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Chicago, IL First Financial Credit Union Launches New Network Brand to Help Credit Unions Achieve Greater Success Through Collaboration.

encurage financial network, a cooperative effort of four formerly independent credit unions and three credit union service organizations (CUSOs), has officially set a date for its launch. The network aims to help members keep their local credit union legacy while providing their credit unions the tools to improve operations, maximize resources, and enhance member services by pooling and sharing knowledge in true collaborative fashion.

encurage financial network brings together a group of credit union teams that include some of the best and brightest minds in the credit union industry. The new concept will bring these teams together under one brand to collaborate, share and scale to succeed in today's highly competitive and rapidly changing financial marketplace.encurage will provide a wide range of services to its credit union network, including operational support, infrastructure, marketing, compliance, and more.

encurage elevated former FFCU President & CEO Michael T. Abraham to lead the new brand and initiative with the support of the four network advisory boards consolidating into the parent network board. "The formation of the **encurage financial network** represents a significant leap for our credit union and its members. Announcing this change today is the first step of many we intend to take throughout the year to roll out enhanced services and benefits for members across the communities we serve. In using the network structure, we've enabled our credit union partners to take the leap with us. Together, in true cooperative fashion, we launch the new network concept, demonstrating the importance of **collaboration** and **innovation** in an ever-changing financial landscape." Says Abraham. Abraham continues, "We're not afraid to disrupt the status quo, especially if that means finding new and innovative ways to deliver more for our members and **enrich** the communities our members call home."

The four credit unions that make up the **encurage financial network** (S & C Electric Employees CU, Win-Hood Co-OP CU, C & NW Proviso CU, First Financial CU) are committed to the principles of collaboration, innovation, and enriching the communities they call home. By working together, these credit unions can leverage their collective resources to achieve economies of scale, streamline their operations, and deliver superior member value. The three CUSO network partners (First Servicing, Owners Access, First Solutions) will continue to provide additional support to their customers while increasing revenue generation opportunities to help credit unions both in and outside of the network succeed in today's complex operating environment.

encurage Chief Marketing & Innovation Officer, Dan Butterworth, who worked with the network partners to develop the new brand said, "We're excited to launch something that really

communicates who we are. Not only do we look to give our members the courage to make their financial dreams possible, but by spelling it a little differently, we showcase our commitment to keeping the CUs, our members, at the center of everything we do."

encurage financial network is actively seeking to bring in new network credit union partners and expects to announce more exciting developments in the coming weeks. By working together, network participants can maintain the cooperative principles credit unions were built on. In doing this, partners can free up time, energy, and resources to focus on creating and delivering greater value to their members and the communities they call home.

Upon inception, **encurage financial network** will serve over 14,000 members mostly in the greater Chicagoland area and hold over $200 million in assets.

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