

# Co-operative Spotlight

April 2010

An overview of  
Saskatchewan co-operative sector  
news and activities

## Co-op Camp Registrations at Critically Low Levels : We Need Your Help!

With less than that 3 months before the start of this year's Co-op Camps registrations are at a critically low level. Program Officer Heather Hale notes, "Registrations are down significantly this year. If levels do not increase soon we will be forced to cancel some of the camps. We need your help to find youth to attend."

In addition to posters in co-ops, credit unions, school and community organizations, we will soon have a promotional TV commercial airing on Access, Global and CTV, as well as numerous YouTube, Facebook and Twitter activities and other promotional efforts. But we need you to help up reach youth, as 70% of participants register through word of mouth. So please help us find this year's crop of Co-op Campers!

Founded in 1928, Co-op Camps are a great opportunity for youth ages 12 -18 from across Saskatchewan to meet new people, develop leadership skills and learn more about co-operatives. If you know a youth age 12-18 who you think would benefit from attending Co-op Camp please share this information with them! Registration forms are available online at <http://youth.sask.coop>

Saskatchewan  
Co-operative  
Youth Program

sask.coop  
or at local  
co-operatives,  
credit unions  
and schools.

## UN International Day of Co-operatives: "Co-operative Enterprise Empowers Women"

United Nations International Day of Co-operatives is celebrated annually on the first Saturday of July. It underscores the contribution of the co-operative movement to resolving global issues addressed jointly by the co-operative movement and the United Nations.

This year's theme highlights how the co-operative model of enterprise can successfully empower women. It links to the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+15) which sets out an agenda for women's empowerment.

Co-operatives have a key role to play as they are able to respond to both women's practical and strategic needs. Whether it be through women only co-operatives or co-operatives made up of women and men, they offer an effective organizational means for women members and employees to raise their living standards by accessing decent work opportunities, savings and credit facilities, health, housing

and social services, and education and training. Co-operatives also offer women opportunities for participation in and influence over economic activities. Women gain self-reliance and self-esteem through this participation. Co-operatives also contribute to the improvement of the economic, social and cultural situation of women in other ways including promoting equality and changing institutional biases.

International Day of Co-operatives  
Journée Internationale des Coopératives  
Día Internacional de las Cooperativas  
2010



Its aim is to increase awareness on co-operatives and promote the movement's successes and ideals of international solidarity, economic efficiency, equality, and world peace. The International Day also aims to strengthen and extend partnerships between the international co-operative

movement and other actors, including governments, at local, national and international levels.

Source: <http://www.ica.coop/activities/idc.html>

## Youth program helps local teen gain confidence

Many good things have come from Zachary Hoggarth's Co-operative Youth summer camp experiences he says, not the least of which has been gaining self-confidence.

Hoggarth has lived in Whitewood since 2000, leaving last fall for Regina where he is taking a two-year Graphic Communications course at SIAST Wascana, an interest, he says, that was sparked by working on the Whitewood School Yearbook as well as "playing around" with photos.



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## Youth - Continued from page 1

His uncle first told him about the annual Co-operative summer camps where students not only enjoy swimming, games and social events, but also gain confidence by mastering teamwork, leadership, co-operation, and communication skills.

"I've become better at public speaking," says Hoggarth who has gone to four summer camps over the past few years and will go again this year, but this time as a staff member, "and I'm more random than I was before," he explains. He also says he's met lots of people and has been able to get to know them better because of his time at camp. Some of their sessions included things like public speaking, skits and ice-breakers that help everyone become more at ease with others.

The summer camp program is one of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association's programs and camp participants are sponsored by various co-operatives including credit unions like Conexus who has sponsored Hoggarth in the past. The camps are held at Candle Lake and according to Alesha Goodwin of the Sask. Co-operative Youth Program (SCYP), participants focus on personal growth during their time at camp and SCYP encourages their active involvement in community and co-operative organizations. Of Hoggarth, Goodwin says, "He is truly a remarkable young adult." Source: Whitewood Herald

## Online Registration Available for CCA Congress

The Canadian Co-operative Association and the British Columbia Co-operative Association invite you to beautiful Vancouver from June 14-16, 2010 for one of the foremost learning and networking events for the Canadian co-operative sector. Join leaders from co-operatives and credit unions across the country and around the world in exploring, learning and strategizing on co-operating for environmental, organizational and social sustainability.

Highlights of this year's Congress include:

- Tour of local co-ops
- Welcome reception
- Keynote speech by John Helliwell, Professor Emeritus of Economics at UBC, and one of the world's foremost experts on people's happiness and well-being
- Keynote speech by world-renowned co-operative economist Stefano Zamagni
- Gala Dinner and awards presentation
- Governance Awards luncheon
- A full day of workshops highlighting best practices in co-op sustainability
- CCA and BCCA Annual General Meetings

For Congress program, online registration and more information, go to <http://tinyurl.com/CCACongress2010>.

## Amalgamations Topic of Co-op Network Lunch

Co-operative Network of Saskatoon luncheons are a great way to get out of the office, meet new people and learn something about co-operatives, too. At the May 6th luncheon, Dwayne Pattison will be addressing the topic of **Retail Co-op Amalgamations: Doing Business in the Rural West**. Although amalgamations among retail co-operatives have occurred in Western Canada for over fifty years, little research has examined the impact of these changes. This study is a starting point for understanding how co-operative members, boards, and managers are affected by the new arrangements. Of particular interest is what amalgamations have meant for co-operative governance models; membership identity, loyalty and participation; and service provision and innovation.

Location: Western Development Museum, 2610 Lorne Avenue South  
Time: Noon, Thursday, May 6th, 2010  
Cost: \$15 per person

Pre-register by 12 noon on Tuesday, May 4. Contact Saskatchewan Co-operative Association at [sca@sask.coop](mailto:sca@sask.coop) or call 244-3702.

## Education Bursaries Accepting Applications

Two educational bursaries are accepting applications. For more information, please visit [http://www.sask.coop/whats\\_new.html](http://www.sask.coop/whats_new.html).

### *Sid Bildfell Business Education Bursary*

To be awarded to a business student, studying administration, commerce or finance in the province of Saskatchewan. This bursary has been established in recognition of Sid Bildfell's 41 years of contribution, leadership and vision to SaskCentral and the credit union system. Sid always impressed the importance of education and lifelong learning.

The Sid Bildfell Business Education Bursary provides \$5,000 each year to be awarded to a business student, studying administration, commerce or finance in the province of Saskatchewan. The application deadline is May 31, 2010.

### *Norm Bromberger Research Bursary*

Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan is pleased to announce the 16th Annual Norm Bromberger Research Bursary to be awarded in support of research relating to co-operatives and/or credit unions. This bursary has been established in recognition of the outstanding contributions made by Norm Bromberger to the development of credit unions and co-operatives in Saskatchewan and across Canada. The Norm Bromberger Research Bursary will provide \$2,000 each year to encourage research in the area of co-operatives and credit unions. Application deadline is June 30, 2010.

# FARM Program Aids Co-operative Development in Ukraine

by Wayne Thrasher

In September 2009, I travelled to Ukraine to undertake a co-operative development training project funded by the Facility for Agricultural Reform and Modernization (FARM) program. Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) under the management of Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP), the program included a component aimed at promoting the expansion and development of co-operatives. The governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were also partners, providing most of the human resources for the individual projects.

This was my second FARM Project in Ukraine, the first being in Simferopol, Crimea in April 2007. This trip took me to the Rivine and Luts'k regions of western Ukraine. The program focused on the delivery of training in "Co-operative Development Processes" to FARM Project Extension Specialists and representatives of local co-operatives.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of Ukraine as an independent republic, Ukrainians have struggled to address the problems of their past and the challenges of the future. My two visits represent these challenges. Crimea is primarily Russian and continues to look east to Russia for its future, while western Ukraine is very nationalistic and seeks greater connections with the west.

Ukraine is also divided by the few who have gained great wealth and primarily live in modern Kyiv and the rest who face the challenges of a rising cost of a living and an economy made weaker by the economic down turn of 2008-09. While in Kyiv, there are Rolls Royces, Bentleys and Mercedes; in rural

**...They are truly committed to the principles of co-operation and believe they are building better opportunities for themselves, their community and their country.**

Ukraine there are old trucks and horse drawn vehicles. In the 1990's state farms were divided up and ownership transferred to local residents, but it was soon apparent that the small plots of land were not sufficient to sustain a viable and modern agriculture. The FARM program was established to

provide Extension Services in designated *blasts* (provinces) to develop technical skills needed to farm the land and organizational and business skills to support them building a viable agricultural economy. This includes support for the development of co-operatives.

FARM has supported the establishment of co-operatives to share farm equipment, build storage facilities, establish local

markets and a variety of other activities aimed at improving the economic well being of rural citizens. Many are trying to rebuild the old state farm infrastructure to help meet their needs. The work shop participants were attentive with many challenging questions and much enthusiasm. When they started to discuss things I

sometimes thought they were arguing but I was told that was just normal conversation for Ukrainians.

I was able to meet with co-operative leaders at their co-ops providing me with first hand experience with the challenges and approaches that the different co-operatives have taken. I

learned in my informal conversations about the particular challenges they faced and was struck by their optimism and enthusiasm. I sometimes almost forgot we were speaking different languages thanks to my translator Yuri. I even learned how to drink vodka, Ukrainian style, although I could not keep up to the locals. They were very hospitable and sometimes we ended up having two lunches a day.

Ukraine is a country with a rich culture but an often tragic past. Its history as a conquered nation has left it with many challenges but the people I met were still optimistic and forward looking. They are truly committed to the principles of co-operation and believe they are building better opportunities for themselves, their community and their country. The FARM program ended on March 31, 2010 but I do hope I have another opportunity to work in Ukraine.



*Installing new milking equipment in old state farm building*



*Lunch at Milky River Farm Co-op 1*



*The author in Kyiv*

## SCA Dates to Remember

### **Nomination Deadline for Co-operative Merit Awards and Young Leaders Award - May 1, 2010**

Awards are presented in the following categories:

- Lifetime Co-operative Achievement Award
- Co-operative Contribution Award
- Co-operative Enterprise Award
- Co-operative Young Leaders Award

The awards will be presented during National Co-op Week in October, at a banquet attended by co-operative and credit union leaders and members, and provincial government representatives.

Nomination forms are available on our website: [http://www.sask.coop/co-op\\_merit\\_awards.html](http://www.sask.coop/co-op_merit_awards.html).

### **Advanced Co-op Developer Training -**

**DATE CHANGE: May 11 - 13, 2010**

**Registration deadline: Friday April 23, 2010**

For the first time ever, this training will be held in Saskatoon, and will be facilitated by Marty Frost and Melanie Conn, from Devco Development Co-operative, both of whom possess extensive experience developing co-ops and training emerging co-op developers.

This three-day seminar is designed for those who already have a basic command of co-operative development and have a desire to increase their skill set in assisting groups through the development process.

Registration forms are available on the What's New page of our website: [http://www.sask.coop/whats\\_new.html](http://www.sask.coop/whats_new.html).

### **15th Annual Co-op Classic - July 9, 2010**

Registration and sponsorship information will be hitting your inbox in the very near future. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this great fundraiser at Harbor Golf Club & Resort at Elbow, Saskatchewan. Confirmed sponsors for this year's event are Concentra Financial, The Co-operators, Saskatchewan Credit Unions, Muenster Credit Union, CGI and Globe Printers. All proceeds are split between the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program.

## Core Neighborhood Youth Co-op Fundraiser

The Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) is holding its annual fund-raising auction and supper on Thursday May 6th, 2010. You can support the important work of CNYC by donating an item for the live/silent auction, attending the event or making a cash donation.

CNYC offers skills building and alternative education programs that meet the needs of youth in the inner city of Saskatoon. The goals and objectives of the CNYC include helping youth who are out of school to get back into a school program, teaching these youth job and life skills while helping them develop strategies to deal with issues of homelessness, addictions, violence, criminal activity and gang involvement. For information or tickets, contact CNYC at 665-3889.

## Conexus, Innovation and Synergy Credit Unions Consider Merger

The Boards of Directors of Conexus, Innovation and Synergy Credit Unions have agreed to evaluate the potential of a three way merger. If approved by membership, the newly formed organization would boast over \$6 billion in assets and serve 194,000 members in 85 credit union branches, 11 insurance offices, six real estate offices and six mortgage brokerage offices across Saskatchewan.

The idea of a province-wide merger among the three credit unions is described by the boards of directors in a Message to Membership as exciting for members and staff. Members will experience an increased number of service locations and an enhanced service delivery network. All current employees would have a place in a new, larger credit union that would give them the opportunity to look at a variety of career paths within the organization, if that is what they choose.

The Boards of the Credit Unions will proceed with an evaluation of the merger opportunity. Should there be agreement that this is the best option for members, they would engage in open dialogue with members and move towards ratification of the recommendation. As always, the members would have the final say through a democratic vote. Timelines and next steps will be communicated to our membership as they become available. Source: <https://www.conexus.ca/>

## Manitoba Budget Includes Co-op Tax Credit

There was great news for the Manitoba Cooperative Association in the recent Manitoba budget. The Minister of Finance announced the creation of the Cooperative Enterprise Development tax credit. This is based on the proposal submitted and subsequent meeting the Manitoba Cooperative Association had with the Ministers of Finance and Housing and Community Development. Details of the new tax credit are still being worked out.

Also worthy of note is the creation of a tax on Manitoba credit unions. Vera Goussaert, Executive Director of Manitoba Co-operative Association commented, "As credit unions are the only financial institution in 68 communities in Manitoba, it is surprising that CUs are being singled out in this way. I am sure that Credit Union Central of Manitoba will be providing more information and analysis on this tax as we move forward." Source: Manitoba Co-operative Association