

# Co-operative Spotlight

January 2010

An overview of  
Saskatchewan co-operative sector  
news and activities

## UN Proclaims 2012 International Year of Co-operatives

Canada's co-operative sector is celebrating a recent decision by the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives.

The proclamation of the International Year was included in a resolution entitled "Co-operatives in Social Development", which was adopted by the General Assembly at a December 18, 2009 session in New York. The full text of the resolution can be downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/InternationalYear>.

Since 1959, the UN has designated International Years in order to draw attention to major issues and to encourage international action to address concerns which have global importance.

"At a time when so many people around the world have a heightened interest in doing business with organizations whose values reflect their own, raising awareness of co-operatives and what they stand for is very important," said Kathy Bardswick, president and CEO of The Co-operators, who was recently elected to represent

Canada on the board of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).



"The International Year of Co-operatives is an opportunity for people everywhere to learn more about this diverse group of organizations that contribute so much to economies and communities in virtually every corner of the world."

On December 3, 2009, the federal government announced its support for the UN resolution, the first time a Canadian government has officially expressed its support for a UN International Year before it was proclaimed. "Our government fully recognizes the importance of co-operatives and their contribution to Canadian society," said the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National

Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), at a news conference in Ottawa.

Carol Hunter, executive director of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), said Canadian co-operative

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## Mark Your Calendars for the Sno-Dome Classic!

SCA's second annual Sno-Dome Classic will be held February 26th, 2010, at the Ramada Hotel Golf Dome in Saskatoon.

Sno-Dome Classic promises to be a fun-filled event featuring an afternoon of indoor golf games, prizes, networking with colleagues, and a silent auction. Proceeds from this FUN-draiser will support co-operative development in Saskatchewan and around the world through the work of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program (SCYP) and the Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF).

This year, SCA invites sponsors to choose a sponsorship package that includes the Sno-Dome and the Co-op Classic in July. Sign up to sponsor both events and get a great deal! Watch for registration and sponsorship information in your inbox soon, or call SCA at 244-3702 for more information.

## 2010 Co-op Camp Promotions Underway!

Summer 2010 is just around the corner, and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program staff are busy getting promotional items distributed to our members and friendly supporters. This year's theme is *Choose Your Own Adventure: Discover Co-op Camp!*

We are excited about this year's posters and brochures and hope you will find prominent places to display them. Remember to contact us if you need more brochures. New this year, we have included a spot on the back of the brochure for you to add your organization's contact information to make it easier to connect youth and sponsors.

Some new communication activities we are undertaking include regular "tweets" from Program Officer Heather Hale (follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter/coopcamps](http://www.twitter/coopcamps)). You might also be interested in viewing our YouTube channel (SCYPclips) or become a Co-op Camp fan on Facebook by searching Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program.

Camps are being offered at the Junior, Introductory and Intermediate levels. Graduate level camp is also offered to those who have successfully completed the Intermediate level. See the brochure, or visit our website (<http://youth.sask.coop>) for this year's camp dates. Stay tuned for more updates!



## Scott Banda Appointed CEO of Federated Co-ops Ltd.

The Board of Directors of Federated Co-operatives Limited is pleased to announce the appointment of Scott Banda as Chief Executive Officer of FCL effective February 8, 2010. Mr. Banda joined FCL in 2002 as the Legal Affairs Manager, and has held the position of Vice-President - Corporate & Legal Affairs since November 2004.

Following graduation from the University of Saskatchewan Law School in 1990, Mr. Banda articulated and practiced in Saskatoon. He later served as the General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Saskatchewan Crown Investments Corporation and was the Manager, Legal Affairs and Corporate Secretary with COGEMA Resources Inc. prior to joining FCL in 2002. Mr. Banda also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Saskatchewan and has done work on his Master of Arts in History. He is a graduate of the Banff School of Advanced Management. He is also a graduate and former Program Assistant of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program.

Source: Federated Co-operatives, January 25, 2010

## Remembering Cecil Smokey Robson

The passing of Mr. Cecil Smokey Robson, age 90 years of Saskatoon, SK, occurred on Tuesday, January 5th, 2010. Smokey was born and raised in Truro, Nova Scotia. In 1940, he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force, served for six years and survived 33 tours. He worked for the co-op fisheries, then in 1955 moved to Saskatoon and worked for Federated Co-op. He was one of the founding members and the administrator of the Saskatoon Community Clinic. He served on numerous boards and volunteer positions. Smokey was awarded the Co-operative Certificate of Merit in 1981. He is survived by his children and grandchildren.

Source: Remembering.ca



## FCL Reports Solid Year in 2009

Despite a year marked by economic uncertainty, Federated Co-operatives Limited announced on December 16, 2009, that it had achieved sales of \$6.5 billion and earnings of \$491.6 million in 2009. Over \$346.7 million was returned to member retail co-ops across Western Canada. Sales decreased by \$1.9 billion and earnings decreased by \$264 million over the previous year.

CEO Art Postle attributed the solid performance to the strength of the retail co-operative's marketing programs, the promotion of Co-op Membership Benefits, and to the growth of retail co-operative due to their continued commitment to raise their standards on facilities, merchandising and selection, and service excellence by over 19,000 dedicated employees.

"By working together, FCL and the retail co-operatives that own FCL have achieved remarkable results in a year of economic uncertainty," said Postle.

Source: FCL news release, December 16, 2009

# \$1 Million SSHRC Grant Awarded for Research on Co-operatives

Study seeks to quantify social, economic and environmental impact of co-operatives

Canada's co-operative sector, in partnership with four Canadian universities, has been awarded funding of \$1 million over five years to conduct research on the social, economic and environmental impact of co-operatives.

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) announced January 21, 2010, that its application to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to create a Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) has been successful. The funding is conditional on SSHRC's review of CCA's "institutional eligibility" -- for example, confirmation of CCA's legal status, governance structure and financial statements -- but that is expected to take place in the near future.

SSHRC's CURA program supports the creation of alliances between community organizations and post-secondary institutions to foster innovative research, training and the creation of new knowledge in areas of importance for Canada's social, cultural or economic development.

John Anderson, CCA's Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy and the lead co-op sector researcher on the CURA project, said Canada's co-operative sector plays a significant role in helping Canadian communities meet social, economic and environmental challenges, but that the extent of that role has not been quantified.

"Members of the co-operative sector know that these enterprises have far-reaching impacts for their members and communities they serve, yet the true value of co-operative enterprise is not well understood," he said. "The research

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that will be conducted through the CURA aims to examine the full impact of co-operatives on Canada's

social, economic and environmental fabric, and demonstrate their value to Canadian communities."

CCA applied for the CURA in partnership with Saint Mary's University, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Victoria, and Mount Saint Vincent University, all of which are well-known for their research on co-operatives and the social economy. More than a dozen other co-operative associations, co-ops, credit unions and academic researchers will also participate in the CURA.

The SSHRC funding will amount to \$200,000 a year in each of the five years starting in April, 2010. The CURA will be managed by CCA in consultation with its partners and participants.

"We are very pleased that SSHRC recognized the value that this research will have, not only for the co-op sector but for all Canadians seeking a greater understanding of economic, social and environmental issues," Mr. Anderson said. "We look forward to working with our partners over the next five years on expanding, enhancing and promoting the body of research that is available on this important subject. The fact that 2012 has been proclaimed the International Year of Co-operatives by the United Nations makes this a particularly opportune time to carry out this initiative."

For more information about CURA, go to [www.coopscanada.coop/en/info\\_resources/CURA](http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/info_resources/CURA). Source: CCA news release, Jan. 21, 2010

## WHAT WILL BE STUDIED?

Dr. Sonja Novkovic, professor of economics at Saint Mary's University and the lead academic researcher for the project, said the CURA's research team will create a network of national and regional research clusters. These clusters will develop measurement tools and study topics such as the nature of the "co-operative difference" as it relates to social responsibility and accountability, the impact of member and employee participation on a co-operative's performance and the role of credit unions in building wealth. Additional topics will examine infrastructure support for co-operative development, how to replicate co-operative innovation and co-operative responses to market failures.

## Tell Us What You Think!

The Co-operative Merit Awards Program Committee is surveying past attendees of the event, to gain insight into changes that would make the event more useful for you. We would like to ensure the event provides a valuable experience for you and your co-operative, and provides a meaningful experience for co-operators that are being recognized for their contributions to the sector.

If you would like to participate in the survey, please go to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RQ7GDVP>. Survey deadline: February 1, 2010.

# Innovative Co-ops Celebrated in New Publication

SASKATCHEWAN'S AFFINITY CREDIT UNION AMONG THOSE FEATURED

A new Canadian Co-operative Association publication, *New futures: Innovative uses of the co-op model*, features twelve profiles of co-operatives that demonstrate the flexibility of the co-operative model and how it is being used in a wide variety of situations. Saskatoon-based Affinity Credit Union is profiled as an example of a credit union that is seeking to improve access to financial services for First Nations individuals, families and new businesses — and it's doing so in a way that respects their histories and cultures, and makes them full partners in the process.

Check out the entire list of innovative co-ops by downloading the publication from the CCA website:

<http://www.coopscanada.coop/>

As the publication's introduction states, "The profiles are a fragment of the nearly 9,000 co-operatives in Canada but they illustrate some of the creative uses of co-operative businesses in new and exciting ventures." Congratulations to Affinity Credit Union for their innovative work!

## Co-op Sector Represented in 50 Best Employer List

Canada's co-operative sector was well represented on this year's list of the "50 Best Employers in Canada" compiled by the international consulting firm Hewitt Associates.

The Co-operators ranked 18th on the list, while its subsidiary, Co-operators Life Insurance Company, was 32nd. Also making the list were Conexus (27), Coast Capital Savings Credit Union (40) and Envision Financial (42), now a division of First West Credit Union.



Co-sponsored by the Globe and Mail Report on Business Magazine, Hewitt Associates compiles the annual list, using the results of confidential surveys completed by employees.

The surveys gauge "employee engagement", which the firm describes as a measurement of employees' willingness to speak positively about their employer, their desire to work there, and the extra effort they are willing to exert to ensure the success of the company.

Source: CCA NewsBriefs, January 14, 2010

## CDF Supports Haitian Relief Efforts

### CO-OP SECTOR RESPONDS TO EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI

Co-operatives and credit unions in Canada and around the world are raising funds in response to the massive earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12.

The Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF) is working in partnership with the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU) to provide relief to those affected by the disaster.

"The people of Haiti already had difficult lives, and it's almost impossible to imagine the devastation the earthquake has brought them," said CDF President Wayne McLeod.

CDF is now accepting donations to provide assistance to Haiti's 175 credit unions and the nearly half-million members they serve. Donation can be made online at [www.cdfcanada.coop/pages/donation-form/](http://www.cdfcanada.coop/pages/donation-form/) or mail your donation to Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada, Suite 400, 275 Bank Street, Ottawa ON K2P 2L6.

Source: Co-operative News Briefs, January 14, 2010

## 8th Annual Food for Friends Raises over \$47,000

Access Communications and 94.5 Jack FM held their 8th annual Food for Friends fundraiser in December. The television/radio marathon was the largest to date in the event's eight years history and was a huge success, raising \$47,470 and several thousand pounds of food in support of the Regina & District Food Bank! This is the 8th and most successful year of the annual fundraiser which has raised over \$190,000 and over 65 tons of food in support of the Regina & District Food Bank since the event began.

Source: Access Communications news release, December 9, 2009

## INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATION, continued from page 1

leaders, together with partner organizations in Canada and around the world, will be working on a program of International Year activities aimed at highlighting the social and economic contributions of co-operatives, including credit unions.

"Co-operatives and credit unions in Canada have more than 17 million members, but most Canadians are unaware of their social and economic impact on this country as a whole and on rural and urban communities across Canada," she said. "The International Year will provide us with ample opportunities to generate awareness of that contribution, and to encourage people to organize themselves into co-operatives to address their own economic and social needs."

Source: CCA News release, December 18, 2009