



## NEWS RELEASE

### CoBank Launches “No Barriers” Program For Veterans With Disabilities From America’s Rural Communities

**DENVER (November 10, 2016)** — CoBank, a cooperative bank serving agribusinesses, rural infrastructure providers and Farm Credit associations throughout the United States, today announced it is launching a new program for veterans with disabilities from America’s rural communities.

In partnership with its customers and the nonprofit group [No Barriers USA](#), CoBank will sponsor up to 50 veterans from rural areas across the U.S. to participate in outdoor expeditions that challenge them mentally and physically and help them to transform their lives.

Cooperatives and other eligible CoBank borrowers will be able to nominate veterans from their local communities to participate in the No Barriers Warriors program, with CoBank covering the full cost for each veteran, including travel expenses. Selected veterans will go through the program in 2017.

“Every American owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the men and women who serve in the armed forces and protect our country,” said Bob Engel, CoBank’s chief executive officer. “Those who are wounded or injured in the course of duty are even more deserving of our thanks. At CoBank, we want to do our part to honor veterans and repay them for their service to the nation.”

Engel noted that over 5 million of the nation’s 22 million veterans are located in rural areas and called on the bank’s customer base to help identify deserving participants for the No Barriers program. “Rural America produces a disproportionate share of the nation’s military personnel,” Engel said. “We need our customers to help make this program successful by nominating individuals from their communities who would benefit from the No Barriers experience. We look forward to partnering with our customers in this effort, which we believe has the potential to change the lives of rural veterans who have been disabled as a result of their military service.”

No Barriers was co-founded by Erik Weihenmayer, an internationally renowned mountain climber and the only blind person in history to reach the summit of Mt. Everest. Weihenmayer has been a regular speaker at CoBank meetings over the past several years and has shared his inspirational message about overcoming barriers and challenges to live a life rich in meaning and purpose with the bank’s customers and employees.

“Through the Warriors program, No Barriers has been working with veterans with disabilities for years,” said Weihenmayer. “We’ve seen the transformation that takes place when veterans are able to overcome the mental and physical challenges involved in one of our expeditions, and then apply the skills they’ve learned to the challenges faced in their day-to-day lives. We’re grateful to CoBank for their partnership and the opportunity to serve even more of our nation’s veterans with disabilities.”

Nominations of rural veterans with disabilities to participate in the 2017 program are due from CoBank customers by May 1, 2017. Detailed information about the nomination process and requirements is available [here](#).

### **About CoBank**

CoBank is a \$120 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving more than 75,000 farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending associations chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture, rural infrastructure, and rural communities. Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank serves customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. and also maintains an international representative office in Singapore.

For more information about CoBank, visit the bank's web site at [www.cobank.com](http://www.cobank.com).

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