

MACC VOICE

October 2014 Newsletter



Mid America Cooperative Council

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October is 2014 "Co-op Month"

Co-op Month has been celebrated annually in October across the United States for 50 years. The theme identified by the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) for 2014 is "The Co-op Connection. How Does Your Co-op Connect?" This basic message is an invitation to our co-ops to promote the many ways that we work together, connect our members and collaborate with other co-ops and organizations to build stronger, more sustainable communities.



Here are some interesting facts about "Co-op Month":

- Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.
- Co-op Month has been a nationally recognized celebration since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.
- The first national theme in 1964 was "Cooperatives: USDA Helps Build a Better America."
- The U.S. Government sponsored Co-op Month from 1964-1970.
- Since 1971, cooperatives, statewide associations, and the **National Cooperative Business Association** have fueled their own events and promotions. **Cooperative Network** annually develops a custom theme, logo, and campaign collateral for Co-op Month.

America is home to more than 30,000 cooperatives, including farmer, rural utility, credit/financial services, food stores, housing and many other types of cooperatives. To get an idea of just how flexible the co-op business model is in meeting virtually any need, see the **Co-op Month special section of the Sept.-Oct. issue of USDA's "Rural Cooperatives" magazine at: www.rurdev.usda.gov (under the "Spotlights" section of the home page).**



Here are some ways your co-op can celebrate Co-op Month and promote the difference that cooperative enterprise makes:

- Put a Co-op Month story in your newsletter, on your website/blog posts, or send a Co-op Month press release to local press promoting how your co-op builds connections with the wider cooperative movement.
- Include Co-op Month core messaging in your co-op's Advertising.
- Share the "What is a Co-op? Our Co-op and the Wider Cooperative Movement" presentation with your co-op's staff, board, and/or members. For a customized version, email: info@nfca.coop.
- Promote Other Co-ops in Your Area by inviting farmer co-ops, worker co-ops, energy co-ops, etc., to share information at your co-op or at a co-op event.

(excerpts from <http://www.cooperativenetwork.coop/wm/events/coopmonth/web/coopmonth.html>, <http://nfca.coop/co-opmonth> and <http://blogs.usda.gov/tag/national-cooperative-month/>)

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How MACC Members Are Celebrating “Co-op Month” and “Co-op Week”

The Ohio Credit Union League, in partnership with the Ohio Credit Unions for Kids Steering Committee, is taking part in a nationwide effort by credit unions called Shop for Miracles Day. On October 16, participating Ohio credit unions will donate a designated dollar amount for every debit and credit card transaction on that day to the local Children's Miracle Network Hospital. **For more information, click on the following link: <http://www.cu4kids.org/ShopForMiracles>**

Southern Loggers Cooperative 10th Anniversary - Todd Martin, Executive Director/CEO of the Southern Loggers Cooperative explains that on October 15, 2004; the Southern Loggers Cooperative was formed in the small town of Winnfield, Louisiana with one fueling location, 9 members and around 50,000 gallons produced the first full year. On October 15, 2014, they will celebrate 10 years of existence and now sit at 22 locations with 3 additional locations to be added by the end of the year, over 1730 members, and will approach 26 million gallons produced out of their stations for the year of 2014. The main office is in Pineville, Louisiana. However, they have fueling locations for loggers and farmers in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Virginia, and Ohio. There are members in 14 states. **For more information, visit their website at www.southernloggers.com.**

In recognition of “Cooperative Week”, **Beacon Credit Union** reports that Credit Unions have reached and surpassed 100 million memberships nationwide - equivalent to one of every three Americans. The 100 million count is based on credit union data collected and compiled by the Credit Union National Association, Washington, D.C., and Madison, WI, in its June “Monthly Credit Union Estimates.” CUNA estimates that credit union memberships expanded by 2.9% from June 2013 to June 2014, and the 100 million mark was achieved in June. **Credit unions added 2.85 million additional memberships over the past year—the largest reported increase in more than a quarter century.**

Farm Credit Mid-America’s “Focus On Cooperative Month”, explains how the celebration is an opportunity each year to recognize the value of the cooperative business model and to appreciate the important role that cooperatives play in the daily lives of millions of people, and their economic contributions. **The Farm Credit System, itself, is a network of cooperatives:** four banks and 78 regional lending associations are each structured as a cooperative, adhering to the seven cooperative principles that include ownership by their customers and governance by a democratically elected board.

Chris Dilley of Peoples Food Co-op of Kalamazoo explains how they are promoting “Co-op Month”:

- “1. We are promoting cooperatives in the store, with an entire end cap of products from Equal Exchange, a cooperative manufacturer of chocolate, coffee and tea.
2. We are hosting our Second Annual Co-optoberfest on October 29, 3-7 PM in the parking lot. This is a wrap up to our 100-Mile Market season.
3. We are talking in our email newsletter about cooperative principles.”

Lisa Staggs Herrman with Butler Rural Electric Cooperative - “We decided to provide cookies from our local food cooperative to our electric cooperative members who visit our office on Fridays and due dates in October. We also gave all of our 48 employees a cookie with the Cooperative tag attached to it. Our purpose was to educate our members about the other kinds of cooperatives and also to support our local food cooperative.”

Rod’s Thoughts

Co-op Month is our cooperative community’s opportunity to tell the world how wonderful it is to own, control and reap the benefits of our cooperative businesses. Our goal is for everyone to benefit from our mutually owned businesses.

I recently attended the ICA Summit in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. The conference brought all types of cooperative leaders together from around the globe. It may surprise you that our 29,000 U.S. cooperatives employ over 2 million people and generate over \$650 billion in revenues. In the Quebec Province, more than 7 of 10 citizens are cooperative members.

The International Cooperative Alliance is following up their “2012 Year of Cooperatives” campaign with an ambitious plan of a “Blueprint – Achieving the 2020 Vision.” This vision is big and has three core goals;

1. To be the acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability
2. To be the model preferred by the people
3. To be the fastest growing form of enterprise

We have much work to be done. One of the conference speakers indicated their research showed over 70% of the general public could not name one cooperative. Our work begins at our front door with our employees and member/owners. The ICA Blueprint for achieving these goals has five themes with Principle #5 “Education & Training” connecting each one. “Identity” is the one theme we are emphasizing for this Co-op Month. You are welcome to reference the ICA web site: <http://ica.coop/en/blueprint-themes/identity> for additional ideas. MACC prefers the simple twin pines logo for all cooperatives to begin the brand identity discussion for your cooperative. **We encourage you to ask your employees and members how they have benefited from your cooperative.**

2014 MAC-ED PROGRAM CALENDAR

Co-ops101 Classes

November 6 Louisville, KY Farm Credit Mid-America

Co-op Credit Conference

October 16-17 Indianapolis, IN Holiday Inn North/Carmel

CFO Essentials Conference

November 19-20 Indianapolis, IN Embassy Suites North

CFO/Controller Conference

November 20-21 Indianapolis, IN Embassy Suites North

2015 MAC-ED PROGRAM CALENDAR

Co-ops101 Classes

June 25 Louisville, KY Farm Credit Mid-America

September 17 Louisville, KY Farm Credit Mid-America

November 5 Louisville, KY Farm Credit Mid-America

Cooperative Leadership Forum

February 18-19 Oxford, OH Miami University

March 3-4 Oxford, OH Miami University

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