

Co-operative Spotlight

March 2010

An overview of
Saskatchewan co-operative sector
news and activities

Nominations Sought for Co-operative Merit Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 31st Annual Co-operative Merit Awards and the 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.

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*

New this year, the Committee has clarified the criteria for the awards, ensuring that volunteer, elected and employed co-operators can be recognized for their contributions to co-operatives and credit unions.

In addition to the updated and clarified criteria, the Committee also streamlined the nomination form, to make it easier to complete the nomination process. We know that there are many outstanding co-operators in your community; the CMAP Committee encourages you to nominate someone this year!

Nomination forms are available on our website: http://www.sask.coop/co-op_merit_awards.html. **Nomination deadline is May 1, 2010.**

Sno-Dome Classic A Great Success!

The second annual Sno-Dome Classic, a fun afternoon of golfing games, silent auction, socializing and prizes, was held Friday, February 26 at the Ramada Golf Dome in Saskatoon. The event, sponsored by Concentra Financial, was a fundraiser for the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF) and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program (SCYP).

Saskatchewan Co-operative Association is pleased to announce that the event raised more than \$2,800. "We are very grateful for the continuing support of our member organizations, co-ops and credit unions, and our suppliers who attend and sponsor our events," said

Top: SCA President Beryl Bauer prepares for his role as "target" in the Hit the Moving Target game. Right: Hole in One contest.

Victoria Morris, Executive Director of SCA. "The funds we forward to CDF are matched three to one by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The funds

donated to SCYP will be used to ensure that as many Saskatchewan youth as possible can experience Co-op Camp and learn about the value of co-operatives in our communities."

This year, for the first time, sponsoring organizations were offered the opportunity to "bundle" their sponsorship for the Sno-Dome Classic and the Co-op Classic, held annually in July. This resulted in \$2,425 in confirmed sponsorships for the Co-op Classic in addition to the funds raised for the Sno-Dome. Concentra Financial has confirmed their

role as a Major Sponsor for the Co-op Classic. Other confirmed sponsors are The Co-operators, Saskatchewan Credit Unions, Muenster Credit Union, CGI and Globe Printers.

Thank you to everyone who attended, sponsored, volunteered and sent prizes! Please see page 2 for a complete list of sponsors and donors.



Carol Hunter, Executive Director of Canadian Co-operative Association brings greetings on behalf of Co-operative Development Foundation.

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SCYP Alumni Among Youth Honoured by SCIC

Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation has created a video entitled "Voices of Youth: Young Global Leaders in Saskatchewan". The purpose of the video is to provide inspiration to youth at home and around the world. The video features young Saskatchewan residents who are changing the world, engaging themselves and others in the fight for a more just and sustainable future for everyone. Among the nine extraordinary young people featured in the video are three Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program graduates.

Ben Ngo-Ming Chung attended SCYP and then worked in our office as Program Assistant for three summers, spreading his love of co-ops and Co-op Camp to the masses and, quite literally, being a poster boy for Co-op Camp. He was born in Hong Kong and raised in Regina and has a Bachelor of Education degree. He has been involved with SCIC facilitating workshops on the themes of Millennium Development Goals and access to education. His recent involvement with Canada World Youth has taken him to Honduras and Nicaragua.



L-R: Young Global Leaders Xochitl Hanson-Pastran, Sasha Hanson-Pastran and Ben Chung

Sasha Hanson-Pastran is an International Studies student at the University of Saskatchewan. She is also a graduate of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program and will be joining our office as Program Assistant in July! Born in Nicaragua, and raised in Saskatoon, she believes strongly in the value of cross-cultural understanding and international experiences as tools to foster co-operation, trust and understanding and create positive change in the world.

Xochitl Hanson-Pastran, twin sister of Sasha and alumni of SCYP, traveled solo in Nicaragua after graduation from high school and fell in love with the country. Her Spanish teacher helped her to set up a volunteer placement at a school. She believes everyone should "find their passions and donate some time towards them."

Other Saskatchewan youth featured are Lindsay Knight, Kieran Conway, Emmanuel Ndayishimiye, Bevan Harlton, Jeh Custer and Michelle Thompson. Congratulations to

all for their exceptional volunteerism and contribution to our world.

Source: Earthbeat, January/February 2010

Tully & Bauer Re-elected to FCL's Board of Directors

Glen Tully was re-elected president of the board of Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL) at the board's reorganization meeting March 2, 2010. The reorganization meeting followed FCL's 81st annual meeting, held March 1 and 2 in Saskatoon. As president of the board, Tully occupies a full-time position at FCL's Home Office in Saskatoon.

Beryl Bauer of Lake Lenore was re-elected vice-chair of the board at the same meeting. Beryl also serves as president of Saskatchewan Co-operative Association.

Source: President's Newsletter, March 2010



Beryl Bauer makes a presentation at a Federated Co-operatives Ltd. sponsored SCYP seminar in 2009

Sno-Dome Classic Sponsors Make Event a Great Success!

Major Sponsor: Concentra Financial



Tee Box Sponsors:

Bourgoin Resources
CGI
Community Health Federation
Globe Printers
Muenster Credit Union
Saskatchewan Credit Unions
Saskatoon Community Clinic

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Nicaragua: A Country of Hardship, Hope and Potential

by Karen Timoshuk, Member Engagement Co-ordinator - International Development for Canadian Co-operative Association

One of the greatest advantages of modern technology is our ability to connect with people and places that are a half a world away. We hear regularly from family and friends as they travel the globe. We hear almost immediately of the magnitude of natural disasters. We respond electronically with our donations when we realize our responsibility to our larger, global community. In my case, it allows me to be a Development Educator for an international development agency from our farm house near Harris.

In late fall, I received word that I was to lead a delegation of Canadians on a Study Mission to Nicaragua in February to learn of the development partnerships of the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA). Having visited the Association's partners in Costa Rica, Indonesia and the Philippines, I realized the Mission would be physically, mentally and emotionally trying, yet immensely rewarding. The country and people of Nicaragua did not disappoint.

Not surprisingly, our impressions of other countries are generally created by the media and what it chooses to share with us. As is the case for many marginalized countries, the news from Nicaragua is rarely pleasant. With the 1972 earthquake killing 10,000, another 4,000 lives taken by hurricanes Mitch (1998) and Felix (2007), and the 10,000 count death toll of the short-lived but brutal Contra-Sandinista war that ended a forty year dictatorship, Nicaragua's people have deep wounds that are, in some ways, just beginning to heal. More recently, the impact of countries thinking inwardly as part of their economic recovery strategy, coupled with low ag commodity prices, have contributed to Nicaragua's second place, after Haiti, among the poorest nations in the Western Hemisphere.

With this as our mindset, I suppose the apprehensive reaction of family and friends upon hearing of my sojourn were justified. It also explains, and perhaps justifies, my anxiety before and upon landing in a marginalized country. What never ceases to amaze me though is how that anxiety changes to curiosity and optimism as I witness the determination, hope and potential of the people, and again, Nicaragua did not disappoint.

As we travelled from community to community, learning how groups of determined coffee growers, red bean farmers, fishermen, and disabled persons have banded together to better their lives, the famous quote of Margaret Mead haunted me: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,

committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Each of our visits did indeed reveal a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens and it is those people who have inspired each of us thirteen Canadians to share their story. It is a story of hardship, but as importantly, it is a story of relentless perseverance and small victories. The story I would like to share with you comes from the remote coastal community of Krukira.



There are two ways to get to the northeast Caribbean coast of Nicaragua--- a 23 hour bus ride on a winding grid road, or, a 1 ½ hour flight on a Cessna Caravan that costs \$175. We chose the latter. We landed in Bilwi and hired the only ground transportation available that could accommodate our group--- an old school-bus-turned-rental-van. The owner and his fourteen year old son loaded us into the unit, taking turns driving us an hour north to Krukira, an indigenous community of 3,500.



TOP: The author & a young Krukira fisherman;
BOTTOM: One of the co-ops' dugout boats, shared by members on a rotation basis.

Devastated by Hurricane Felix and ignored by the region's central government, the Moskitos of Krukira truly live a hand-to-mouth existence. Three months ago the community celebrated the arrival of electricity. The lone nurse can take credit for delivering most of the babies in the community and is the keeper of the 100 pain relief tablets given to her monthly by the government to disperse to those most worthy. Besides 13 teachers, the only occupation in the community is fishing.

Krukira was chosen as a stop for this Mission because it has benefitted from the partnership between the Canadian Co-operative Association and Nicaragua's co-operative federation, CECAMPO. This partnership has helped strengthen Krukira's fishing co-operative. The members of this co-op share one boat with a 9.9 horsepower outboard motor and two dugout canoes which they use on a rotation basis (about once a month for each member). The recent arrival of electricity to Krukira means that the dream of a refrigeration unit to keep their catches in safer storage is closer to reality. A small

hangar, purchased with the help of CECAMPO, will serve as a processing plant. "By storing our product and taking it outside and selling it, our community is seeing the benefits of joining the co-operative," Mr. Florez, the co-op's vice president, said. We were told by many that strengthening the co-op has allowed its 32 members to not only feed their families but to earn a small income.

Continued on page 4

Prairie Lily Funeral Co-operative A.G.M.

April 27, 2010

Registration: 6:30 / Meeting: 7:00 p.m.
2nd Floor, 1106 Winnipeg Street,
Regina Community Clinic

Agenda includes:

- election of five board members.
- financial and audit report.
- president's report on membership drive and business plan.

Members, please attend this important meeting. Your attendance is needed to listen, to discuss, to deliberate and to vote. Your input is part of the Co-operative Difference!

Access Announces Major Upgrades

Access Communications Co-operative Limited undertook a major upgrade of their service offerings in Balgonie and Pilot Butte. During February, Access Communications' technical crews began upgrading the cable system in Balgonie and Pilot Butte. This investment will result in many new cable television channels, including digital and high definition services. As well, a first-class Internet service, home phone and home security service will soon be available along with a unique, local community channel, Access7, with programming dedicated to each community.

Access President and CEO, Jim Deane, says the co-operative is excited about the new opportunity, "Access Communications is committed to improving and expanding the services available in Balgonie and Pilot Butte through a capital investment of over \$900,000 into the communications infrastructure. We plan to roll out the best quality entertainment and communications services available – at the lowest possible prices, including more digital and high definition cable television channels, enhanced high speed Internet services, and new options in home phone service and home security."

Source: Access Communications Co-operative Ltd. Press Release, February 19, 2010

Nicaragua - Continued from page 3

The community has also come to realize that the ocean's weather systems make it far too unpredictable to be exclusively relied upon for their livelihood. The co-op hopes that its office will eventually be filled with grain and rice to market. "We realize we just can't live off of fishing. We need other means of survival," added Florez.

Ralph Washington, former President and founder of the co-op remarked of our visit, "We are very proud because we did not know we have a family in Canada and now we see this with our own eyes and we are very, very happy." Ralph, whose name curiously sounds like an adopted name for a Nicaraguan Mosquito, is about 80 years old. He carries the complexion of a weathered, leathery fisherman and his missing arm suggests that life presented him with additional challenges beyond those that meet the eye.

"We never imagined in our wildest dreams that we would see today the friendly faces who helped us in this room," co-op vice president Franklin Florez said in greeting our group. "It is a blessing from God that you have this good heart in you. Now we are happier and stronger because now we have seen the faces of our brothers and sisters." As we exchanged stories about farming and fishing, its challenges and successes, the similarities and stark differences of our livelihoods, we could feel a strong kinship budding with this group. As the Coordinator of the group, a quick "reality check" with the Canadian delegation afterward suggested that all wished for a much longer visit with the people of Krukira.

We were the largest delegation to ever have visited the fine people of Krukira. So it was no surprise that our visit to Krukira on day three of our Nicaragua mission caused a great stir among the Mosquitos up and down the Caribbean Coast. Word spread, and by the time of our departure, we gladly returned to Bilwi with a few extra passengers on our bus, including a young malnourished mother and her premature baby. Travelling by boat to Krukira from her remote community, she asked for a ride into Bilwi in hopes to get medical attention for her five month old baby. Although "teaching a man to fish" is the best strategy for long term economic change, which is the overriding principle of CCA's work, we took up a collection for this woman to help buy medication and vitamins for her son. There are times when the heart should prevail over the mind, and for our Canadian delegation, this was clearly one of those times.

The Canadian response to the recent earthquakes in Haiti and Chile shows our commitment to helping those with desperate, immediate needs. What is less known perhaps, are the many success stories of decades old non-government development agencies, that patiently persevere alongside their overseas partners--- victories that can only be achieved through the generosity of Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Nicaragua in a Nutshell...

- 33% of the population is under 14
- 48% live below the poverty line
- 3 million cell phones among its 5.8 million inhabitants
- 5.6% unemployment rate, with 47% underemployment
- Second lowest per capita income in the Western Hemisphere

Source: CIA World Factbook



Mom and baby accompany the Canadian delegation back to Bilwi seeking medical services for the infant

Farmer Direct Co-op Joins Organic Valley's Grower Pool

In a measure designed to provide a stable price and secure market for its organic feed, Farmer Direct Co-operative Ltd. has joined Organic Valley Family of Farm's Grower Pool.

A co-operative of more than 1,400 family farmers in North America, Organic Valley formed its Grower Pool last year to provide stable prices for organic feed producers and to ensure a supply of organic grain for its member farmers.

Farmer Direct Co-operative (FDC) includes 70 certified organic family farms throughout Western Canada. FDC is the largest organic farmer co-operative in western Canada specializing in the marketing of certified organic grains, oilseeds and pulses to food manufacturers in Canada, the United States, European Union and Japan.

"Strategic partnerships among farmers' co-operatives can only strengthen the co-operative movement," said Luke Zigovits, feed program coordinator for Organic Valley. "Through mutual integrity and cooperation, we help bring stability to family farmers in an always changing and challenging marketplace."

"Farmer Direct Co-op brings a decade of experience in the organic feed business along with 120,000 acres of organic farm land, while Organic Valley brings an internal market of more than 1,400 feed customers. This strategic relationship provides a market for our members' grain while providing Organic Valley farmers with feed security," said Jason Freeman, general manager of FDC.

This initial agreement represents \$400,000 in annual feed sales.

Source: January 11, 2010 Media Release



2010 Federal Budget Highlights

The 2010 federal budget had little to offer the Co-operative sector except for a new provision for federally-chartered credit unions (see side bar). Canadian Central has been actively lobbying for this provision, which would mean that a credit union could, if it so chooses, expand beyond provincial borders under a federal charter. More than 100 years ago, Alphonse Desjardins campaigned for federally-incorporated credit unions.

The budget also makes it clear that federally chartered credit unions would operate under the same income tax rules as provincial credit unions. This includes extended access to the small business tax rate and the deductibility of patronage-like payments of bonus interest and allocations in proportion to borrowing. The budget does not indicate whether GST/HST rules for federal and provincial credit unions will also be consistent, an issue Canadian Central is planning to pursue with the government.

The budget announcement also does not deal with another key issue of concern to Canadian Central: whether federal credit unions will be incorporated under special provisions of the Bank Act, the Cooperative Credit Associations Act or other legislation. Canadian Central and Desjardins have both expressed the view that they would prefer that federal credit unions be incorporated under credit union-specific legislation, rather than the Bank Act.

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) was disappointed that the budget did not include elements of its proposed Co-operative Investment Strategy: a Co-operative Investment Plan which would provide tax credits for members of producer and worker co-ops who invest in their co-operatives, and a co-operative development fund which would be

a repayable loan fund for co-ops seeking financing. These proposals have received strong support from the co-op sector and were also endorsed by the all-party House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. The CCA, together with the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité, will continue to urge the government to institute these measures.

Some good news in the budget came from a continuation of stimulus funding towards Canada's affordable housing providers, including federally-administered housing co-operatives. Sadly, no new budget provisions affecting co-operative housing were announced in 2010's budget.

For a more in-depth review of the budget, checkout The Canadian Co-operative Association's "What's New" section on their website: www.coopscanada.coop.

Source: Adapted from Canadian Co-operative Association's Budget Breakdown

Credit Union Central of Canada Welcomes New Legislation

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty made an historic announcement for the evolution of the credit union system in Canada by stating the federal government's intention to proceed with federal credit union legislation. The main purpose of a federal credit union charter is to accommodate growth and expansion of the Canadian credit union system. It will enable those credit unions that so choose to reach beyond provincial boundaries and pursue business strategies that are not constrained by provincial incorporation. More information about the legislation is available at <http://www.ns-creditunions.com/default.asp?mn=1.21.42.131&sfid=content.id&search=601>

Botting Steps Down as Enterprise Saskatchewan CEO

Dale Botting is stepping down from his position as CEO of Enterprise Saskatchewan (ES) to take on a new role concentrating on investment attraction for the new economic development agency. Botting was originally appointed Deputy Minister of the former Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation in November 2007, to lead "the design-build phase" of Enterprise Saskatchewan. The new ES Board later appointed Botting as its founding CEO when it was officially formed on July 29, 2008.

"I extend my sincere appreciation to Dale for his dedicated service to Enterprise Saskatchewan and the provincial government," Enterprise Minister Ken Cheveldayoff said. "His consummate work ethic and business skills assisted in maintaining the positive and growing economic development climate in Saskatchewan."

Since the establishment of Enterprise Saskatchewan just over a year and half ago, Botting has played an instrumental role in assisting the Board make more than 50 recommendations to the provincial government. He also led the restructuring and transfer of staff from several previous ministries into the new agency, and the creation of grass roots advisory sector teams and strategic issues councils to identify various barriers to growth and new economic opportunities. Added highlights in the last 18 months include the rapid consolidation and roll out of a new system of larger and more integrated enterprise regions.

Starting April 1st under a six-month, renewable contract to Enterprise Saskatchewan, Botting will oversee the completion of several investment attraction projects and will continue to advise the provincial government on issues ranging from innovative partnerships to competitive intelligence. The Board will meet before the end of the month to determine an interim CEO and a process to select a permanent replacement.

Source: Enterprise Saskatchewan, March 15, 2010

Advanced Co-op Developer Training - April 27 - 29, 2010

Registration forms available at http://www.sask.coop/whats_new.html

Advanced Co-operative Developer Training

This three-day training 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. By utilizing specific case studies from seminar participants, who are currently engaged with a co-op development project, the seminar will explore the method and knowledge required to support new co-ops through all phases of development.

The seminar will be of significant interest to:

- those who are currently working on or are about to work on a **specific co-op related project**,
- people who are already involved in community economic development/ social economy,
- co-operative and community developers who work with individuals and groups that want to start a co-operative,
- government officials and others who want to increase their knowledge and understanding of the co-operative business model.

Seminar participants will have the opportunity to utilize real life examples to illustrate specific topics and approaches to co-op development. The six Development Phases will act as an organizational guide for the seminar and training for each Development Phase will include topics for discussion presented in a systematic way. Additional resources and tools will be provided to participants to assist in the application of knowledge.

Participation is limited to 25 people. Register now to secure your spot.

Queen's House Retreat and Renewal Centre, Saskatoon
610 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon
April 27-29, 2010, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Registration Fee: \$400.00 plus \$20.00 GST = \$420.00
• Registration fee includes all workshop materials, refreshments, and lunch for each day of the seminar.

Sponsored in part by:



Facilitators: Marty Frost and Melanie Conn

Marty Frost is the founder and a member consultant of FWC Development Co-operative (Devco) formed 1996. He has designed, marketed and delivered co-op training and development services to co-operatives, local and provincial governments and development agencies across Canada. He has extensive development experience, having worked on over 90 projects in the last 13 years as a co-operative and non-profit business developer. Marty is a founding developer of CoopZone (2004), the national network of co-op developers.

Melanie Conn is a long-time co-op and CED activist and practitioner. As a member of Devco since 1998, she has provided technical, research and other development assistance for dozens of new co-ops. She also designs and delivers train-the-trainer programs and other curriculum related to co-operatives. Melanie is a founding member and director of Common Thread, an innovative co-op that provides marketing and production services for sewing social enterprises. She is also a founding member and director of the Women's Economic Council and on the board of Genuine Progress Index-Pacific.

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The 2010 National Summit on a People-Centred Economy

Registration Now Open for Ottawa Summit, May 30 - June 1

For the first time, several of the leading co-operative, community economic development and social economy networks in Canada are coming together for an unprecedented gathering of community leaders, researchers and civil society representatives. The 2010 National Summit on a People-Centred Economy will craft a common agenda to scale up social and economic innovation for sustainable and inclusive communities.

The National Summit is part of the growing movement supporting economic alternatives in Canada and around the world. Several exciting speakers will offer inspiring examples of the successes and even greater potential this movement offers:

- A representative of the new partnership between the United Steelworkers, North America's largest industrial union, and Mondragon, the world's biggest worker-owned co-operative, will present their new joint venture to open Mondragon manufacturing cooperatives in Canada and the United States.
- Raj Patel, the New York Times bestselling author, academic and activist will make connections between our current food, climate and economic crises, as well as the democratic responses that can lead to more sustainable and equitable systems, drawing from his books *Stuffed and Starved* and *The Value of Nothing*.
- Nancy Neamtan, President of the Chantier de l'économie sociale and Ian MacPherson, Co-Director and Principal Investigator of the Canadian Social Economy Hub, will survey the accomplishments of the social economy and co-operative sectors in Canada, and challenge participants on the path ahead.

As part of the preparatory process for the Summit, six issue papers have been drafted on key themes for the development of a people-centred economy. Each paper presents strengths, challenges and proposals for action to further reinforce the movement. The issue papers will be subject to an engagement and outreach process for feedback and revisions by Summit participants and other stakeholders between March 1 and May 15.

To read the papers and find out how to provide your input, for more information, or to register, please visit <http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/summit>.

The deadline for early bird registration is April 15th so act fast to take advantage of reduced rates.

Members of the National Summit Steering Group

- Canadian Community Economic Development Network
- Canadian Co-operative Association
- Chantier de l'économie sociale
- Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships
- Causeway
- The Social Enterprise Council of Canada
- Enterprising Non-Profits
- Canadian Centre for Community Renewal
- Women's Economic Council
- BC-Alberta Research Alliance on the Social Economy

Huard Appointed New FCL Vice-President

In February, Federated Co-operatives Limited announced the appointment of Mr. Vic Huard as Vice-President – Corporate Affairs of Federated Co-operatives Limited effective March 1, 2010. Mr. Huard will also serve as Corporate Secretary.

Vic has significant experience in strategic communications, branding, public relations, government relations and governance. He has been working with the FCL Board of Directors during the past year on the Board's director competency and evaluation project.

Vic most recently was the principal in Vic Huard & Associates Consulting. He has served as President and CEO of the RCMP Heritage Centre, CEO of United Way of Regina, Executive Director of the Regina Community Clinic (a co-operative) and has held a number of communications, policy and planning responsibilities within the Government of Saskatchewan.

Vic has taught a variety of courses at the Kenneth Levene Graduate School of Business and the Paul J. Hill Business School at the University of Regina. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts from the University of Saskatchewan, and a PhD from Queen's University.

La Siembra Seeks Investors

Looking for an ethical Co-operative Home for your RRSP contributions? La Siembra Co-operative, an Ottawa based worker-owned co-operative and creators of the Cocoa Camino and Cuisine Camino brands of Fair Trade and Organic cocoa, sugar and chocolate products is currently seeking new equity to support its growth into new Fair Trade product areas.

- La Siembra has over 10 years of operational experience in fair trade and organic product imports, marketing, and sales in Canada;
- Preference A shareholders have over \$820,000 invested in La Siembra with the average investment equal to \$8700;
- Investors in La Siembra have had a positive return on their investment every year, with an average dividend of 3.72% in the last 5 years;
- The sale of Preference A shares will pre-finance producer purchases, launch new products and support producer value chain development.

For more information contact Jennifer Williams, CEO at invest@lasiembra.com. Submitted by La Siembra Co-op

Concentra Achieves Platinum Status in 50 Best Managed Companies Awards

Concentra Financial is honoured to be inducted into the Platinum Club of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies program. Sponsored by Deloitte, CIBC Commercial Banking, Queen's School of Business and the National Post since 1993, Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies is a national awards program recognizing businesses from a wide range of industries that have implemented world-class best business practices.

In its seventh consecutive designation as a 50 Best Managed Company, Concentra is proud of this new Platinum Club status, affirming that Concentra and its co-operative culture remain successful even through the most challenging economic environments on record. The results achieved by Concentra are truly the sum of all its parts; all its people working together in balance and unison toward common objectives.

"We are proud to be part of a co-operative system that has demonstrated excellence and innovation during a time of great challenge," says Myrna Bentley, CEO and President of Concentra Financial. "We stand where we are because of our Board's willingness to embrace a vision of Concentra. At the same time, execution of this vision has been possible because of the professionalism, commitment and 'can do' attitude of our employees and our partners."

Platinum status is not an easy target to achieve. Hundreds of companies compete for designation every year and are subject to rigorous and independent reviews, ultimately defining companies who symbolize excellence in corporate success: focussed on core vision, creating stakeholder value and excelling in the global economy.

"This designation affirms what the Board has always known; that there is an excellent system of co-operation here, combined with innovative leaders and talented employees," says Wayne McLeod, Chair of the Concentra Board of Directors. "We're a dynamic company bound for future success, as evidenced by very positive year end financial results."

"We will not rest on these achievements, but will continue to move forward and share our success with the system," says Bentley. "Thank you all for your trust and support in Concentra."

Source: Credit Union System Release, February 16, 2010

Spectra in Best Small & Medium Employer Top 50

Spectra Credit Union and Spectra Financial are pleased to be named among the Top 50 Best Small and Medium Employers in Canada for the 5th year in a row. The study, now in its sixth year, is published in the Globe and Mail and PROFIT Magazine.

"Employees are the key factor to our success, and these results back up the positive atmosphere that exists within our organization. We recently polled our members and they told us that Spectra employees provide to them friendly, knowledgeable service, always putting them first. Our positive environment leads to a great place for our members to do business and a great place for our employees to work," said Tim Schroh, Spectra's CEO.

Wayne Amos, President of the Board of Directors added his congratulations to the staff of Spectra. "Members recognize the fact that it is always preferable to deal with an organization where the employees are committed to its success. That has always been the case at Spectra, and we are again pleased to receive recognition for that."

Becoming a Top Best Small and Medium Employer is a very detailed and competitive process. This national awards program recognizes top employers with between 50 and 400 employees. This year, more than 200 companies across Canada registered to participate in the study. More information about the Best Small & Medium Employers in Canada is available online at <http://business.queensu.ca/qcbv/sme>.

Source: www.spectracu.com

Credit Union Mentorship Opportunity

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) is seeking 14 credit unions across Canada to host women credit union professionals from developing countries this June.

The visitors will be in Canada as part of the tenth annual **Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due** women's mentorship program, which provides overseas staff of financial co-operatives with a professional development opportunity. From June 9 to 19, 14 women from credit unions in the developing world will spend 10 days with Canadian credit unions receiving leadership training and learning the ins and outs of managing a loans program.

If your credit union is interested in acting as a host for this year's program, contact Kati Clark at 613-238-6711, ext. 208 or at katherine.clark@coopscanada.coop.