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**Belco Honored with 2023 Leaders in Financial Literacy Award by
CrossState Credit Union Foundation**

HARRISBURG, PA (MAY 19, 2023) – Belco Community Credit Union is one of five credit unions across Pennsylvania and New Jersey recognized with the 2023 Leaders in Financial Literacy Award by the CrossState Credit Union Foundation. The \$2,500 award was presented during CrossState’s Annual Convention on Friday, May 19 at the Hershey Lodge.

Dream, Achieve, Succeed, Belco’s in-school Financial Wellness initiative, was created to teach middle school and high school students financial literacy skills, as well as to introduce new programs to meet the needs expressed by students and school districts.

“Financial education is the cornerstone of the credit union movement, and central to our mission at Belco Community Credit Union,” said Amey Sgrignoli, President and CEO. “We are proud of our 84-year commitment to a superior member experience, and that includes teaching our children—the credit union members of the future—how to budget, spend, and save money. Belco developed an in-depth variety of financial literacy programs with the goal of inviting middle school and high school students at different money management levels to take control of their finances. We believe children who learn to control their finances can control their future.”

“The CrossState Credit Union Foundation celebrates credit unions across New Jersey and Pennsylvania who are providing financial education services, and we were thrilled to have a record number of entries this year. Our 2023 Leaders Financial Literacy Award winners are creating programs and pathways to ensure young people and their members gain the knowledge and experience necessary to make wise financial decisions, creating hope for the future,” says Sue Ward-Diorio, Executive Director, CrossState Credit Union Foundation.

Belco’s youth financial wellness programs have impacted 1,891 central Pennsylvania school children this year and include the following programs:

Financial Reality Fair: Career exploration combined with a hands-on budgeting activity which gives students a realistic look at living independently on an expected salary for a selected career.

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Belco Receives Leaders in Financial Literacy Award
Page 2 of 2

Middle School Deposit Days/Belco Student Ambassadors: By encouraging students to make deposits each month during the school day, the program teaches students the importance and benefits of saving regularly. Belco Student Ambassadors, who are middle school aged Belco members, provide program assistance and provide the Belco staff with information and recommendations on how to best reach their peers while learning valuable communication and leadership skills.

Financial Flex Program: Mirroring a lunch-and-learn format, these programs are held in a flexible period during the school day. Consumer topics are driven by student suggestions and presented by subject matter experts from Belco or its business partners.

The Steelton-Highspire Neighboring Academy and Summer Camp Academy Program introduces high school students to workforce development education and invites them to experience pathways to success through an array of community connections, including financial education programs from Belco. Developed in collaboration with the school district, the program was introduced through a 6-week summer camp.

For the past seven years, Belco has also sponsored two high schools and a middle school student recognition program through their **Good Character and Student of the Quarter** programs. “Good Character and Student of the Quarter recognize and reward students who have displayed positive character or carried out good deeds in school which would normally go unnoticed,” said Sgrignoli.

“Thank you for organizing the Belco Reality Fair for all the juniors and seniors here in Greenwood School District,” said Wendy Ellenberger and Brian Tomko of Greenwood School District Careers. “Our administration was impressed and grateful for the work that you and your team put into all aspects of the fair. Students expressed a variety of positive reactions. Some didn’t realize all their parents put toward household expenses. Others are now more aware of the finances of daily living and will pay more attention to budgeting in the future. This educational experience made a positive change in their future, and we look forward to doing it again!”

To learn more about Belco’s youth financial education programs, visit <https://belco.org/compass/>

About Belco Community Credit Union

Belco Community Credit Union is a full-service financial institution offering checking, savings, loan, investment, and small business products and services. Established in 1939 to serve employees of Bell Telephone Company in Harrisburg, PA, Belco became a community-chartered credit union in July 2005, opening membership to businesses and individuals who live, work, worship, or attend school in Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, or York counties. Belco has more than 75,000 members and \$935 million in assets, 15 branches, numerous ATM/ITM locations, and 24-hour account access through mobile, online, and telephone banking. For more information, visit www.belco.org or call (800) 642-4482.

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