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**BELDON FUND, CLOSING DOORS ON SCHEDULE, OFFERS GUIDE TO MANAGING
A “SPEND-OUT” FOUNDATION AND WEBSITE TO SHARE STRATEGIES, LESSONS LEARNED**

*National foundation encourages other donors to explore spend-out approach and funding
advocacy as means to deliver effectively on missions*

NEW YORK, May 15, 2009 – As it ceases operations, the Beldon Fund, a national foundation dedicated to building public and policy support for environmental protection, has created a new website (www.beldon.org) and publication, *Giving While Living*, to share what it learned from its ten years as a spend-out foundation. Designed as resources for other donors, regardless of issue area, they recount Beldon’s effort to accomplish an ambitious mission on an accelerated timetable, and provide guidance on adopting a spend-out model that focuses on policy advocacy.

The information found in *Giving While Living* and Beldon’s website are particularly timely as the economy may prompt many donors to explore different giving approaches that will have a lasting impact even in reduced financial circumstances.

Over its ten-year lifespan Beldon spent a total of \$120 million in grants and foundation-directed projects that supported environmental policy advocacy. It made its last grants in June 2008 and will officially close May 31, 2009. Beldon’s web site will remain live for the foreseeable future.

“Given the state of the environment, I felt it would be inexcusable not to spend out now,” said Beldon founder, John Hunting. “Today’s money should address *today’s* problems and I believed that larger, targeted investments over a relatively short period of time would be more effective than smaller grants made over decades. Ultimately, this approach worked well for us.”

Hunting believes sharing strategies and results will be an important part of Beldon’s legacy. “We hope other donors will incorporate what we’ve learned into their own exploration of spending out or spending more to make a difference, and that funders focused on pressing social issues will consider the merits of funding nonpartisan civic-engagement efforts as a powerful way to influence policy,” he said.

Short Timeframe, Ambitious Mission and Bold Strategies Brought Results

Though Hunting, a longtime environmentalist, started Beldon in 1982, he set it on a new course with \$100 million from the 1998 sale of Steelcase stock he received as a child from his father, an early Steelcase executive.

Hunting sought to fund efforts that would strengthen advocacy and civic engagement to affect environmental public policies. Years of disinterest in the environment meant vast work was needed, but the Beldon team settled on two main programs:

- **Key States** (Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina and Wisconsin), to increase the impact of environmental advocates in states that had the potential to shift policy and influence the national agenda; and
- **Human Health and Environment**, to promote policies that prevent or eliminate environmental risks to people's health. Beldon focused on chemical policy reform as a signature issue around which it organized grantees and philanthropic partners.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVER A DECADE

The Beldon Fund was bolder than it might have been with a limitless horizon, which helped it achieve many of its goals:

- **Helped grantees build capacity** to change local, state and national policies.
- **Fostered collaboration among grantees and other advocacy organizations** with compatible policy agendas in order to be more effective agents for change.
- **Engaged nontraditional allies**, particularly nurses and health-affected groups, such as breast cancer survivors.
- **Achieved concrete policy victories**, such as state bans on toxic chemicals in everyday products.
- **Assisted grantees in identifying and obtaining additional funding** to continue their work after the Beldon Fund closed.

Source: Beldon Fund

“Spending out and focusing on policy change proved a potent combination; the one allowed us to concentrate our resources and the other to achieve results that we hope will last long after our exit,” said Anita Nager, Beldon’s Executive Director. “Once we hit our stride our average annual grant budget was approximately \$14 million, so we spent three or four times more on grants each year than is typical for similarly sized foundations set up to exist in perpetuity.”

The Good, the Bad and the Unexpected: An Inside Look at Running a Spend Out

Setting a limited lifespan shaped decisions across the foundation. *Giving While Living* examines three areas where the spend-out approach had the greatest consequences: finance, operations and program strategy. The publication details how Beldon addressed challenges in each area and guides readers on such topics as building a financial strategy for spend out; staffing for spend out and preparing to close the doors; developing a program strategy; and preparing grantees to thrive after you’re gone.

“*Giving While Living* is the most comprehensive and transparent account of the operational and programmatic lessons from a spend-out foundation produced so far,” said Doug Bauer, senior vice president of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

Giving While Living is available for download free of charge at www.beldon.org/content/spend-out-strategy.

Beldon.org: complete picture of activities and results

Beldon’s new website (www.beldon.org) provides comprehensive information on program strategies, operations, and outcomes, including results of three independent external evaluations. It also includes project case stories and a “Lessons and Tips” section with insights on such practices as encouraging collaboration among grantees, engaging new allies and achieving impact in a limited time frame. Finally, it offers “Principles of Responsible Exiting,” for phasing out grant programs and closing down a spend-out foundation; the Beldon team felt these principles could be applied to *all* foundations that phase out specific programs.

“I think Beldon’s programs helped strengthen environmental advocates so they are now much better positioned to take advantage of policy opportunities and respond to new environmental threats,” said John Hunting. “I’m proud of what our grantees were able to accomplish in a difficult policy environment. They have won scores of state policy victories, which helped build momentum for national policy reform.”

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