will County Chapter of Credit Unions.

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O'Neill has also been instrumental in organizing the Council for Working Women, a division of the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This Council provides professional and business growth opportunities for women to enhance their capabilities and benefit the organizations or businesses they represent.

“Needless to say, Ann O'Neill exemplifies “people helping people” and it is with great pleasure that we honor her with the Spirit of Service Employee of the Year Award,” said Dan Plauda, ICUL president/chief executive officer while presenting the award during the keynote and awards presentation at the convention.

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**Note 1:** The Illinois Credit Union League 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 423 credit unions in Illinois serving 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.