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ACTE Announces Retired North Dakota Career & Technical Education Director as National Award Finalist

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announces LaDonna Elhardt, a retired career and technical education director from Minot Public Schools in Minot, North Dakota, as the winner of the 2015 ACTE Region V Lifetime Achievement Award. The ACTE Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes the contributions and distinguished accomplishments of members who have been identified with the work and purposes of the Association for Career and Technical Education over an extended period of time.

“It would be a great challenge just to mention, let alone measure, all the positive impacts of Mrs. Elhardt’s career relative to the work and purposes of our organization and profession,” says Debra Huber, administrator at the North Dakota Department of CTE. LaDonna Elhardt began her career in CTE as a home economics instructor in the early 1960s. When she became a director at Minot Public Schools in 1993, Elhardt collaborated with teachers and advisory committee members to determine how best to allocate local, state and federal resources and grants to meet curriculum and department needs. She implemented a tech prep and school-to-work initiative which resulted in hiring the first career development counselors for her school system. Her successful equity projects resulted in national recognition for the Minot Public Schools with the Programs and Practices That Work Preparing Students for Nontraditional Careers award. The award was sponsored by ACTE, the National Association of State Directors of CTE Consortium and the National Alliance for Partnerships of Equity.

When a dilapidated automotive dealership that housed the majority of the CTE programs failed to meet compliance, Elhardt lobbied hard for a new facility to ensure the continuation of those programs. After years of petitioning locally and travelling to D.C. to lobby before North Dakota congressional members, Elhardt acquired funding in 2003, the year of her retirement. She stayed involved in the project and she worked closely with stakeholders to plan and build the new 41,500 square foot state-of-the-art CTE facility. In recent years Elhardt has assisted in developing an alternative licensing program for CTE instructors, has presented in various state conferences and briefings on Capitol Hill, and has remained a strong voice and advocate for FACS and CTE.

Elhardt is one of three finalists for the 2016 national title. The national winner will be announced at the [ACTE Awards Banquet](#), a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event will take place on Thursday evening, November 19, during ACTE’s CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Awards Banquet is

sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, Kuder, CareerSafe, Certiport, and Stratasys. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, [visit our webpage](#).

About ACTE

The [Association for Career and Technical Education \(ACTE\)](#) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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