

THE  
Rod Nilsestuen  
FUND

Contact:

Jayne Kincade  
Secretary  
Ralph K. Morris Foundation  
888-246-5601  
kincade.jayne@dorsey.com

Bill Berry  
Communications specialist  
715-341-9119  
billnick@charter.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Rod Nilsestuen's legacy lives on as cooperative, conservation organizations establish fund**

Minneapolis, Minn. (Nov. 15, 2010) — Longtime Wisconsin agriculture, cooperative and conservation leader Rod Nilsestuen's legacy will live on with a fund established in his name. Nilsestuen died earlier this year in a drowning accident.

A host of cooperative and land conservation organizations along with his family, friends and colleagues have joined together to create the Rod Nilsestuen Fund. The Fund was launched at the Cooperative Network's annual meeting Nov. 15 in LaCrosse, Wis.

At the time of his death, Nilsestuen was Wisconsin's secretary of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, earning a reputation as a results-oriented public servant. "More than that, he was a visionary leader in all his endeavors. He inspired others to act for the common good," said Tom Lyon of Cambridge, Wis., who chairs the working group that established the Fund.

"With Rod's tragic and untimely passing, the cooperative, agriculture and conservation communities lost a true champion," Lyon said. "He was a tireless advocate for farmers, a passionate believer in farmland preservation and a dedicated volunteer."

The Rod Nilsestuen Fund has been organized as part of the Ralph K. Morris Foundation, which shares a dedication to the future of cooperatives and leadership development. The Fund will sponsor programming that advances research, education and outreach in cooperative business and development, wise rural land use and leadership.

One of its primary activities will be to establish a symposium devoted to in-depth, thought-provoking presentations on issues affecting cooperatives, conservation and leadership development. The inaugural event is slated for 2012 and will be held at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, Nilsestuen's alma mater.

Nilsestuen died July 21, 2010, while swimming in Lake Superior. He and his wife, Carol, were in Upper Michigan, volunteering on one of their favorite projects, building a Habitat for Humanity house.

For more information or to make a contribution, go to [www.ralphk Morris foundation.org](http://www.ralphk Morris foundation.org) and click on The Rod Nilsestuen Fund.

**Ralph K. Morris Foundation**

50 South Sixth Street, Suite 1500 ~ Minneapolis, MN 55402 ~ (888) 246-5601 ~ [www.ralphk Morris foundation.org](http://www.ralphk Morris foundation.org)