



Cooperative Leadership Forum a VALUABLE EXPERIENCE for Employees

Having worked in the credit union industry for more than 28 years, Kevin Willour lives and breathes the cooperative lifestyle. He is the president and CEO of Beacon Credit Union, a financial cooperative founded in 1931 by a group of farmers whose vision was simple – to provide dependable savings and loan programs to farmers during a time of economic hardship.

That mission is still reflected in Beacon's business model today, serving more than 47,000 members in north central and northeast Indiana. It is now the fourth largest credit union in Indiana and the largest agricultural lending credit union in the country.

While Beacon has grown significantly in the past 83 years, it's important to Kevin that his organization stays rooted in the seven cooperative principles, which is why Beacon became involved with the Mid America Cooperative Council (MACC).

"At Beacon, we like to partner with like-minded organizations intent on serving and adding value to our member-owners," says Kevin. "

“ We feel MACC is very intent on serving and adding value.”

Of the added value MACC provides to its members, educational programming is at the top of Kevin's list; in particular, the Cooperative Leadership Forum for Emerging Leaders. He has sent many of his staff members to the conference through the years and it has proved to be a valuable asset to the credit union.



"All of our employees and volunteers who have attended the Cooperative Leadership Forum have expressed their appreciation for sending them to the training and have communicated how valuable of an experience it was for them," explains Kevin. "They all indicated a better understanding of our cooperative structure and values."

“ In fact, most of our employees exceeded their own expectations.”

The MAC-Ed programming not only benefits Beacon, but all cooperatives in the Midwest that take advantage of MACC offerings. From helping cooperative employees understand the seven founding principles to communicating the value-added concept to cooperative members, MACC demonstrates its ability to connect with all those involved in the cooperative structure.

"MACC is a tremendous resource that cooperatives can use to promote and strengthen the value of your cooperative, regardless of the type of cooperative," says Kevin.

And, from one CEO to another, Kevin encourages all of his counterparts to take advantage of the MACC offerings for one very important reason.

"As CEO of a financial cooperative, it is my responsibility to 'improve the quality of life for the member-owners we serve and improve the quality of life for the communities we serve in.' MACC is a valuable resource that partners with Beacon Credit Union to improve the quality of life for everyone involved."