

A news update from **CooperationWorks!**—the center of excellence for cooperative business development

What's New



CW! Founder, Melbah Smith, Honored

Members of Cooperation Works! (CW) will gather on May 6, 2009, at the annual Cooperative Hall of Fame awards dinner to honor one of their own: Melbah Smith. Smith is a founding member of Cooperation Works!, a national member service cooperative of cooperative business professionals formed in 1997 to use their mutual skills, resources and knowledge to revitalize communities through effective cooperative business enterprise development.

The Cooperative Hall of Fame is administered by the Cooperative Development Foundation in cooperation with the National Cooperative Business Association. Induction is awarded to individuals who have lifetime achievements as leaders, educators, advisors, innovators and advocates for cooperative development. Leaders in the cooperative business community nominate and screen Hall of Fame candidates; the National Cooperative Business Association

MELBAH SMITH cont. on pg. 16

CooperationWorks!

is a member service cooperative of cooperative business development professionals working together to revitalize communities through effective cooperative enterprise development.



To learn more about Cooperation Works! contact:

Madeline Shultz

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Co-op Development in Turbulent Times

By Christina Clamp,
Southern New Hampshire University

Rising unemployment, frozen credit markets and thousands of foreclosed properties are a perfect economic storm. It is time to bring cooperatives back to the forefront as a solution to the failure of the market. The cooperative movement historically helped average Americans preserve their farms, savings and to create affordable, safe and secure homes in light of economic hardships. Co-ops are a very effective response in these troubled times.

The School of Community Economic Development (SCED) at Southern New Hampshire University offers education programs to promote effective cooperative development.

The university's masters' program in community economic development integrates co-ops into a "tool bag" for community developers. Students can take an advanced certificate in cooperatives and credit unions to learn how to create and sustain new co-ops in both the US and abroad.

All master's students in the program are required to be involved with a Community Economic Development



Members of Stone Soup Worcester at September Block Party line the steps of the Community Center. Renovations will add a resident cooperative in the attic as well as a commercial kitchen for all to share. (Photo: Michael Bowie)

project. Students with a focus on cooperative solutions are developing co-ops and co-op policies. Tanya Gracie is a Canadian and her project is focused on co-op policy. She is currently working with the Canadian

Cooperative Association and the Ontario Cooperative Association to assess how to recruit a new generation of cooperators both through paths

TURBULENT TIMES cont. on pg. 16

Inside: CenterNews

CooperationWorks! members facilitate a broad range of critical cooperative business development activities that enhance income and economic opportunity in communities across the county. Some of the Centers' current projects are detailed inside.

CW OFFICERS

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Development Corporation*

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*Iowa Alliance for Cooperative
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*Nebraska Cooperative
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Keystone Development Center

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*Common Enterprise
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Networking: Deb Trocha
*Indiana Cooperative
Development Center*

Advocacy: Kevin Edberg
*Cooperative Development
Services*

Membership and Marketing:
Ben Rainbolt
Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union

Professional Development:
Kate Smith
Keystone Development Center

Woodworks: Eric Bowman
*National Network
of Forest Practitioners*

ARKANSAS RURAL ENTERPRISE CENTER

For information, contact Donna Uptagrafft at 501-280-3078 or duptagrafft@winrock.org

The Arkansas Rural Enterprise Center (AREC), a division of Winrock International, expands jobs and income in rural Arkansas and the surrounding region by providing the guidance and consultation necessary to ensure profitable, functioning cooperatives.

Sweet Potato Project Boosts Farmer Production

In 2002, The Arkansas Rural Enterprise Center of Winrock International, and the Central Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC & D) began discussions about the need for crop diversification in East Arkansas. One of the main purposes of the project was to build a curing and climate controlled storage facility so that sweet potato farmers in the region could sell their crops long after the traditional harvest season came to a close. This could pave the way for increased production and effectively address the problem of farmers selling their products "off the turnrow," or straight from the field at roadside stands. All products that were not sold rotted before turning a profit for the grower.



Harvey Williams, Arkansas farmer, with Annett Pagan, Director, Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Winrock and the RC&D began working with five minority farmers who were already growing sweet potatoes on a relatively small scale. To help the farmers improve production quality, Winrock linked them with technical assistance provided by a retired professor with sweet potato expertise.

In 2007, the storage facility opened. This encouraged the affiliated growers to increase their sweet potato acreage, with many expecting to harvest more potatoes in 2008 than ever before. As time moved forward, the farmers also created an agreement with Bright Harvest Sweet Potato Company in Clarksville, Arkansas, to purchase all of their "canning" potatoes for use in frozen sweet potato patties and casseroles.

In August of 2008, Central Arkansas RC&D met with 30 farmers interested in storing potatoes in the facility. Currently, an expansion is underway to ensure that there is enough room for all interested farmers to lease storage space. This development will produce enough storage

space for leasing that the facility should begin to see a cash flow. The facility is currently owned by the Central Arkansas RC&D, but there has been talk that Bright Harvest may potentially purchase ownership and operation rights.

Donna Uptagraff, AREC

CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Kim Coontz at 530-297-1032 or ekcoontz@cccd.coop

The California Center for Cooperative Development promotes cooperatives as a vibrant business model to address the economic and social needs of California's communities by providing education, coordination, and technical assistance.

Co-op Offers Affordable Home Ownership Opportunities

Difficult economic times often create opportunities to implement nontraditional problem solving strategies. The crisis in the housing market creates an opportunity to promote cooperative housing to communities looking for viable solutions to home ownership for low and moderate income families. The California Center for Cooperative Development is currently engaged in a multi-year program to educate policy makers, affordable housing developers, and consumers about Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives.

Fueled by data showing that home ownership positively affects everything from improved school performance to reduced crime, an array of publicly funded programs exist to generate home ownership opportunities. Government supported lending programs like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac assist a wide range of income groups. In addition, programs specifically target low and moderate income families who have not previously owned a home.

Traditional strategies focus on providing low and moderate income households with down payment and loan qualifying assistance to purchase single family homes. Flaws in this funding strategy have resulted in the squandering of public funds and left many program beneficiaries worse off than they were before the assistance. First, traditional strategies lack effective mechanisms for preserving affordability when the initial household changes ownership and the subsidy benefit is not passed on to subsequent low income homebuyers. Second, the



Dos Pinos Housing Cooperative in Davis, CA is a limited equity housing community of 60 one, two, three and four bedroom homes.

financial monitoring mechanisms proved ineffective because many buyers refinanced to predatory, sub-prime lending schemes, and thereafter lost their homes, causing federal, state, and local agencies to lose their investments and leaving beneficiaries with credit scores so low that even rental housing is difficult to obtain.

Limited equity housing cooperatives (LEHCs) offer home ownership opportunities for low and moderate income households that do not have the flaws of traditional programs. The buildings range from a group of single family houses to townhomes. LEHCs are financed with a blanket mortgage that covers the entire development. Homeowners own a “share” in the development that grants them occupancy rights to a particular unit. They pay monthly “carrying charges” that include their share of the mortgage payment and an investment in reserves to be used for maintenance and repairs. The financing model allows members to move to a smaller or larger unit if their needs change without costly transaction costs.

Enduring affordability is assured in the LEHC model because there is a cap on the re-sale appreciation value of the unit. The cooperative is a prudent investment for public subsidies because of this effective mechanism for preserving affordability over time and because the financing structure of the cooperative insulates the project from problematic refinancing schemes.

Although there is a limit on the re-sale equity a homeowner can earn, the co-op member still reaps homeowner benefits. Cooperative housing members gain a homeowner tax deduction, payment stability, asset investment, and control over how funds are allocated to infrastructure repairs and improvements. Cooperatives enhance social and community building mechanisms.

COBANK

CoBank, a \$61 billion Denver-based cooperative bank, provides financing to rural cooperatives and vital industries—food, water, electricity and communications—across the United States. Part of the \$214-billion U.S. Farm Credit System, the bank also finances agricultural exports. In addition to the national office in Denver, CoBank has offices across the United States and an international representative office in Singapore.

CoBank Shares Lending Success with Members

CoBank, a leading national cooperative bank serving agribusinesses and rural utilities throughout the United States, recently announced record financial results for 2008, with continued good credit quality and strong capital and liquidity at year-end.

CoBank's net earnings increased 28 percent to \$533.4 million, up from \$415.6 million in 2007, driven by robust growth in average loan volume across all operating segments. Net interest income rose 34 percent to \$862.6 million, compared to \$645.4 million in 2007. At December 31, 2008, the bank's loan and lease portfolio totaled \$44.6 billion.

“CoBank delivered exceptional financial performance

during 2008 on behalf of customer-owners, investors and our other stakeholders,” said Robert B. Engel, CoBank president and chief executive officer. “As importantly, we were able to stand by our borrowers in the face of extremely challenging conditions in commodity markets, credit markets and the broader economy. We believe CoBank succeeded, by virtually every measure, in fulfilling its mission to serve as a strong, dependable source of credit to vital industries across rural America.”

Extreme volatility in the grain, oilseed and farm supply markets during the first eight months of the year was a key driver of increased financing requirements from CoBank's agribusiness customers. Lending to rural providers of power, water and communications services also experienced robust growth. Additional information about the performance of the bank's individual operating segments is contained in the “Financial Highlights.”

CoBank will make patronage payments to customer-owners totaling a record \$314 million, compared with \$245 million for 2007. Of that, \$207 million will be paid in cash, with the remainder distributed in CoBank stock. 2008 patronage distributions represent an average 25 percent return on the stock investment of our active borrowers.

“We're extremely pleased with the level of patronage our customer-owners will receive this year,” Engel said. “Total patronage will rise by 28 percent above last year's level, returning real value to our customer-owners and lowering their overall net cost of borrowing. The increased patronage payout authorized by our board of directors underscores the strength of the cooperative model and the overall value proposition that CoBank offers its customer-owners.”

COMMON ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

For information, contact Bill Patrie at 701-663-3886 or bill@ncdf.coop

Common Enterprise Development Corporation (CEDC) is a North Dakota non-profit development corporation focused on the development of community-owned enterprises and cooperatives in all sectors. Led by longtime co-op developer Bill Patrie, CEDC is working with value-added agriculture, housing cooperatives, health services, succession planning and worker cooperatives, natural food co-ops, and marketing and consumer cooperatives.

New Co-op Center Continues Valuable Cooperative Services

Incorporated in February 2009, Common Enterprise Development Corporation (CEDC) is carrying on the cooperative development work formerly conducted by Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund (NCDF).

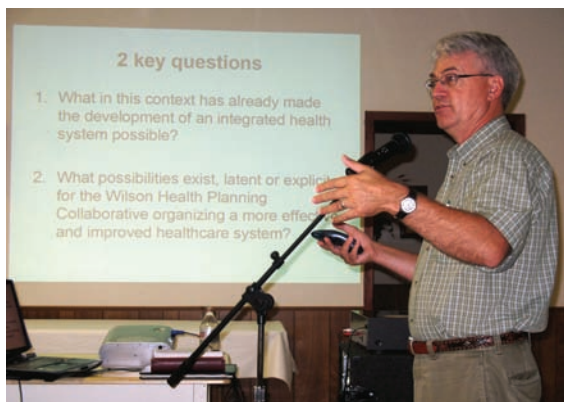
“We have interests in wind energy cooperative development, establishing housing finance cooperatives and establishing CSAs (Community Supported Agriculture)



“WE BELIEVE COBANK SUCCEEDED, BY VIRTUALLY EVERY MEASURE, IN FULFILLING ITS MISSION TO SERVE AS A STRONG, DEPENDABLE SOURCE OF CREDIT TO VITAL INDUSTRIES ACROSS RURAL AMERICA.”

**ROBERT B. ENGEL
COBANK
PRESIDENT & CEO**





Bill Patrie, executive director of the new Common Enterprise Development Corporation, presents a session on Appreciative Inquiry—the art of asking positive questions—during one of the 10 health care public meetings held during the summer of 2008.

and sustainable farming operations primarily in Minnesota and North Dakota,” says Patrie, CEDC’s executive director.

CEDC provides technical assistance to an array of different types of cooperatives, including: a rural health care planning cooperative; Native American hoop barn hog producers; a locally-owned wind energy cooperative; a poultry producers cooperative; a member-owned hog packing plant; Community Supported Agriculture; and a home building cooperative and revolving loan fund.

Co-op Promotes Better Health Care

CEDC’s rural health care planning work has resulted in the newly-incorporated Wilson Health Planning Cooperative. CEDC is an active member and is leading the work to design and implement a new health care delivery plan in an 11-county area in North Dakota that includes the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. The two main goals for the 115,000 residents who live in this area are to: 1) increase the years of healthy life; and 2) end disparities in health care.” And those disparities run deep.

“A White male living in Mountrail County in North Dakota can expect to live to be 77,” Patrie says. “A Native American male living in the same county can expect to die at 66.”

Patrie adds that the high rates of diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses in and around the reservation are a brutal cycle. “Poverty often leads to poor health and poor health often leads to poverty,” he says.

To help discover the health care system already in place, Patrie and Davis helped organize and led site visits to health care facilities on the reservation and throughout the 11 counties. They also led 10 public meetings to gain consumer input into the type of health care system residents want.

“Through an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, we found that the area’s 115,000 residents want what we all want,” Patrie says. “They dream of accessible, affordable local care with high-quality passionate providers.” They also want a diverse array of services that includes preventive care, mental health services, dental care, and home health care and hospice.

The cooperative is named after Dr. Herbert Wilson who

practiced family medicine to both Native Americans and Whites on the Fort Berthold Reservation for 43 years. Now 87, the doctor is a member of the cooperative and attended most of the tours and public meetings.

“It has long been my dream that one day all people living in this region can have access to quality, affordable, hassle-free health care,” Wilson says. “I hope I live to see it happen.”

CEDC is now helping the Wilson Health Care Cooperative raise close to \$800,000 in grant money to help fund a three-year effort to design and implement a new health care delivery plan in the Cooperative’s 11-county area. CEDC will assist the co-op in submitting grant applications. A 10-member board was recently elected and the co-op was incorporated on March 9, 2009.

Susan Davis, CEDC

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

For information, contact Jen Gutshall at 413-665-1271 or jgutshall@cdi.coop

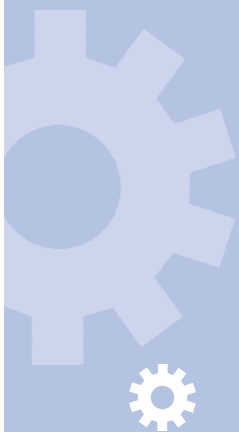
The Cooperative Development Institute increases economic opportunities and benefits for people in the Northeast by fostering the growth and success of all types of cooperative enterprises by providing education, training and technical assistance to existing and start-up cooperatively-structured enterprises.

Toward a ‘Cooperative Maine’

Following through on several CDI sponsored, state-wide cooperative development projects, including the Maine Cooperative Enterprise Conference in 2005 and “Maine Feeds Maine”, a 6-month community dialogue and coordination effort focused on identifying and further developing the Maine cooperative food system, CDI hit the road last Spring for a study tour through Maine to meet emerging and prospective co-ops and regional support organizations. Now, it is working closely with Crown O’Maine Organics Cooperative—a distributor for 80 local food producers—in its transition to a worker cooperative. CDI



Al Smith of Cooperative Maine (left) discusses forming housing co-ops in Lewiston at the Common Ground Fair last September.



**CEDC ... IS LEADING
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NEW HEALTH CARE
DELIVERY PLAN IN AN
11-COUNTY AREA IN
NORTH DAKOTA...**



Board member, Terry Daniels, is helping start a worker-owned weatherization co-op. CDI also provided help to the 'Local Sprouts' worker co-op in Portland, which caters and sells prepared entrees of local food.

Several geographic clusters of different types of cooperatives and groups wishing to start co-ops were identified on the tour. CDI is holding 'Co-op 101' workshops in these locations in 2009 to address their specific objectives and issues and to explore local and regional cross-sector opportunities. For instance, buying clubs may elect to order food from producer co-ops, all other factors being equal; cooperatives of all types may hire worker co-ops to cater their meetings or weatherize their buildings.

CDI is leveraging its resources by forging strong ties with highly regarded local entities and state agencies. DownEast Business Alliance, Portland Hour Exchange, Belfast Food Co-op, Heart of Maine Resource Conservation & Development all accompanied CDI on the Maine Co-op Tour. CDI is an active partner in Cooperative Maine, a young alliance of co-op members and others seeking to promote the cooperative economy. A state-wide conference CDI co-sponsored with this group and Cooperative Fund of New England, The Co-op Model: Transition to Economic Democracy" focusing on "the basics" of finance, housing, food, agriculture and jobs, was a sell-out in February, and received major media attention.

Jennifer Gutshall, CDI

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

For information, contact Kevin Edberg at 651-287-0184 or kedberg@aol.com

Cooperative Development Services (CDS) supports, builds, and strengthens organizations that contribute to cooperative and sustainable development through consultation and participation in the development, restructuring, and expansion of cooperative organizations in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa.

Cooperative Offers Green Energy

In response to a Minnesota mandate requiring the use of biodiesel fuels, Farmer's Union Marketing and Processing Association (FUMPA) BioFuels began operations in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Farmers Union Industries is the parent company of FUMPA BioFuels, the producers of Northland Choice biodiesel fuel.

Cooperative Development Services (CDS) worked with FUMPA BioFuels to update a feasibility study and business plan in preparation for development of the new facility. These documents were also used as part of a \$500,000 USDA Working Capital Grant that CDS wrote and submitted for the organization. The grant was awarded in December 2004 and provided FUMPA BioFuels with the financing needed to purchase inventory and fund other working capital requirements during the initial months of start-up.

"In order to receive the working capital grant, we had to demonstrate we had an acceptable feasibility study completed and a business plan in place," says Chuck Neece, Director of FUMPA BioFuels and Director of

Research Development. While these documents had been done internally, they needed to be updated to meet USDA requirements. "CDS knew how to modify our current documentation to meet those requirements. Their involvement brought third-party credibility to the project."

CDS has both the experience and connections that made the process efficient in terms of time and money, Neece notes. "We have seen what other people spend on grant writing," he says. Large grant writing fees cut into the amount of funds available for actual project costs. "We feel that when you compare the service we received, it was an efficient use of funds and we had more money to use for the project in the long run."

Located at Central Bi-Product's site, the refinery uses a variety of feedstock and animal fats in the biodiesel production process. "It's a true multi-feedstock operation," Neece says. The company expects to increase overall capacity over time and reports that margins are on target with projections. The cooperative created 10 full time jobs and processes 2.9 million gallons of bio-fuel each year.

INDIANA COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Debbie Trocha at 317-275-2247 or dtrocha@icdc.coop

The Indiana Cooperative Development Center is committed to providing a range of innovative, results-oriented, and cost-effective services to cooperatives and related organizations statewide.

Community Cooperative Creates Local Jobs, Services and Economic Development

In September 2005, a large group of residents from the greater Orange County region in Southern Indiana gathered to discuss plans to initiate a project to support the growers of local specialty foods and enhance their availability within the region. From that meeting, a steering committee was formed to begin development work of the Lost River Community Cooperative. Since that time, the group has been off and running!

The group, consisting of consumers as well as producers, adopted a vision and mission statement, drafted a set of bylaws, and collected information to formulate a road map to successfully conduct the development work for a new consumer owned food cooperative. The food co-op store offers a mix of conventional food items, locally grown produce, meats, and baked goods, natural food selections, bulk foods, hard-to-find items, and health and nutrition products. The goal of the retail store is to have a unique product offering, but be broad enough to act as a primary food store.

The cooperative incorporated in 2006 with the help of two Cooperation Works! centers: the Indiana cooperative Development Center and Cooperative Development Services. The steering committee utilized the expertise of food co-op advisors to conduct a market analysis and

**THE COOPERATIVE CREATED
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YEAR.**



Lost River Market and Deli in Paoli, IN is conveniently located at the junction of Hwy. 37, 150 and 56.



THE LOST RIVER
MARKET AND DELI IS
A LOCALLY OWNED,
SELF-SUSTAINING
ECONOMIC
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VENTURE WHICH
PROVIDES JOBS TO
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MEMBERS.

feasibility study and to write a business plan. The steering committee immediately embarked on an intensive membership recruitment drive, member loan campaign, and financing of the cooperative business. The Lost River steering committee transitioned to their initial Board of Directors at their first annual meeting in April, 2007. The project has garnered much enthusiasm and support within the committee. The cooperative purchased a building in Paoli for its retail location which, as it turns out, was originally built as a locally owned grocery store. The co-op membership has been diligently working to renovate and install fixtures for the store.

Today, The Lost River Market and Deli is a locally owned, self-sustaining economic development venture which provides jobs to local community members. The co-op purchases goods and services from over 90 local businesses, including 40 local farmers, vendors, and producers. Additionally, they sponsor monthly Healthy-Living Education Workshops, which discuss topics including diabetes prevention, nutrition, heirloom seeds, and local farm tours. The co-op also works hard to protect the environment while supporting other cooperative ventures by utilizing recycling services from Orange County Recycling Co-op, and offering recycling for customers. The cooperative also invests money back into the local community by giving sixty-seven cents of every dollar spent at the store back to local vendors, local service providers, and employees as wages.

IOWA ALLIANCE FOR COOPERATIVE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

For information, contact Madeline Shultz at 515-294-0588 or Shultz@iastate.edu

The Iowa Alliance for Cooperative Business Development initiates and strengthens producer cooperatives in Iowa by combining outreach and research programs that provide rural Iowans with viable alternatives for economic development.

Succession Planning Strives to Preserve Local Jobs and Ownership

The Iowa Alliance for Cooperative Business Development is introducing the cooperative succession model as a creative solution for Iowa's decline in small meat processing industry. Cooperative succession involves selling or otherwise transferring ownership and management to employees and presents a strategy to maintain the longevity and vitality of small businesses that are crucial to the prosperity of rural communities.

In Iowa, there were 550 small meat processors 40 years ago. Today there are 140 meat-processing businesses that are economically vital to their local communities because they provide much needed services to niche marketers, local food producers, and customers. Cooperative models are a proven strategy for keeping these businesses operational.

Reg Clause and Madeline Schultz, of the Iowa Alliance for Cooperative Business Development, presented a three



Young meat processors in Iowa.

part succession planning workshop and training to meat processing business owners and industry professionals during the annual meeting of the Iowa Meat Processors Association (IMPA), held on the Iowa State University campus on February 20-21, 2009.

The succession workshops acknowledged that business owners have many different goals when planning for succession. Allowing plenty of time to develop and implement succession strategies in a meat processing business can alleviate stress, benefit the owners financially, and generate greater long term success for the business. The speakers used several worksheets developed by the Ohio Employee Ownership Center to guide the business owners through the process of understanding and documenting their succession planning goals.

The training included a panel of meat processing business owners who shared their experiences working through the succession and business transfer process. Bill Dayton from Dayton Meats is the second generation of his family to manage and own the business. Mr. Dayton shared that he is already looking at ways to transfer assets and management: "You've got to let the younger generation know they matter or they won't be interested."

Clint Smith, owner of Stanhope Locker, bought his meat processing business outright from the previous owners. Mr. Smith, a former auto parts store owner, told the audience: "Parts are parts; I knew I could manage a business, but I relied heavily on trusted employees for the meat processing expertise."

John Tiefenthaler, owner of Food Locker Service, started working for the previous owner as a kid in high school. During the 1980's the previous owner knew he would have a hard time selling the business to an outside buyer, so he began a gradual transfer of the business to John. "He was ahead of his time," said Mr. Tiefenthaler, "I never could have done this without his mentoring."

Madeline Schultz, IACBD

COOPERATIVE MODELS
ARE A PROVEN
STRATEGY FOR KEEPING
THESE BUSINESSES
OPERATIONAL.

KENTUCKY CENTER FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

For information, contact Larry Snell at 270-763-8258 or lsnell@kcard.info

The Kentucky Center for Agriculture & Rural Development (KCARD) fosters business success and growth by developing and delivering technical assistance and by providing educational opportunities for agricultural and rural businesses seeking to enhance their economic opportunities in and around the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Distributing Quality: The Local Food Advantage

A wonderful phenomenon has been taking place in restaurants across Kentucky over the last several years. More and more chefs are introducing their customers to the wonders of locally grown produce, meats, cheeses, and value-added products. As the demand for the diversity of Kentucky proud farm fresh products continues to grow in restaurants, companies and farmers that are working hard to address the challenge of connecting products from the farm to the restaurant kitchen.

Meeting the Challenge

Incorporating locally grown foods into the business plan can be challenging for larger food distribution companies. With contracts that require products that meet a certain quality and be delivered on time, it makes it challenging to take on local growers who have never produced for the restaurant market.

According to Jim Walker, Vice President and Managing Partner of Creation Gardens in Louisville, there is a learning curve as farmers begin producing for new markets. Learning the quality and packaging requirements takes time, but Walker admits that in the end it is a win-win situation for everyone involved.

“We have been selling locally grown products since the inception of Creation Gardens eleven years ago,” explained Walker. “We have always been open armed to the farmers of the region as they are passionate in how they grow, and we are equally as passionate about delivering those products to our customer base.”

A Cooperative Approach

Large scale distribution isn't the answer for all farmers, especially those with small scale operations. That is why a group of farmers came together to create a Grasshoppers Distribution, LLC.

“The founding principle of Grasshoppers is that we work with local, independently owned stores and restaurants, because they are flexible and responsive, they keep our market diversified and stable, and they circulate money back into our communities,” explained Grasshoppers Manager, Berna Ernst.

Grasshoppers' just in time delivery has been key to help farmers market and distribute fresh local products.

“We call on Monday and producers tell us what they have, so we put it on our call sheet to the restaurants,” explained Ernst. “The restaurant orders come in by

Wednesday morning and our producers harvest and it is picked up and delivered within a twenty-four hour period in most instances.”

KEYSTONE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Cathy Smith at 814-687-4937 or smith@kdc.coop

The Keystone Development Center is a non-profit corporation dedicated to providing technical and research assistance to groups who wish to organize as cooperatives in the multi-state area of Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey and Delaware.

Farmer Cooperative Unites Diverse Farmers and Meets Consumer Needs

The Lancaster Farm Fresh Cooperative (LFFC) is a farmer owned cooperative in southeastern Pennsylvania. LFFC represents 40 farmer owners all located in Lancaster County. The cooperative is made up of Amish and Mennonite farmers who take great pride in building their soil to produce healthy plants, animals and people. The



Cooperative member displays bounty of organic cucumbers.

Keystone Development Center (KDC) supported the start-up activities of the cooperative and assisted the group in incorporation, by-law development, and board education. KDC provided a local facilitator during the start-up year (2005). The facilitator was able to set up the cooperative office, bring on-line the web ordering system, and ease any conflicts arising from the membership differences. LFFC is a rare cooperative effort between Amish and “English” farmers. The cooperative model gave them the framework to work together, across the differences in their lifestyles and religious practices. LFFC has greatly contributed to the rural community by assisting start-up farmers and opening up marketing channels between the farmer and consumer.

Where We Are

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2. California Center for Cooperative Development

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3. CoBank

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4. Cooperative Development Institute

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Jen Gutshall
413-665-1271
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5. Common Enterprise Development Corporation

Serves North Dakota
Bill Patric/Susan Davis
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704-663-3886

6. Cooperative Development Services

St. Paul, MN, and Madison, WI
Serves Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa
Kevin Edberg
651-287-0184
www.cdsus.coop

7. Indiana Cooperative Development Center

Indianapolis, IN
Serves Indiana
Debbie Trocha,
317-692-7787
www.icdc.coop

8. Iowa Alliance for Cooperative Business Development, Iowa State University

Ames, IA
Serves Iowa
Madeline Shultz/Roger Ginder
515-294-0588
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9. Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural

Elizabethtown, KY
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Larry Snell
270-763-8258
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10. Keystone Development Center

York, PA
Serves Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland
Kate Smith
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11. Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development

Jackson, MS
Serves Mississippi
Myra Bryant
601-354-2750
www.mississippiassociation.coop

12. Missouri Farmers Union Family Farm Opportunity Center

Jefferson City, MO
Serves Missouri
Judy Allmon
573-230-1196
www.missourifarmersunion.org

13. National Network of Forest Practitioners

Athens, OH
Primarily in Central Appalachia, but also work with members across the US
ColinDonohoe/Scott Bagley
740-593-8733
www.nnfp.org

14. Nebraska Cooperative Development Center

Lincoln, NE
Serves Nebraska
Jim Crandall
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http://ncdc.unl.edu

15. North Dakota Rural Electric & Telecommunications Development Center

Mandan, ND
Serves North Dakota
Lori Capouch
701-663-6501
www.ndarec.com/RE&TCenter.htm

16. Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Olympia, WA
Serves Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii
Diane Gasaway/Eric Bowman
360-943-4241
www.nwcdc.coop

17. Ohio Cooperative Development Center

Piketon, OH
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Tom Snyder
740-289-2071
http://ocdc.osu.edu

18. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative Development Center

Greenwood Village, CO
Serves Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming
Ben Rainbolt
303-752-5800
http://www.co-ops.org

19. South Dakota Value-Added Agriculture Development Center

Pierre, SD
Serves South Dakota
Cheri Rath
605-224-9402
www.sdvalueadded.com

AFFILIATES:

20. Cooperative Development Foundation

Washington, DC
Steve Thomas/Ellen Quinn
703-302-8093
www.cdf.coop

21. National Cooperative Business Association

Washington, DC
Adam Schwartz
202-383-5456
www.ncba.coop

CooperationWorks!

Madeline Schultz
toll free 800-600-7682
email: schultz@iastate.edu
or info@cooperationworks.coop



CENTER NEWS, cont. from page 6

In 2008 the cooperative reached the milestone of \$2,000,000 in gross sales and takes pride in returning 75% of that to farmer owners. LFFC serves the Lancaster and Philadelphia metropolitan regions through wholesale food service and community supported agriculture. Whether the buyer is a restaurant owner or natural food store manager they are able to view available products and order on-line at www.lancasterfarmfresh.com.

The produce sold through LFFC is certified organic, with the exception of tree fruit that is grown using Integrated Pest Management techniques (IPM). The dairy products are produced on small farms with small herds of Guernsey, Jersey and Holstein cows. LFFC farmers do not feed their animals growth hormones or antibiotics. The poultry products come from small flocks that eat grass and insects and spend time, on all but the coldest days, clucking about the range.

Cathy Smith, Keystone Development Center

MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

For information, contact Myra Bryant at 601-354-2750 or fsmcmiss@mindspring.com

The Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development uses cooperative development as a strategy to enhance the quality of life and economic opportunities for rural Mississippi residents by providing rural communities with options and tools for expanding, creating, diversifying, and strengthening cooperatives throughout rural Mississippi.

Grassroots Cooperative Engages Local Youth The Attala County Self-Help Cooperative Constructs Educational Greenhouse

Since October 2005, the Attala County Self-Help Cooperative (ACSHC) has helped expand and strengthen community involvement in Attala County, Mississippi. The ACSHC was formed to save rural resources in central Mississippi through educational outreach programs targeting small landowners with limited assets, focusing on areas of agriculture and horticulture. Inspired by the success of their neighbors at the Winston County Self-Help Cooperative; the ACSHC has grown from twelve members in 2005 to twenty-seven paying members today; including four women and fifteen active youth within the area.

While the organization serves adults, it also has a number of youth-centered programs that promote education about the sustaining and preserving of natural resources.

As both a founder and youth coordinator for ACSHC, Daniel Teague is currently focusing on expanding children's participation through the Attala County Youth Greenhouse/Garden Project. The project involves the construction and maintenance of a greenhouse on the Long Creek Elementary School campus located in Sallis, Mississippi, which involves children from kindergarten to sixth grade. The greenhouse is to act as both an educational tool for agricultural sustainability as well as recruit new members to get involved in the cooperative.

"We brought in youth from the layout stage when there



Adult and youth members of the Attala County Self-Help cooperative construct educational greenhouse.

was nothing on the ground," said Teague, "We let them participate and got them involved. We're letting them take part in every aspect of its construction."

The goal of the project is to inspire children and teenagers alike to take charge of what and how they eat by teaching about small gardening through hands-on experience. The importance of healthy eating is especially salient in Mississippi, as approximately 32 percent of the adult population is categorically obese according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Because roughly 80 percent of obese children are likely to become obese adults, it is important to begin nutritional education early. By offering a fun and informative after school activity, ACSHC not only educates students about sharing and working cooperatively within their community; but improves their health and lifestyle for years to come.

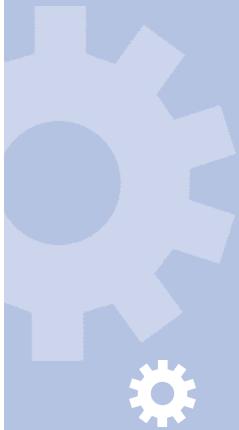
Currently the ACSHC has received local support from members through donations of seeds, building materials, money, and volunteer assistance from adults and youth alike. The project continues to seek funding in order to expand the project in the future.

"There has been a melting pot of ways people have assisted us. I've been very pleased with the result personally," said Teague, who expects the greenhouse to be completed by Spring, 2009.

Teague hopes to expand the project into a one to two acre 'demonstration plot' in order to offer more hands-on educational tools for students to plant, grow, and sell agricultural transplants to people within the community. This training will ultimately teach them how to be productive and become responsible citizens.

Teague also plans to eventually have key representatives from related organizations give presentations to the involved youth in order to increase awareness of natural resource preservation. This includes the county chair for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to discuss their conservation efforts, and a representative for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). These presentations give students the opportunity to see what a working knowledge of cooperation and sustainability can achieve, and has the potential to stimulate future projects, career interests, and the pursuit of continued education.

ACSHC regularly cooperates with a number of interrelated organizations, including the Mississippi Association



THE GOAL OF THE
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of Cooperatives, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund, USDA Agencies, and others.

In addition to the greenhouse project, ACSHC recently celebrated its annual Founders Day on October 18, 2008. Over 100 people came to enjoy cake walks, music, agricultural tours of local farms, a live auction, and other entertainment.

Rita Simerly, Cooperation Works!

MISSOURI FARMERS UNION FAMILY FARM OPPORTUNITY CENTER

For more information, contact Amy Meyer at 573-659-4787 or ameyer@missourifarmersunion.org

The Missouri Farmer's Union Family Farm Opportunity Center protects and enhances the economic interests and way of life of family farmers and ranchers and the rural communities they represent in rural Missouri.

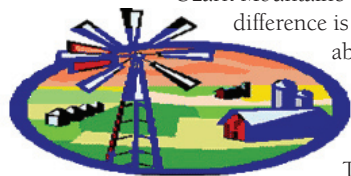
Ozark Cooperative Offers Traceable Production for Safe, Naturally Processed Pork

Ozark Mountain Pork Cooperative is a Missouri Farmers Union venture formed to produce and market highly differentiated pork products. Ozark Mountain began operations in January 2002 and sales have consistently grown since that time. The Cooperative's products are sourced only thorough cooperative members on small, sustainable family farms, which provides complete control over production.

Ozark Mountain's compelling point of difference is traceability, or the ability to track a product from the farm of origin to the finished product package. This source verification allows the Cooperative to track inputs used to make food products back to their source at different levels of the marketing chain, for unsurpassed quality assurance and food safety.

In addition, Ozark Mountain has integrated European small scale style processing. This control over processing moved product from slaughter directly into further processing, and allows the cooperative to track and make processing changes when warranted.

The Cooperative markets a complete line of natural pork products including deli-style hot dogs, artisan sausages, natural cured bacon and hams, and fresh meats under the Heritage Acres brand. The pork is raised by cooperative members without the use of hormones or antibiotics, and with feed containing no animal by-products. In addition, cooperative members follow strict production protocols designation as "Certified Humane" by Humane Farm Animal Care, a third party verification service. Heritage Acres products contain no preservatives, nitrites, or flavor and color enhancers. They are processed the cooperatives plant in Mountain View, Missouri.



NATIONAL NETWORK OF FOREST PRACTITIONERS

Athens, OH

For information, contact Colin Donahue at 740-593-8733 or colin@nnfp.org

The National Network of Forest Practitioners promotes the mutual well being of workers, rural communities, and forests by supporting individuals and groups that build sustainable relationships between forests and people by carrying out a variety of networking, education, technical assistance, and policy projects nationwide. NNFP's cooperative development work is concentrated in Central Appalachia, but they also work with their members across the country.

National Network of Forestry Practitioners Connects Forestry Cooperatives

Cooperation Works!, the national cooperative of Cooperative Development professionals, welcomes its most recent member: The National Network of Forest Practitioners (NNFP). NNFP provides the tools and the know-how to support cooperative growth and instigate inter-cooperative participation to rural forest and wood-related coopera-



tives. The education, technical assistance, and networking opportunities provided by NNFP support the growth of business groups and grassroots organizations while promoting the well-being of the forest; helping them to create jobs while stewarding or restoring the forest. Their cooperative development work is distinctive in that it focuses exclusively on forest-related services including landowner cooperatives, forest products manufacturing, and forest-grown medicinal herbs.

Springing from a collection of forest workers, micro-enterprises, and grassroots organizations in the early 1990s, NNFP has become a force for sustainable business development and cooperative ownership. Originally founded in New Mexico, the NNFP is now based in foothills of the Appalachian mountains of Southeast Ohio, and focuses much of its efforts in Appalachia while remaining open

*Co-op forestry technician, Andy Ledin, plants white spruce on the edge of a woods and a field.
(Photo: Peter Hoffman)*



WITH THE TIMBER
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INFRASTRUCTURE.



to working as needed with other groups nationally. Its members include the Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative, the Ohio Forestry Cooperative, the Living Forest Cooperative, and the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperatives, among others, including a variety of blossoming efforts by people seeking ways in which to improve their livelihoods.

Environmentally conscious problem solving

With the timber industry in a freefall due to low housing starts, there are many cooperative education and support needs as communities look for ways to retain vital wood processing infrastructure. In particular, sustainable forestry groups are looking for assistance with marketing Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood. FSC is an international standard for sustainable forestry that gives local businesses a boost in marketing to Green Building projects.

“Our interest is in supporting ownership and entrepreneurship for a broader range of people,” explained Colin Donohue, NNFP Executive Director, “Business isn’t just for people with a large pool of money; everyday folks should be able to participate in ownership too.”

The association achieves its goals through a variety of media. One of these is a web-based peer learning program that facilitate exchanges of information and ideas to address problems faced by co-ops. Recent webinars have been focused specifically on ensuring the economic survival of member cooperatives in light of the deteriorating economy.

Promoting financial success

“Currently our biggest project is helping people buckle down and get finances in order.” said Donohue. NNFP provides business planning and general technical assistance necessary to keep cooperative ventures afloat. This is achieved through the webinars, which not only allow for the free exchange of information, but also spares participants the costs and time of travel.

“[The webinars] are a much more effective way of sharing information,” explained Harry Groot, CEO of the Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative (BRFC) who participated in recent webinars aimed at the economic security of groups like BRFC. “We can share solutions and problems that we’ve been having or are going to have, and we come out of it with a prioritized laundry list of issues.”

The Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative, which helps sustain the Blue Ridge Forest while marketing local forest products, has benefitted significantly from the webinars, NNFP-hosted gatherings, and other assistance. By working with other cooperative forest industries nationwide, BRFC has been able to foresee potential business problems and develop methods of avoiding them. In the case of the web meetings, members are instantly connected to one another, becoming part of a network of related groups that are then able to collaborate with one another to achieve common goals.

“[The webinars] have broadened the network of resources we can get assistance from very effectively,” said Groot, “It’s a fantastic group to work with.”

Rita Simerly, Cooperation Works!

NEBRASKA COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Jim Crandall at 308-995-3889 or crandall3@unl.edu

The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center builds a strong, engaged, and sustainable network of people with access to local, state, and national resources, dedicated to allowing people to prosper in rural Nebraska by helping them to work together to increase their incomes via cooperative development, and to help facilitate “value-added” opportunities.

Nebraska Center Educates Co-op Board Members

The Nebraska Cooperative Development Center located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, serves a statewide rural audience with assistance and educational programs. NCDC has developed three levels of training for Board of Directors of new or existing cooperatively owned businesses, in conjunction with the Nebraska Cooperative Council.



Mike Williams, President of Gothenburg State Bank, works with participants of the NCDC Board of Director training program. Mr. Williams discusses how a new cooperatively owned business can successfully work with their local bank.

These trainings are offered twice a year and focus on the role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, legal obligations of the Board, understanding financial documents, the Board’s role in education of the members, hiring and firing of management of the business, conducting an effective meeting and basic parliamentary procedure.

Additionally, NCDC held a workshop for professional business developers across the state including University Extension personnel, USDA RC&D Coordinators, and local/regional economic developers. This workshop reviewed best practices, where to find applicable resources to aid in business development, the use of the cooperative business model in a variety of business settings, and a review of the legal corporate structures are available in Nebraska.

The NCDC continues to work closely with a number of new business development projects involving Crandall local food systems, value added agriculture, and main street business retention and development in small rural communities.

Jim Crandall, UNL NCDC

NORTH DAKOTA RURAL ELECTRIC & TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Lori Capouch at 701-663-6501 or lcapouch@ndarec.com

Cooperative Brings Light to Members

The Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center adds new wealth to the economy by creating, retaining, and expanding rural cooperatives and other primary sector business enterprises in North Dakota through consultation, technical assistance, financing programs and education

The Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center has been providing federally-supported technical assistance to rural areas since 1994. Operating under the umbrella of NDAREC and the North Dakota Association of Telecommunications Cooperatives (NDATC), the Center has come to be recognized as a major development player in North Dakota.

NDAREC promotes and support development of cooperatives and economic development through consultation, technical assistance, financing programs and education.

The North Dakota center is networked with 17 electric cooperatives and 12 telecommunications co-ops in a statewide effort focusing on sustaining and growing rural areas. The local cooperatives assist the Center with rural development activities and community outreach. North Dakota's rural electric and telecommunications cooperatives have been providing matching funds for the Center since 1994.



Back Row: Pat Downs, Gary Hoffman. Seated: Drew Pandolfo and Lori Capouch.

For almost seventy years, People's Memorial Association (PMA), a non-profit in Seattle, has contracted with area funeral homes to provide simple, dignified, affordable cremation and burial options to its members in Washington. Due to corporate buyouts of local funeral homes, the organization found itself with no funeral provider willing to service its roughly 35,000 members living in Seattle.

Determined to create a member-owned funeral home, the board of PMA turned to the Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC) for advice. As an established organization with a large membership, financial services and paid staff, it had many advantages for getting this new co-op off the ground.

With the guidance of staff at NWCDC, within 3 months, a co-op was incorporated and licensed as a funeral home, moved into its new location on Seattle's Capitol Hill, and hired and trained its professional staff.

The funeral co-op opened its doors on June 11, 2007 and had business the first day.

In 2008, the funeral co-op handled over 1,000 funeral arrangements or approximately 1 in 12 Seattle deaths. In less than 2 years, PMFC is one of the largest-volume funeral homes in the State and the largest cooperative funeral home in North America.

The co-op offers significantly lower prices on cremation and burial arrangements and provides quality customer service to its members. In these lean economic times, families are increasingly price conscious when making funeral arrangements. The Co-op provides burial services at 1/3 to 1/4 the price of other Seattle funeral homes. The member price for cremation at the co-op is \$649 versus nearly \$3,000 at a traditional funeral home.

Despite offering drastically lower prices, the co-op showed a handsome increase in equity in 2008 and paid out over \$200,000 in patronage dividends to its members. In addition, it was able to bring staff up to a competitive wage scale and provide them with a complete benefits package.

PMFC is a model for consumers to take control of funeral prices and quality of service in the time of loss. Lifetime membership in PMFC is a mere \$25 and includes and funeral planning documents. For more info go to www.funerals.coop.

John Eric Rolfstad, PMFC

THE CO-OP OFFERS

SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER PRICES

ON CREMATION AND BURIAL

ARRANGEMENTS AND

PROVIDES QUALITY CUSTOMER

SERVICE TO ITS MEMBERS.

NORTHWEST COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Diane Gasaway at 360-943-4241 or diane@nwcddc.coop

The Northwest Cooperative Development Center is a nonprofit organization devoted to assisting new and existing cooperative businesses, from daycare centers to credit unions by providing access to information and tools that will enable effective governance and management.

Funerals Go Co-op

There are a variety of co-ops in the Northwest, but now a new model is on the scene: a co-op funeral home. In reaction to the increasing trend toward corporate ownership of funeral establishments, People's Memorial Funeral Cooperative (PMFC) was established in 2007.

OHIO COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Tom Snyder at 740-289-2071, ext. 220, or snyder.11@osu.edu

The Ohio Cooperative Development Center enhances economic development in rural Ohio by establishing new cooperatives and strengthening existing cooperatives statewide by applying cooperative development to foster economic viability and advancement of underserved and disadvantaged groups and communities.

Bigger Role Seen for Ohio Farmers' Markets

The popularity of farmers' markets and locally grown food is soaring nationally. According to the Farmers' Market Coalition, the number of farmers' markets in the United States has increased 40 percent during the past





Ohio Farmer's Market. (Photo: Cathy Rollison-Krist)

Ohio State University and Ohio Cooperative Development Center Support States' Co-ops

Farmers markets aren't the only co-ops receiving help from the OSU Extension and the Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC).

In the Appalachian region of Ohio – where low income, high unemployment and lack of opportunities stifle economic growth – an OSU program promotes rural development by pooling the resources, training and services for new and existing businesses. For nearly a decade, the OCDC office in Piketon has also been supporting rural economic development throughout southern Ohio by assisting busi-

nesses in developing cooperatives.

The goal, says OCDC's Snyder, is to encourage businesses that serve a common purpose to work together, especially in communities where cooperatives would have a significant impact on economic development and where they would be more cost efficient.

Cooperatives Promote Economic Development

OCDC has assisted in the formation of six new cooperatives, some of which target farmers' markets, manufacturing businesses and health-care services. The program operates through grants and funding from OSU Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. OCDC also recently received a \$200,000 grant from USDA Rural Development to continue its efforts.

"We've worked closely with the Ohio Cooperative Development Center to carry out the common mission of rural economic developing using the cooperative business model," says Randy Hunt, state director for USDA Rural Development in Ohio.

Snyder says some of the objectives of OCDC are to increase incomes and production, create employment opportunities and decrease out-migration from rural Ohio communities – in short, to ensure the region as an asset to Ohio's overall economic sustainability.

"In Appalachia Ohio, as opposed to more metro areas, unemployment is higher, the average household income is lower and community structure is not always conducive to business growth. Additionally, businesses tend to be smaller, so they have fewer opportunities to access resources individually," says Snyder. "We recognized these issues and realized that the keys to economic growth may lie in the ability to market as a group and increase business visibility for those seeking employment opportunities."

To help businesses achieve those goals, OCDC staff provides technical assistance and advisory services, conducts training programs, assists with information access, conducts feasibility studies, develops business plans, produces budget and cash flow documents, and participates in bylaw development.

Ohio State University Extension

decade. More than 3 million consumers shop at farmers' markets, spending more than \$1 billion annually.

A majority of farmers' markets are organized as cooperatives or operate on cooperative principles. Several efforts are underway in Ohio to help farmers' markets and their farmer-vendors boost the marketing of fresh, local foods. One program helps farmers' market managers, boards and vendor/producers in three main business functions: marketing, money/accounting and general management. Christie Welch, an OSU Extension farmers' market specialist with OSU South Centers at Piketon remarks: "This is a win-win for producers and consumers alike. The producers increase their financial stability, which helps maintain their farms, and the consumers have access to the fresh local foods they demand."

The program is designed to increase the knowledge, skills and abilities of the farmers' markets participating in the program. Training includes developing marketing plans, establishing producer standards, building a business plan, developing accounting systems, leveraging resources and conducting feasibility studies.

Statewide co-op formed to help farmers' markets

The Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC) in Piketon assisted with the formation of The Farmers' Market Management Network, a statewide cooperative formed in early 2008 to bring together managers, vendors and board members to improve Ohio's farmers' markets, both large and small. Specific goals include helping farmers' market managers determine common needs and collaborate to improve the cost effectiveness of their markets.

The cooperative is beginning work on two big projects, including creation of a farmers' market manual for new and emerging markets. It will identify best practices and needed resources for starting a farmers' market. The second project involves working closely with the Ohio Department of Agriculture to create consistent and reasonable regulations to maintain the highest level of food safety for consumers.

" THIS (PROGRAM) IS A WIN-WIN FOR PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS ALIKE. THE PRODUCERS INCREASE THEIR FINANCIAL STABILITY WHICH HELPS MAINTAIN THEIR FARMS, AND THE CONSUMERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE FRESH LOCAL FOODS THEY DEMAND."

**CHRISTIE WELCH,
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FARMERS UNION COOPERATIVE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

For information, contact Ben Rainbolt at 303-752-5800 or center.director@co-ops.org

Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Assists Goat Milk Cooperative

The Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Cooperative and Economic Development Center advances the cooperative model in order to foster sustainable human and economic development in the Rocky Mountain West. The Center is an innovative and accessible resource upon which citizens and communities can draw for ideas, resources and support to create innovative cooperative solutions to pressing economic and social challenges.

The Rocky Mountain Farmers Union (RMFU) Educational & Charitable Foundation Director Ben Rainbolt announced the award of a \$32,500 Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) from the USDA Rural Development division to Prairie Sunshine Products of La Junta, Colorado on August 11, 2008.

The grant is for development of a goat milk dairy cooperative in Otero County. "Prairie Sunshine Products is building a creamery in La Junta," Rainbolt said. "This RBEG money will fund a feasibility study and business plan for developing a network of milk suppliers on the co-op model. We are looking forward to helping build this exciting new business."

At full capacity, Prairie Sunshine's creamery can process milk from 5,000 goats into \$8 million in organic and



Milk goats graze in field.

natural goat cheese per year. So they are looking for more goats. The cooperative will consist of goat dairies across southern Colorado. The initial plan is to put together a group of ten dairies to supply milk to the creamery. The co-op will also help producers get certified organic.

"The market created by the creamery could create a half dozen new goat dairies and dozens of new jobs in rural southern Colorado," Rainbolt said. "The co-op model lets big operations and start-ups leverage resources so that everybody shares the risks and the rewards."

Prairie Sunshine began creamery operations this year. They have milk supply commitments that will meet their needs for the first year of operation. The co-op will help them move to their full capacity, producing 800 tons of goat cheese per year. And that takes 5,000 goats. "There are more than 40,000 goats in Colorado today," Rainbolt said. "And more than 300,000 dairy goats nationwide. Goat dairy products are a young, barely tapped market. It's a recipe for success."

2009 Calendar of Events

MAY

3-5
Cooperation Works!
Spring meeting
Washington, DC
cooperationworks.coop

5-7
NCBA Annual Meeting
& Co-op Conference
Washington DC
ncba.coop

5-7
NNFP Annual Meeting
and Conference:
Sustaining Rural
Communities and Forests
Missouri Ozarks
nnfp.org

JUNE

2-4
National Value-Added
Ag Conference
Moline, IL
nvaa2009.homestead.com

11-13
Consumer Cooperative
Management Association
Conference
Pittsburg, PA
peopleware.net/2723

20
Northeast Cooperative
Summit
Boston, MA
cabotcheese.com

21-23
CUNA's America's Credit
Union Conference & Expo
Boston, MA
cuna.org

22-23
NDAREC Annual Meeting
Bismark, ND
ndarec.com

JULY

14, 16, 21, 23
CW Professional Co-op
Development Training:
Worker Co-op Webinar
cooperationworks.coop

28-31
Association of
Cooperative Educators
Conference
Minneapolis, MI
ace.coop

31- Aug 2
Eastern Conference for
Workplace Democracy
Pittsburgh, PA
east.usworker.coop

AUGUST

15-16
California Co-op
Conference
San Francisco, CA
cccd.coop

SEPTEMBER
7-10
Western Worker Co-op
Conference
Breitenbush, OR
west.usworker.coop

13-16
NCBA 15th Annual Con-
ference for Purchasing
Cooperatives
Austin, TX
[ncba.coop/purchasing/
index.cfm](http://ncba.coop/purchasing/index.cfm)

OCTOBER

26-30
CW Professional Co-op
Development Training
Madison, WI
cooperationworks.coop

NOVEMBER
9-10
National Farmer
Cooperatives Conference
Saint Paul, MN
www.uwcc.wisc.edu

10
2009 Indiana
Cooperative Summit
Hendrix County, IN
<http://icdc.coop>

What's New, cont.

MELBAH SMITH, cont. from page 1

approves the final selection of award recipients. Steve Thomas, executive director of the Cooperative Development Foundation, notes that Melbah Smith and the four other 2009 inductees have contributed “solutions on how to succeed in any economic era, any region of the country and any economic sector, which is especially instructive in a down economy.” Thomas adds that the five Hall of Fame inductees’ “lives and accomplishments provide historical example for the cooperative community, and serve as a guide for the direction of future cooperators.”

Smith retired last fall from her dual appointments as executive director of the Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development and director of the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives. She devoted nearly 40 years to developing cooperatives in some of the most impoverished areas of the country. Her work helped bring health care, economic development and social justice to rural communities using the cooperative model. The Hall of Fame work acknowledges the service and contributions of Smith, who worked as a community organizer and co-op developer for the Mississippi Center’s parent non-profit,

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**SUSAN DAVIS
PRESIDENT OF CW**

the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund. Her recent cooperative development work helped bring immediate assistance and long-term cooperative education and development to areas of Mississippi devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

“Melba’s work has been invaluable to CW and really showcases how co-ops can be used to effectively contribute to bettering the lives of people,” says Susan Davis, president of CW.

Since Smith’s retirement last October, Myra Bryant was promoted to executive director of the Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development. Bryant has been active in CW and currently serves in the position of member-at-large of the Leadership Circle.

“The mark of a truly great leader can be seen in the way Melbah’s legacy is continuing since her retirement. Because of Melbah’s kind and caring leadership skills, the great work she has contributed is being carried on

by Myra Bryant and others at the Mississippi Center for Cooperative Development,” Davis says.

E. Kim Coontz, Cooperation Works!

TURBULENT TIMES, cont. from page 1

into existing co-ops and with co-ops specifically serving youth.

Michael Bowie is a graduate student with co-op development project. Michael was employed at a Community Development Corporation that was struggling with empty home ownership units in Worcester, Massachusetts, a city with over 2000 foreclosures last year. He realized that his hometown would benefit from a co-operative solution. Because his boss had previously been involved with a failed co-op housing project, the employer and others were quick to shrug off a co-op proposal.

We do not discount the value of starting a new business when one fails. So why, Bowie asked, do people reject co-op solutions when one fails? He conducted a survey of young community activists and found that they wanted to develop co-op community housing. He is working with a group of young people to acquire a property for a new housing cooperative while also developing a small housing cooperative for the Stone Soup Artist Activist Collective and Community Resource Center.

**FOUNDED IN 1982 AND WITH
OVER 2,500 GRADUATES FROM
OVER 100 COUNTRIES, SCED
IS RECOGNIZED BOTH
NATIONALLY AND
INTERNATIONALLY AS A
LEADER IN ADVANCING THE
CREATION OF JUST AND
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES.**

Lisa Stolarski and Andi Shively are both students from Pennsylvania. Andi is interning with SCED’s Center for Cooperatives and Community Economic Development to create a web-based resource site for cooperative developers. Lisa is a consultant with Keystone Development Center. She is interning with the National Cooperative Business Association to identify resources for supporting urban co-op development.

The goal of SCED educators is to strengthen the student’s “tool bag.” Their communities are the case material and beneficiaries of what they learn. Founded in 1982 and with over 2,500 graduates from over 100 countries, SCED is recognized both nationally and internationally as a leader in advancing the creation of just and sustainable communities. A variety of advanced degrees are offered at the main campus in New Hampshire and satellite campuses in Los Angeles, Tanzania, and the Philippines. Alumni build affordable housing, run community-development financial institutions, promote cooperatives and microenterprise

programs, and develop commercial projects and small businesses in low-income communities.

For more information about the school, go to <http://www.snhu.edu/388.asp>.

