

MACC VOICE

April-May 2015 Newsletter



Mid America Cooperative Council

Mid America Cooperative Council
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The 7 Cooperative Principles



The 7 Cooperative Principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership; without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. Cooperative members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and elect the board of directors who will lead their cooperative.

3. Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5. Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6. Cooperation among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

(excerpts from <http://ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>)

[How MACC Provides Its Members with Education, Training and Information \(Cooperative Principle #5\)](#)

The Mid America Cooperative Council (MACC) is a multi-state, non-profit trade association founded in January 2003, by a group of like-minded individuals. These individuals understood the impact cooperative principles have on the sustainability of co-ops, yet they began to see a widespread erosion of co-op knowledge among co-op communities. The founders also wanted to address the lack of unique co-op educational resources available in the Midwestern region. Members co-aligned and co-created MACC, filling this advocacy gap. MAC-Ed is a subsidiary 501c3 that concentrates on the educational aspects of MACC.

Why Cooperative Education is So Important

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Cooperative education is one of the most crucial yet least understood elements of co-ops, in general. At times it seems as if education is merely tolerated because there is a "co-op principle" of continuing education, with all too many co-op boards, managers and co-op educators not really knowing quite what to do with it. Co-op education enables cooperative employees, member/owners, board members, etc.; to gain the knowledge needed to grow and sustain their cooperatives. This education also enables class attendees to teach their outlying communities about the advantages of their interaction with their cooperative.

2015 MACC Financial Conferences

2015 Co-op Credit Conference

The 2015 Co-op Credit Conference will take place on October 8-9, 2015 at the Holiday Inn North/Carmel in Indianapolis, IN. This two day program is well-suited to the needs and time demands of co-op credit and collection professionals, and those involved in the process. The program focuses on current challenges in farm credit markets and is tailored for our agri-business industry, along with a discussion of the industry outlook for the near future. 9 CPE credits are available for this conference.

Comments from past conference attendees include:

- “Sessions had good content, yet interaction with other co-op credit professionals is still the most valuable aspect of the experience”
- “Very good mixture of topics.”
- “Good speakers and good information.”

2015 CFO Essentials Conference & CFO/Controller Conference

The 2015 CFO Essentials and CFO/Controller Conferences will take place November 4-6, 2015 at the Marriott East, 7202 E 21st St., in Indianapolis, IN. These two conferences will take place back-to-back, with the CFO Essentials Conference on November 4-5 and the CFO/Controller Conference on November 5-6.

The CFO Essentials Conference teaches the integrated view of co-op finance management. This two-day program qualifies for 8 CPE credits and includes methods for:

1. Managing Liquidity
2. Measuring Financial Risk
3. Developing Multiple Borrowing Reports
4. Debt and Equity Management Policies
5. Topics Driven by Annual Steering Committees

The CFO/Controller Conference is customized annually to deliver fresh and relevant topics to address the current economic trends and climate. This conference features top-tier industry speakers and qualifies for 8 CPE credits. Topics include:

1. Equity Structure
2. Patronage
3. Revolving Equity
4. Fraud
5. Managing Financial Risk

Comments from past conference attendees include:

- “It was very interesting and was presented very well by giving background and basics.”
- “It was time well spent, interesting topics and great speakers.”
- “Information I will use over and over again.”

To learn more about these three MACC Financial Conferences, or to register, please visit the MACC website at: <http://macc.coop/>.

Rod's Thoughts



The Mid America Cooperative Council was formed to provide cooperative education for the cooperative business community. It is **Cooperative Principle #5: Education, Training and Information**. On first glance, we may think this is all about informing member/owners what it means to be a cooperative. However, it is much more. We, as cooperative leaders, have a significant responsibility to the member/owners we serve by giving them the knowledge to sustain their businesses.

Education is both the process of educating, as well as the knowledge that comes from being educated. This is an important distinction. To learn what Cooperative Principle #5 is, we must first embrace the process of being educated as well as open to the knowledge that comes from that education experience. Frequently, I speak with cooperative leaders from many different cooperative sectors. Often times, they tell me their members and board of directors who represent those members “don’t care that we are a cooperative.” They only want quality products and services, at a fair price. Cooperative Principle #5, first, values education because we have a responsibility to the process of educating and being educated. To reject this principle is to say we have learned all we need, and that nothing more can be gained from the process of education.

Secondly, the product or result of the process of being educated is knowledge. Every day we learn new ways of applying knowledge. Most recognize that with a changing world around us, it is good to rethink our processes and be open to change when a new way provides a better result.

While I hear from many cooperative leaders that their members don’t care about cooperative education, I believe they are only telling me that their cooperative is a complicated business. Perhaps, their cooperative is not ready to fully embrace Cooperative Principle #5, because it requires being open to change through the process of education. Many times, cooperative leadership is comfortable with the way things are, at present, and think “why should we complicate things?”

When I signed on to manage an association focused on cooperative education, I also agreed to be a steward of cooperative education. When other cooperative leaders accepted their board of director or employee role for their cooperative, they also agreed to be a steward for what is best for their member/owners.

The constant change needed is **Cooperative Principle #5; Education, Information and Training**. As we embrace the new life of spring, let us also look for opportunities to be the best stewards for our cooperatives. **You have my commitment to be a steward of cooperative education, for our members and the cooperative community.**



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