

Co-operative Spotlight

November 2010

An overview of
Saskatchewan co-operative sector
news and activities

Co-ops & Credit Unions Called on to Support Fair Trade

There is a natural affinity between co-operatives and Fair Trade; in many ways, support for Fair Trade is an extension of the Principles of Co-operation which guide the co-op movement. TransFair Canada, the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA), the Conseil Canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) and Équiterre have launched a campaign aimed at generating greater awareness of Fair Trade within the co-op sector. The goal of the campaign is to have at least 100 Canadian co-ops, credit unions, and co-operative apex organizations adopt a resolution committing to supporting and promoting Fair Trade by December 2011 - in time for the International Year of Co-operatives in 2012.

For more information on the campaign and an Action Guide, visit <http://transfair.ca/en/get-involved/co-operating-fair-trade#campaign>.



New Manitoba Co-op Tax Credit Assists Emerging Co-operatives

A first-of-its-kind tax credit and the creation of a new development fund will enable established and successful co-ops and credit unions in Manitoba to help new and expanding co-ops.

Starting October 1, contributions to a co-operative development fund of up to \$50,000 by a Manitoba co-op or credit union are eligible for a partly refundable tax credit. All of Manitoba's more than 400 credit unions and co-ops will qualify for the credit.

The fund, which will be managed by the Manitoba Cooperative Association (MCA), will be used to provide strategic investments, grants and technical assistance to support emerging and expanding Manitoba co-operatives and the development of the broader co-operative sector in Manitoba.

"We're excited at the potential for this first-of-its-kind tax credit in Canada," said MCA chair Barry Gosnell. "It's great to see the province respond so positively to our request to find ways to develop the co-op model and we think this is a sustainable way to help co-ops all across Manitoba."

Source: CCA Newsbriefs, October 7, 2010

Two Sask. Co-ops on Canada's Best Employers List

The co-operative sector is well-represented on the recently announced list of the Best Employers in Canada 2011. Saskatchewan's Co-operators Life Insurance Company and Conexus have both been selected for the honour, along with The Co-operators and Island Savings Credit Union of Duncan, BC.

The 2011 Best Employers studies, conducted by Aon Hewitt in conjunction with the Queen's University School of Business, saw participation increase by 20 per cent over last year in the annual Best Employers studies. Two hundred and fifty-one Canadian employers took part in the 2011 Best Employers studies. Organizations are selected as Best Employers based primarily on survey responses from more than 134,000 Canadian employees at these organizations that gauge their level of engagement.

The 2011 lists of the Best Employers in Canada and the Best Small & Medium Employers in Canada (available at <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/October2010/28/c6670.html>) appear in the November 8 issue of Maclean's magazine and the November 4 edition of La Presse.

Source: www.newswire.ca

SCA Welcomes CCEDNet Interns

SCA is pleased to welcome two new interns to our office. Carla Paul and Alieka Beckett began their positions on October 4th and will be with us for six months. The internships are made possible by the support of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network's (CCEDNet) CreateAction Work Experience Program.



Carla Paul, Regional Event Co-ordinator

Carla Paul, our new Regional Event Co-ordinator, is a graduate of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program. She holds a degree from the University of Regina in Kinesiology, Recreation and Sports Administration. After graduating, Carla worked as a project co-ordinator planning and organizing various cultural events in Saskatoon. In her new role, Carla will be tasked with the planning and co-ordination of a regional Community Economic Development (CED) event. This event will provide an opportunity to organizations and individuals that are interested in and involved in CED and co-operatives to share concepts, practices and experiences and learn from each other and network. This event will be one of several events that are being planned across the country, with the Saskatchewan event focusing on co-operatives, CED and environmental and economic sustainability.



Alieka Beckett, Sustainability Officer

Alieka Beckett is our Sustainability Officer. She grew up in Saskatoon and is a recent graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. She holds an undergraduate degree in History and a certificate in Theology from Eston College. As Sustainability Officer, she will focus on improving SCA's sustainability practices and supporting communities who are interested in developing environmentally sustainable enterprises. This will include creating online registration and payment options for the SCYP website, and facilitating and promoting the co-operative business model to develop worker and agricultural co-operatives in Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan Business Magazine Profiles Co-operatives

In the latest edition of the Saskatchewan Business Magazine (October/November 2010), Wadena Co-operative Association, Moose Jaw Co-operative Association and Pineland Co-operative Association are profiled for making a difference in their communities. Retail co-ops are often distinguished as a benefit to communities as they give back to their members and support their personnel through staff incentives, such as personal development training and volunteer recognition awards. Saskatchewan retail co-operatives also support local community groups by sponsoring a wide variety of activities and events. Supporting the community as a whole is not only a priority for co-ops but it's what they do.

In Wadena, after a national hardware store closed, the Co-op board undertook a feasibility study to determine if it was a viable option. Even though the numbers didn't look promising, the Co-op board knew it was something the community wanted.

Using the co-operative principles of equity and cash back membership, the Wadena Co-operative Association Hardware Store has been highly supported as membership has increased over the last 8 years. Today Wadena Co-operative Association gives back to their community by sponsoring many local community initiatives such as sports teams, projects and events.

Meanwhile, if you were to ask a Moose Jaw Co-op member what their rate of return on their cash back and equity

was ten years ago they would probably say it was low but over the last decade cash back and equity programs have increased substantially and so has memberships. Their recent success is attributed to building new facilities which are spacious and comfortable inside and makes people feel proud to be a part of the Co-op Association. Moose Jaw Co-operative Association is also giving back to their community through volunteerism and sponsoring minor sports.

Improved memberships due to facility development echoes what is happening in Nipawin at the Pineland Co-operative Association. Over the last decade, Pineland Co-operative Association has invested over \$13 million in assets for facility development. This includes: a new gas bar/convenience store/car wash, food store, and 2 fertilizer outlets along with a new gas bar/convenience store/car wash in the neighboring town of Choiceland. All of the investment has paid off for Pineland Co-operative Association as memberships have

increased. They too are giving back to the community by sponsoring sports, culture and charities that are focused on youth activities.

As you can see Saskatchewan Retail co-ops play a pivotal role in communities by making a difference at the local level through sponsoring sports groups, events and projects. Practicing the co-operative principle for concern for the community is what these co-operatives are doing!

Source: Saskatchewan Business Magazine, October/November 2010



The article in Saskatchewan Business Magazine, October/November 2010

Second Annual YES Network Youth Leadership Forum

On October 20, 2010 Co-operators Life Insurance Company hosted a full-day sustainability forum for 80 students from seven local high schools to kick off its 2010-2011 Youth Engagement in Sustainability (YES) program. This is the second annual YES Network Youth Leadership Forum, with more than twice as many participants as there were at last year's inaugural forum.

YES is a unique initiative spearheaded and sponsored by The Co-operators. The International Centre of Sustainable Cities was enlisted to help develop the program in 2009. YES engages and empowers adolescents in making their schools, homes, and communities more sustainable places to live, work and play.

The full-day youth leadership forum is designed to equip students with the necessary information and tools for tackling sustainability projects. Forum workshop topics this year included project management, applying for grants, researching, dealing with government and media, and leadership development.

"The passion that young people have for creating a greener, healthier planet is really quite inspiring," said Kevin Daniel, Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer of Co-operators Life. "By providing a program like this, we are seeking to harness that energy and provide them with tools they can use to bring about positive change in the years and decades ahead."

The 2010 YES Network Youth Leadership Forum featured an open discussion of sustainability facilitated by David Noble, founder and principal of 2degreesC, a climate change organization. The prominent environmental activist who has previously worked with Al Gore and given youth engagement talks around North America also presented on youth and their crucial role in addressing the issue of climate change.

For more information on the YES Network, visit: <http://www.yesnetwork.ca>.

YES Network Creates Young Leaders

Heather Hale, Program Officer of Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program interviewed Kathleen Wilson about the Co-operators Life Insurance Company sponsored youth engagement initiative in Regina schools

You are working on an innovative project called the Youth Engagement in Sustainability (YES) Network. Can you tell us a little bit about it?

YES is a youth engagement initiative sponsored by Co-operators Life Insurance Company in Regina. It consists of a network of teachers, students and community organizations working together to create youth leaders on environmental sustainability through youth led action projects. We are currently working with environmental clubs at seven Regina and area high schools to kick start these youth led initiatives.

Where do you see this project being in 5 years?

I would like to see environmental clubs in every high school in Regina working on a variety of school based and community based projects related to environmental sustainability. I also hope to see a skilled base of young leaders moving on from the program and working to make change at all levels of the community. How amazing would that be!

How can youth sign up and get involved?

We are currently working directly with high school environmental clubs within Regina and the surrounding area. For youth in this region there are two ways to get involved; They can join the club that already exists at their high school or talk to their friends and teachers and form a club to join the network.

Do you have any advice for youth who want to start their own organization or project but don't know where to get started?

My best advice is to get out into the community and start talking about your idea! You never know who might be interested in helping or supporting your idea. Any given community can provide a wealth of knowledge and resources - how to find grant money, how to get in contact with the right people, etc. Having a network of support behind your program can only make it stronger!

How do co-operative ideals fit in with the work that you are doing? Both idealistically and on the ground?

The YES Network is about community coming together to support each other. It is about training, educating and engaging the next generation of community members, employees and clients.

What responsibilities do cooperatives have for environmental sustainability?



Students in the YES Network raised money to put solar panels on the roof of Campbell Collegiate (photo: Cal Fehr)

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Sask. Business Magazine Publishes Top 100 Sequel

In the October issue, Saskatchewan Business Magazine lists the next 45 most successful business in Saskatchewan. Once again, the co-operative sector is well represented with Spectra Credit Union, TCU Financial, Prairie Centre Credit Union and Weyburn Credit Union appearing on the list.

The magazine can be downloaded at http://sunrisepublish.com/saskbusiness_magazine/

Virtual Exhibit Launched

Be sure to visit the new on line exhibit called "Building Community: Creating Social and Economic Well-Being" at <http://usaskstudies.coop/exhibit/>. This is a virtual exhibit of stories, research outcomes, illustrations, videos, and artifacts prepared by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives and the Diefenbaker Canada Centre at the University of Saskatchewan.

This exhibit was created to inspire you, to help you imagine what might be possible in your own community by exploring what is happening in others. Researchers and communities across Northern Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan have been working together to learn more about how the economic and social well being of communities can be improved. The exhibit examines the topics of:

- Building Sustainable Communities
- Building Engaged Communities
- Building Enterprising Communities
- Building Inclusive Communities

The exhibit contains a wealth of information as well as wonderful photographic and video resources.

Source: <http://usaskstudies.coop/exhibit/>

YES Network - Continued from page 3

Our environment is such a crucial part to how we function and live. Our access to clean air, clean water, nutritional food is dependent on our environment. To make sure everyone has access to these things, now and into the future, we have to make sure that we are working in a way that is not going to impact these environmental systems. This responsibility belongs to everyone.

What do you do when you are not running the YES Project and being awesome?

I volunteer. I am in a book club. I'm part of a craft circle. My roommates and I have been known to throw a pretty great potluck. It really is all about community.

Where do you find inspiration for the work that you do?

The inspiration comes easily when you are working with youth. If I am ever overwhelmed or having a bad day, all I need to do is spend some time with some of these students. Their energy, enthusiasm and idealism get me every time. They remind me that it really is possible to change the world!

What do you say to those people who claim the youth of today are not engaged? What do you think is the best way to get youth involved in things?



YES Network students celebrate Earth Day

I think social media is a great example of how youth are engaged. They are on facebook, they are on twitter, they are blogging - they care about issues in the community and what

is happening around the world. I saw a quote not long ago that said "Is it really youth that are out of touch with institutions or is it institutions that are out of touch with youth?" There is a fine line between meaningful engagement and tokenism. Youth need to have a voice. They need to be treated as an equal. They need mentorship. If you can provide these opportunities, they will get involved.

You're on a role! What is next for you?

The YES Network is just kicking off for this school year! There is a lot coming up. In addition to the program we ran last year, I am hoping to do more external community events. In the coming months we will be teaming up with the City of Regina to do a crash course in city planning for high school students. In the Spring I am hoping to do a community photo visioning project. The possibilities are endless!

Did You Know . . .

there are all kinds of ways you can keep up-to-date on happenings at SCA and SCYP?

On FaceBook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saskatchewan-Co-operative-Youth-Program/38628850928>

On Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/CoopNewsSK>
<http://twitter.com/coopcamprocks>

Our You Tube Channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/SCYPclips>

On Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/people/coopcamprocks/>