

Co-operative Spotlight

November 2011

An overview of
Saskatchewan co-operative sector
news and activities

Fundraisers Held at FCL Fall Conferences

Fundraising events were held on November 6 at the Federated Co-operatives Ltd. fall conferences in Saskatoon and Regina. A live auction and 50/50 draw were held in Saskatoon, and a Select Your Prize raffle was held in Regina. Proceeds from these two events exceeded \$5,500.

Half the funds raised will be used to support the ongoing work of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program. SCYP continues to work with young people to encourage their active involvement in community and co-operative organizations, ensuring the co-operative leadership of tomorrow.

The other half of the proceeds will be forwarded to the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada. Also, a third fundraiser was held at the Calgary fall conference, raising \$845 for CDF. These funds will support CDF's international development work. This allows CCA to leverage significant funds from the Canadian International Development Agency to further its international work which helps create lasting community prosperity and secure lives worldwide.

The success of these fundraisers would not be possible without the tremendous support of Federated Co-operatives Ltd., Saskatchewan retail co-operatives and their delegates.

Largest-Ever ICA General Assembly Wraps Up in Cancun

It was an event that will be remembered as a milestone in the 116-year history of the International Co-operative Alliance: the largest General Assembly ever and the global co-op movement's launch of the International Year of Co-operatives.

More than 2,000 co-operators attended the week's events, which ended on the evening of Friday, November 18 with a gala dinner. They came from 78 countries and from every conceivable type of co-operative.



Mexican president Felipe Calderón addresses the assembly

They talked about a wide range of issues affecting co-operatives, from gender equality to environmental sustainability; from measuring co-op performance to enabling legislation; from youth engagement to co-operatives' contribution to peace.

But most of all, they talked about the International Year of Co-operatives, which is a mere 43 days away. The official global co-op sector launch of the International Year took place Wednesday evening, [Continued on Page 2](#)

2012 International Summit of Co-ops Unveils Program

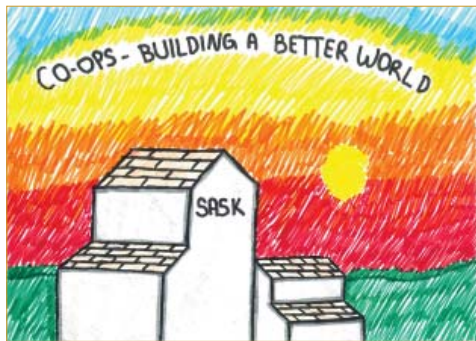
On October 31, 2011, in conjunction with the launch of the United Nations' International Year of Cooperatives, the 2012 International Summit of Co-operatives (www.2012intlsummit.coop) unveiled a unique and diverse program covering topics of interest to the co-operative and mutual community. The goal of the program, which focuses on the financial and socio-economic aspects and global socio-political influence of co-operatives and mutuals, is to create opportunities to do business differently.

"The contribution that co-operatives and mutuals make to the global economy will receive the recognition it deserves," said Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, one of the three co-hosts of the Summit. Presidents and CEOs from the 300 largest co-operatives in the world, whose combined economic power is equal to the 10th largest global economy, will share their strategies and vision of development for the co-operative and mutualist business model in the face of global challenges. "We are looking forward to welcoming them to Quebec City, the birthplace of the Canadian co-operative movement," said Monique F. Leroux, Chair of the Board, President and CEO of Desjardins Group, a co-host of the Summit.

With many theme-based workshops focusing on co-operatives' various areas of activity and more than 125 world-renowned speaker, the 2012 International Summit of Co-operatives promises to be a unique source of global information.

Source: 2012 Summit of Co-operatives news release, October 31, 2011

SCYP Produces Postcards to Celebrate International Year of Co-operatives



Celebrate the International Year of Co-operatives 2012 with a set of co-operatively themed postcards. Each postcard in the set was created by a talented participant of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program this past summer. The distinctive designs, depicting aspects of IYC 2012 celebrations as well as the contributions that co-operative and credit unions make to Saskatchewan, will gain attention no matter the recipient.

The set of ten unique postcards are printed in full colour, shrink-wrapped in clear plastic and are available for \$5.00 plus shipping. All proceeds go to the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program's IYC 2012 events. Contact us at 244-3702 or at Kim.VindegSmall@sask.coop to order.



Artwork by Tana Gammel (top), and (bottom L to R) Shanae Blaquiere, Aja Cooper and Julia Hanson

SCA P.O. Attends NASCO Institute

From Nov. 4 to 6, SCA Program Office Heather Hale participated in the North American Students of Co-operation's (NASCO) Annual Co-operative Education and Training Institute in Ann Arbor Michigan. The 2011 theme was *Creative Intersections- Education, Media and Co-operatives*. The event brought together nearly 400 co-operators from across Canada and the United States to share skills, ideas and discuss topics that affect the co-operative movement. NASCO is a family of associations which organizes and educates affordable group equity co-ops and their members for the purpose of promoting a community oriented cooperative movement.

Highlights of the Institute included a tour of nearby Detroit, Documentary Film Festival, engaging workshops on a variety of topics such as Building Co-operation Through Popular Education, Creating an Effective Website, and Accounting Troubleshooting for Co-op Bookkeepers as well as a keynote address by Adrienne Maree Brown, an organizational healer, facilitator, singer, doula-in-training and artist living in Detroit.



Heather Hale, left, registers for NASCO Institute

For additional information about NASCO's ongoing programs and services check out their website at www.nasco.coop.

CANCUN - Continued from page 1 November 16, with a ceremony which included a recorded message from United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

"Co-operatives are a unique and invaluable presence in today's world," he said. "They help to reduce poverty and generate jobs," he continued.

Another video message came from Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Mr. Somavia was effusive in his praise of co-ops, describing them as "effective entrepreneurs of a better world."

Dame Pauline Green, president of the ICA, described the International Year as a "gift" to the co-operative movement and made the link between the frustration with existing economic models shown by the Occupy movement and the alternative that co-ops offer. She suggested that co-operators must maximize the value of the International Year and "drive awareness of co-operatives up the political agenda."

A highlight of the week was Friday morning's appearance by the president of Mexico, Felipe Calderón. Accompanied by his wife, Margarita Zavala, he was greeted warmly by participants and praised co-operatives in his address.

President Calderón pledged his country's support to both the co-operative business model and the International Year of Co-operatives, adding that co-ops have made a significant contribution to the social and economic development of Mexico.

"I know about the value, the economic results and also the human value and social value of a co-operative," he said. "I see how co-operatives bring together the most human part of the social side and the most human part of economic side."

Source: CCA News Briefs, November 18, 2011

Meetings with the Regional Development Co-operatives in Eastern Canada

Editor's note: Quebec's record of co-operative development success is looked to as a model in Canada and throughout the world. A key piece to Quebec's co-operative development strategy is a system of Regional Development Co-operatives (RDCs). RDCs in Quebec are regionally based, and their purpose is to help co-operative businesses through the development steps. This summer, representatives from some of the western provinces went on an exploratory study mission to find out more about how the RDCs in Quebec and New Brunswick work, and to see if the RDC model could be adapted to work in western Canada.

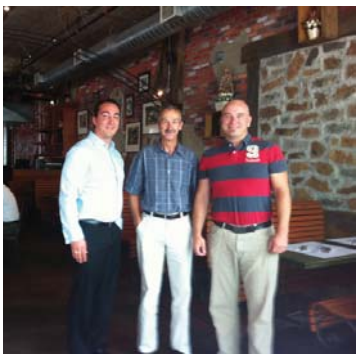
The provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba were looking for a way to increase the impact of the co-operative movement in western provinces. Following much research and discussion, the three partners decided to study the Quebec model of Regional Development Co-operatives (RDCs). RDCs can ensure more asymmetrical co-operative development while respecting regional realities. Also, the model would permit the creation of new co-ops, co-operative formation, job opportunities, and competitive growth between co-operative enterprises.

Thanks to the contribution of the Secretariat of Intergovernmental Affairs (Quebec Government), representatives from Alberta and Manitoba learned about the Quebec model, with the intention of studying this co-operative structure in view of adapting and implementing it in the west.

Therefore, the following exploratory mission was carried on in order to start the process:

- On August 29th, a meeting took place between the representative of Conseil Québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM) and an employee from Desjardins in order to fully understand the Québec co-operative context.
- On August 30th, a meeting with the RDC of L'Outaouais-Laurentides followed by a meeting with an agent of the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat.
- On August 31st, a meeting with the RDC Acadia (New-Brunswick), and a meeting of Research Symposium of Official languages of Canada.
- On September 1st, a meeting with the RDC of Montérégie followed by a meeting with the director of the co-operatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Export Trade (Quebec Government).
- On September 2nd, a meeting with the CDR of Québec-Appalaches, followed by a meeting with the Federation of Co-operatives for Regional Development in Quebec (FCRDQ) and finally, a meeting with the Conseil Québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité (CQCM).

These numerous meetings allowed the western provinces' RDC representatives to discover the vitality of the structure of Quebec co-operative development. Also, meeting with the Acadian CDR gave them the opportunity to realize that it was possible to export this formula out of Quebec, as that RDC has existed since 2004 and experiences great success in New-Brunswick.



Left: Patrice Gauthier (CDEA), Melvin Doiron (Acadian RDC) and Danny Gendron



Right: (L to R) Patrice Gauthier, Mme. Sandra Serrano Molina and M. Janvier Cliche (CDR de l'Estrie) and Danny Gendron.

Thanks to the generosity of the Quebec people, the trip allowed them to come back to western Canada with a great number of co-operative economic development tools. The three western partners are looking forward to many partnerships with their eastern colleagues. This collaboration, based on inter-cooperation, will permit, in the long term, the exchange of expertise, products and services which will energize the eastern co-operative movement in Canada.

**Secrétariat
aux affaires
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Québec 

Co-operatives Recognized on Best Employers List

October is the month when two different organizations release their lists of Canada's best employers, and as in previous years, co-operatives appear on both lists.

Aon Hewitt's list of the 50 Best Employers in Canada, which appears in the latest issue of Maclean's, includes both The Co-operators and Co-operators Life Insurance Company, as well as Coastal Community Credit Union and Conexus Credit Union. La Capitale, a mutual insurance company, also appears on the list.

The list of Canada's Top 100 Employers, issued by Mediacorp Canada Inc. and published in the Globe and Mail, includes Desjardins Group, Mountain Equipment Co-op and Vancouver City Savings Credit Union, better known as Vancity.

Source: October 20, 2011 CCA News Briefs

Central 1 and Credit Union Central Alberta Discuss Merger

Central 1 Credit Union ("Central 1") and Credit Union Central Alberta Ltd. ("Alberta Central") recently announced the initiation of merger discussions with the objective of enhancing core services to more than 190 credit unions in B.C., Alberta and Ontario.

During this process, the centrals will evaluate whether an opportunity exists through consolidation, to achieve efficiencies, offer a stronger liquidity structure, greater diversification of funding sources and better capacity in the areas of finance, payments and trade services. Any proposal to merge would be subject to the approval of regulatory authorities and the boards of directors and shareholders of both centrals.

These discussions are timely considering the changing landscape of the credit union system. The growing trend of individual credit unions merging is resulting in larger credit union organizations with a greater concentration of assets and members and more complex service needs. The centrals will evaluate whether a merged central could more effectively meet the needs of credit unions in the long term.

Central 1 and Alberta Central act as the central financial facilities and trade associations for the B.C. and Ontario, and the Alberta, credit union systems, respectively.

Source: C1 Central News Release, October 17, 2011

Tis the season for online shopping . . .



The Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada (CDF) is gearing up for its 2011 Tis The Season online auction generously sponsored by GROWMARK, Inc.

The auction is set to run from Nov 28 to Dec 4. Set up like E-bay, the auction will feature many novelties from around the world. The auction is a great opportunity do some holiday shopping while supporting a great cause! Visit www.cdfcanada.coop to place your bid!

Sask. Co-ops & CUs on Annual Top 100 Lists

Eleven co-operatives, credit unions and mutual insurance companies are among the **100 largest companies in Saskatchewan in 2011**, according to the latest issue of Saskatchewan Business Magazine.

Federated Co-operatives Limited was ranked the second largest company in the province, second only to Viterra. Co-operators Life Insurance Company, based in Regina, was ninth on the list, up from 13th in 2010. Other co-operatives and mutuals in the top 100 included SaskCentral (27), Conexus Credit Union (32), Concentra Financial (36), Affinity Credit Union (47), Innovation Credit Union (61), Access Communications Co-operative (66), Synergy Credit Union (80), Co-operative Hail Insurance Co. (84) and Saskatchewan Mutual Insurance Company (86).

Eleven Saskatchewan credit unions made Credit Union Central's list of **Largest 100 Credit Unions** (outside of QB), including: Conexus Credit Union (6), Affinity (11), Innovation (19), Synergy Credit Union (27), Cornerstone (32), Spectra (37), TCU (51), Advantage (53), Prairie Centre (58), Weyburn (62), and Diamond North (68). See the full list here: http://www.cucentral.ca/Top100_Q2_2011.

Source: CCA News Briefs, October 20, 2011

North American Worker Co-ops Come Together

The federations representing worker co-operatives in Canada and the United States have created a new organization to share information and work together on specific projects.

At the North American Worker Co-operative conference in Quebec City, the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (CWCF), the United States Federation of Worker Co-operatives and three worker co-op federations in Quebec formed CICOPA-North America as a sub-region of CICOPA-Americas. CICOPA (International Organisation of Industrial, Artisanal and Service Producers' Cooperatives) is the international federation representing worker co-operatives, affiliated with the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).

The five organizations signed a declaration pledging to facilitate the creation of new worker co-ops; facilitate the harmonious development of member co-ops; partner with other organizations sharing their vision and urging governments to use the worker co-op model to contribute to a better future. *Source: CCA News Briefs, Oct. 20, 2011*