



Lifetime Co-operative Achievement Award Presented to: Jim Deane

For long, varied and meritorious service by individuals in volunteer and/or elected positions within co-operatives and credit unions.

Jim Deane has a legacy as a trailblazer at Access Communications Co-operative. He was responsible for the growth of the co-op from a relatively small cable television company in Regina to a significant player in the provincial telecommunications industry.

Jim began at Access in 1981 and was appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2000. His tenure at the co-operative was marked by strong and decisive management, and substantial community investment.

Prior to Jim's appointment as CEO, Access Communications Co-op had been struggling financially. Jim implemented a two-part approach to turn the organization around: Embrace and promote its co-operative identity while pursuing a growth strategy.

Together with Jim and his senior leadership team, the board created a new mission, vision and guiding principles that celebrated the co-operative's distinctiveness.

Supporting local economic and social development programs is a key part of the organization's brand identity. While Access Communications Co-operative adheres to all seven International Principles of Co-operation, "contribution to community" figured very prominently in Jim's strategy and the co-op's marketing programs.

The co-op's ongoing message - that it is 100% Saskatchewan-owned and committed to re-investing 100% of profits back into the communities it serves - has had a profound impact on the co-op's operations and outcomes. "We haven't looked back since", said Jim.

Today, Access serves 250 communities covering 200,000 square km in Saskatchewan, and employs 350 people. More than 1,100 community organizations received support from the co-op last year. Additionally, Access reinvests over five per cent of its broadcast revenues into community programs.

Jim believes the co-op identity defines who you are. He's helped foster a strong co-operative culture within Access Communications, and notably with its customers and partners. "After all, the sector is huge in Saskatchewan. It's an important part of our communities and our province, and it's really important that we support that."

Following Jim's roadmap, Access Communications continues to grow, both organically and through acquisitions. In 2022, Access purchased KRAKR Enterprises and its rural wireless network. The added capacity enhances the co-operative's presence in rural Saskatchewan and otherwise underserved communities.

The co-operative model is a unique structure for a telecommunications company. From being considered the “odd duck” when it first appeared on the national telecom scene, Access Communications Co-operative has proven over the last 40 years that co-operatives can be enormously successful and able to withstand competition, amalgamations and access to capital challenges.

Jim is Vice chair of the Collectors Car Club of Saskatchewan. For the last 16 years, he has partnered with car club members and others to host the Access Communications Show N Shine on Labour Day. More than 1 million meals have been donated to the Regina Food Bank through funds raised by Show N Shine. Even in retirement, Jim continues to chair the event.

Jim was a driving force behind the creation of Access Communications Children's Fund. It's a charity that contributes funds and support to youth-based not-for-profit organizations. Over \$3 million has been donated since 2000 to help kids all across Saskatchewan.

Jim has helped strengthen foundational governance within other co-ops. The Regina Community Clinic today is thriving, adding new physicians and growing its member base. The shift in focus to building strong governance began with Jim's tenure as chair of the board. Jim helped motivate the member base at Wheat City Curling & Recreational Co-op, which led to an eventual amalgamation with the Tartan Curling Club Co-operative.

Recently stepping back from Saskatchewan Co-operative Association where he was president, Jim currently chairs the National Public Affairs channel, CPAC, chairs the Regina Community Clinic board, is a delegate and Saskatchewan regional chair for Co-operators, and a delegate for Access Communications Co-op. He's a member of Conexus Credit Union and a member of the Sherwood, Prairie and Southland co-ops.

Beyond the co-op sector, Jim has been a baseball coach and a youth hockey team manager. He is past chair of both the Canadian Council of Better Business Bureaus and the Better Business Bureau of Saskatchewan.

Jim retired from Access Communications Co-operative in 2023 after 42 years, but remains deeply connected to the co-op sector and his community. He is a role model to young co-operators entering the sector, and has achieved a career and impact for co-operatives in Saskatchewan that many would be fortunate to achieve.

We celebrate a lifetime of commitment to co-operation, visionary leadership, and dedication to community, by presenting Jim Deane with a Lifetime Co-operative Achievement Award. The awards ceremony takes place October 16, 2023 in Saskatoon as part of Co-op Week celebrations.

Awards will be presented October 16, 2023 at TCU Place, 35-22 St E, Saskatoon as part of the Co-operative Merit Awards ceremony. YOU'RE INVITED to attend and help celebrate our four Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Award recipients.

Cocktail reception begins at 5:30pm and the dinner and awards ceremony begins at 6:00pm. RSVP to Saskatchewan Co-operative Association by October 9th - sca@sask.coop or 306-244-3702.

More information at <https://sask.coop/events/co-op-merit-awards>