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For more information contact:Maria Woldt, communications

(608) 577-4345

execdir@wiscustomoperators.org

**WCO honors three scholarship winners; Accepting applications for 2018**

DEFOREST, Wis. (March 12, 2018) — The Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc. (WCO) recently awarded three scholarships to students pursuing further education. These students were selected based on leadership, civic engagement, academics and volunteer activities related to agriculture. Students also submitted essays detailing their educational and vocational plans for the future. Scholarship winners are required to have ties to the WCO – either as a member, relative of a member or employee of a member. Students received a $1000 scholarship.

 “WCO understands that the foundation for the continued success of Wisconsin’s agricultural economy depends on a well-educated workforce,” says Dr. Kevin Shinners, chair of the WCO Scholarship Committee and professor of Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“We also recognize that the high-cost of additional education can impact this need.”

Winners of the 2017 WCO scholarships include: Kaleb Cauffman, Fennimore, a freshman at South West Technical College, majoring in ag mechanics. He is the son of WCO member Cauffman’s Slurry Transfer; Jacob Kraus, Elkhart Lake, a freshman at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, majoring in mechanical engineering. He is the son of WCO member Kraus Custom Forage Harvesting; Rachel O’Leary, Janesville, is a third-year vet student at the UW School of Veterinary Medicine. She is the daughter of WCO member O’Leary Brothers Chopping Service.

Applications for the 2018 WCO scholarship are currently being accepted and are due May 1. Interested students should visit [www.wiscustomoperators.org/about\_us/scholarships.php](http://www.wiscustomoperators.org/about_us/scholarships.php) for more information including eligibility, criteria and application. Again this year, WCO will offer three (3) $1,000 scholarships.

WCO is an organization comprised of individuals throughout the state who derive their income in whole or part from providing custom farming services. To learn more about the Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc. including membership and events, go to [www.wiscustomoperators.org](http://www.wiscustomoperators.org) or email info@wiscustomoperators.org

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