

# Co-operative Spotlight

June 2011

An overview of Saskatchewan co-operative sector news and activities

## Saskatchewan Recognizes Retirement of Wayne Thrasher

An evening event was held for Wayne, with his wife Peggy at the Hotel Saskatchewan on June 16, 2011. There was a good mix of friends and colleagues from the co-operative sector, Enterprise Saskatchewan and other ministries. It was a night all will remember fondly.

Wayne began his 30 plus year career with the Government of Saskatchewan on July 23, 1979, with the Office of Energy Conservation in its Minerals Branch. In June, 1981, he took on a permanent position as a Co-op Management Advisor with the Development Branch's Department of Co-operation and Co-operative Development.

Early on, Wayne was recognized for his positive attitude and his analytical and communication skills. Through the 90's, with successive organization changes, he continued in a co-operative development

capacity, particularly with the Regional offices of the time, as the regional office small business services and the

co-operative development services became more aligned.



A retirement party, held for Wayne Thrasher (top left), was attended by colleagues, family and friends

continued on page 3

## Register Now for the 16th Annual Co-op Classic

The 16th Annual Co-op Classic will be held on Friday, July 8 at Elbow Golf Club and Resort. The annual event raises funds for the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program.

**16th Annual Co-op Classic**  
A fundraiser for the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program of the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada

**Friday, July 8, 2011**  
Tournament registration: 10 a.m. Tee-off: 11 a.m.  
Harbor Golf Club & Resort, Elbow, Saskatchewan

Your \$150 registration fee includes:  
18 holes Mixed Texas Scramble  
Steak dinner  
Motorized golf cart  
Prizes for everyone  
Side games and contests  
Live auction  
International development silent auction

Major Sponsor:  
**Concentra FINANCIAL**  
**conexus Credit Union**  
**the co-operators** A Better Place For You

Register by June 30 to be eligible for Early Bird Prizes.  
Deadline for registration is June 30.

Presented by  
Saskatchewan Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada  
Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada  
Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada

This year, we are fortunate to have our three major sponsors, Concentra Financial, Conexus Credit Union and The Co-operators, joining us for the second year.

"We are very grateful to our three major sponsors for their on-going support of the Co-op Classic," says Victoria Morris, Executive Director of Saskatchewan Co-operative Association. "There are also many other co-ops and credit unions across the province who have signed on as sponsors and donors. However, we still have opportunities available to sponsor holes, contests, auction items and prizes, so there is a place for everyone to get involved."

Golfers have until June 30 to register for the fun-filled day, which features an 18 hole mixed Texas Scramble tournament, steak dinner, silent and live auctions, games, contests and prizes.

Sponsorship and registration details and forms are available on the SCA website at [http://www.sask.coop/co-op\\_classic\\_and\\_sno-dome.html](http://www.sask.coop/co-op_classic_and_sno-dome.html).



## Register Now for 2011 ACE Institute

The annual ACE Institute is the only annual conference dedicated solely to highlighting innovative programs in co-operative education. Taking place in Winnipeg for the first time, the ACE Institute provides a unique opportunity to network with educators across co-operative sectors as well as national boundaries.

The event will take place from July 26 to 29. On-line registration plus more information about the meeting, lodging and available financial assistance is on the Association of Co-operative Educators' website at <http://www.2011ace.com/>.



## Co-op Camp Ready to Go!

From June 1 to 3, Co-op Camp staff attended the annual Staff Training Workshop at Shekinah Retreat Centre. A total of 46 staff spent 2 days learning more about the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program and planning for their respective camps.

Assisting the Program Officer with this year's staff training and co-op camps are our two fantastic Program Assistants, Alesha Goodwin and Anne Viczko. Alesha, returning for her fourth summer with SCYP, has one year left of her Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Saskatchewan. Anne, who is beginning her third year of Fine Art studies at University of Regina, is joining us for her first year. With all this experience and talent, things are running very smoothly at the SCYP office!



2011 Program Assistants, Anne Viczko (left) and Alesha Goodwin

Participant numbers are looking good this year and are on track to exceed last year's enrollment. Remember, even if your organization cannot sponsor any more youth to attend camp, please don't turn anyone away. Refer them to our office for assistance in finding a sponsor. During the Canada Post lockout, please phone our office at 244-3702 for help getting registrations to us.



Co-op Camp staff attend staff training workshop (top); Junior 1 staff try out their costumes for their "Choose Your Own Adventure: Western Theme"

## Historic 1st Meeting of Health Care Co-operatives Federation to be Held

The first conference and members' meeting of the Health Care Co-operatives Federation of Canada will be held in Regina from July 7-9. For information, contact Chantal McDonald at [chantal.mcdonald@coopscanada.coop](mailto:chantal.mcdonald@coopscanada.coop).

## Youth Co-operative Entrepreneurship Program

The Youth Co-operative Entrepreneurship Program (YCEP) is a new and exciting project for youth in rural and northern Saskatchewan starting in the summer of 2011. YCEP is an employment and education project for youth ages 14-17. Participating youth will gain education on the skills and steps required to create a co-operative business. The project also includes the creation of a summer co-operative business where youth can test out their new knowledge and skills!

In addition to providing a form of summer employment, YCEP will also create a connection between youth and their community. The youth will identify needs in their community and

***In addition to providing a form of summer employment, YCEP will also create a connection between youth and their community.***

address these needs through the creation of a service co-operative. Youth will receive guidance from SCA as well as a committee of local business and community leaders based in the rural or northern community.

The YCEP pilot project will take place in Foam Lake this summer. The participants will gain experience in different co-operative roles such as leader, contract worker, co-op administrator or team player to provide the community of Foam Lake with excellent service and a new summer co-operative business. YCEP will provide participants with new leadership and entrepreneurship skills, a source of summer income, a connection to their community, and a great summer experience!

For more information about the Youth Co-operative Entrepreneurship Program please contact Kacey Keene, Project Facilitator at (306) 244-3702 or [kacey.keene@sask.coop](mailto:kacey.keene@sask.coop)

### SCA WELCOMES KACEY KEENE

SCA is pleased to welcome Kacey Keene to our office to oversee the Youth Co-operative Entrepreneurship Program. Kacey is originally from Swift Current, Saskatchewan. She came to Saskatoon to attend the University of Saskatchewan in the fall of 2006 and, in June 2010, completed her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in English. She has spent the past year studying for a Masters of Public Administration and will be awarded this degree in October.



# Ménsa/Mawsootan Harvesting & Marketing Co-operative

by Ryan O'Connor

*This article, reprinted from Canadian CED Network, profiles a new Northern Saskatchewan co-operative. Over the past six months, SCA has been working with the members to provide support during the incorporation process. We have also been able to assist the co-op with funding for board training and business development through the Co-operative Development Initiative.*

Northern Saskatchewan is home to a natural resource with a large and growing global demand. In this case, consumer interest has not been piqued by oil or potash; this crop is much more delicious. The demand for Saskatchewan wild blue berries is strong, but the challenge of distribution and transportation remains. That's where the Ménsa/Mawsootan Harvesting & Marketing Co-operative (MMHMC) comes in. MMHMC was incorporated in March 2011 with the purpose of bringing fair trade practices to the harvesting and sale of berries in Northern Saskatchewan.

To accomplish this, MMHMC will build a purchasing depot in the Green Lake community that will become a central berry repository and distribution centre, and will hire 8-10 local employees. The depot will also house machinery to dry and powder the berries, which allows the Co-op to produce less perishable products and ship them out for 10% of the cost of transporting raw berries. Meanwhile, "local, national, and international markets are being explored," for value-added products, as well as fresh and frozen berry distribution. In the long term, "We hope to retain control over the entire value chain," says Ric Richardson, a founding member of the co-operative. The Co-op is hoping to develop nutritional products made of dried berries, as well as jams and desserts, which will ensure greater and more direct economic benefits for regional residents.

Blueberries have played an integral role in northern diets and economies for generations. However, the harvest and sale of berries is generally unorganized and informal, which means that many berry harvesters are underpaid and subjected to exploitative practices. Moreover, economic development opportunities are scarce in many of these

isolated communities. These poor economic conditions have combined to create rampant poverty with an unemployment rate that hovers at 80% in Northern Saskatchewan.

Fortunately, MMHMC is offering an innovative business model that builds on the traditional knowledge and skills of the estimated thousands of local berry harvesters. "We are trying to develop something in the region that has local control and local benefit," says Ric. By adopting a co-operative model, MMHMC can more easily remain committed to its goals of creating widespread economic benefit, and ensuring that harvesters are fairly compensated for their work.



Photos courtesy of Maria Pulfer

**MMHMC is offering an innovative business model that builds on the traditional knowledge and skills of the estimated thousands of local berry harvesters.**

"We see a lack of pride being one of the problems coming from multigenerational poverty," Ric continues. In an effort to ameliorate this communal challenge, MMHMC has developed a strong cultural preservation component. He

calls it "using traditional values and knowledge in a modern economy."

And MMHMC's timing could not be better, as the global health food markets continue to grow. It seems that the rest of the world is only beginning to catch on to what northern communities have known for centuries; "Blueberries are rightly described as a super food," says Ric.

Although the growing season is short – it typically runs from July to early September - the benefits of MMHMC's fair trade purchasing policies will be felt all year long. As a socio-economic enterprise that is culturally, environmentally, and economically sustainable, MMHMC is a perfect, and creative, example of community economic development in action.

Source: CCEdNet Newsletter, April 2011

**WAYNE THRASHER - continued from page 1** Additional recognition of his knowledge and skills are noted around co-operative legislation, policy development, and co-operative economic activity. When Enterprise Saskatchewan was formed in 2008, Wayne took on the role of Sector Manager, Co-operative Development, working with the Co-op Sector Team / Issues Council, and other initiatives.

Over his years with government and work with the sector, Wayne has been involved in many activities, worked with many people and developed close ties. Three areas he notes from his work over that time are the different co-operatives that he has worked with; the 1995 International Conference of Co-operatives, which was held in Saskatchewan and had 500 people from 20 different countries in attendance; and his opportunity to be involved with co-operatives internationally, for instance his work in the Ukraine and most recently his travels to India.

Wayne is acknowledged for his passion and commitment for co-operatives, his technical expertise and knowledge, and his reputation in the co-operative sector. Wayne, as most people know, likes to travel and has further interest in international co-operative development work. Everyone wishes Wayne the best in his retirement and we know he will keep himself busy with a number of projects and activities and keep his connection to the co-operative sector.



# International Year of Co-operatives 2012

CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISES BUILD A BETTER WORLD

LES COOPÉRATIVES, DES ENTREPRISES POUR UN MONDE MEILLEUR

## IYC 2012 at Co-op Camp!

Approximately 40 sector and alumni Co-op Camp staff from around the province took in a presentation about International Year of the Co-operatives 2012 at SCYP Staff Training last month. The staff discussed how the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program can get involved, both this year and next, to educate the masses and help celebrate!



2011 Co-op Camp staff participate in IYC 2012 session at Staff Training

In preparation for IYC 2012, curriculum has been developed for this year's Co-op Camps to educate youth about how they can get involved and celebrate in their own communities. The goals of the session are to educate and create awareness with participants about IYC 2012, to understand the impact of IYC 2012 here in Canada and around the world, and how participants can make a difference with IYC 2012 in their own community.



SCYP participants will also create postcards that they can use to spread the word. All postcards will be entered into a contest to win an iPod! The winning submission will be used by the Saskatchewan IYC planning committee for the rest of 2011 and throughout 2012.

## New Peruvian Legislation Recognizes Co-op Difference

The government of Peru has adopted legislation that makes co-ops and credit unions exempt from sales tax, recognizing that co-ops are different from other types of businesses.

The Federacion Nacional de Cooperativas de Ahorro y Credito del Peru (FENACREP), the country's credit union federation, worked with a coalition of co-operative advocacy groups to get the new law passed. Manuel Rabines Ripalda, president and CEO of FENACREP and 1st vice-chair of the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU), said the law is an act of justice for the co-operative movement in Peru.

"This is not just about a tax break for co-operatives," he said. "The law is simply correcting the interpretation of existing co-operative legislation so that tax laws will be properly applied to co-operative acts."

The new law specifies the scope of two articles in Peru's existing General Law of Co-operatives by recognizing that co-operatives are different from commercial enterprises in that their transactions with members are "co-operative acts".

## Co-op Zone Offers Co-op Development Training

The CoopZone Developers' Network Co-operative is pleased to announce that it will offer a two-level on-line training program on co-operative development, starting this September. The course will give essential information and knowledge to provide development, facilitation and project management services to new, existing and expanding co-operatives. A tele-learning webinar about the program will be held Friday, July 8, 1 - 2 pm Eastern Time (ET). You must RSVP by 4 pm ET on July 7 to [hazel@canadianworker.coop](mailto:hazel@canadianworker.coop). Visit the CoopZone web site at [www.coopzone.coop/en/node/3705](http://www.coopzone.coop/en/node/3705) for more details on the program.

## International Mentorship Helps Women Leaders

It's a sad reality that few women hold leadership positions in the world's financial sector. Even in community-owned co-operatives and credit unions, there are often too few women in management positions. The Canadian Co-operative Association's Women's Mentorship Program is designed to begin to address the gender gap by providing women leaders of overseas financial co-operatives with a unique opportunity for professional development.

Beginning in 2002, CCA has brought groups of women credit union managers from developing countries to Canada for a one month internship/mentoring program. Each participant is assigned to one Canadian for 10 days of job shadowing with a Canadian branch or general manager acting as their mentor. In addition to job exposure, participants also undertake a 2 (1/2) week training program that looks at general leadership issues and lending practices.

This month, 14 credit union managers from Africa and Asia are making their way to their Canadian credit union placements to participate in the program. Horizon Credit Union in Melfort is hosting Elina Chimwena Zimba from Malawi.

A resounding success, 137 women from 16 countries in Africa, Asia and the Americas have benefitted from the training offered by the Women's Mentorship Program since its 2002 inception.

Source: [www.coopscanada.coop](http://www.coopscanada.coop)