

Connections

Northwest Cooperative Development Center

Fostering community economic development through the cooperative business model



New Co-op Development Neighbors

Fall 2006

After several years of being the only USDA-funded center west of the Montana Co-op Development Center, NWCDC finds itself in good company once again.

In Alaska, which is part of the Center's territory, we are happy to have another Center opening up. Our five state region has experienced a steady increase of interest in co-ops and we are happy to share our workload in that giant state.

The Center has connected with this new effort, which is a joint venture between the Center for Economic Develop-

ment at the University of AK, Anchorage and the Extension Office at the University of AK, Fairbanks, to offer assistance.

Their initial projects are expected to be in resources, with a special focus on shellfish and salmon co-ops. We have already offered our assistance to this new Center and will be meeting to discuss specific assistance that we can offer.

Additionally, a new center in California has received RCDG funding. Several years after the U.C. Davis Center for Cooperatives closed, the new center will join forces with the Rural Cooperatives Center. The

new Center will add a technical assistance aspect to the existing Center's focus on co-op information, education and R&D.

Meanwhile, the Rocky Mountain Farmer's Union Cooperative Development Center will work in Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

For the first time in years, the western U.S. has a variety of centers. Everyone at NWCDC looks forward to getting to know our new neighbors.

Inside:

Eat Cooperatively 2

United Co-op Appeal 2

4th Annual Co-op Council 3

RCDG 3



Food Co-op Workshop: Feasibility & Funding

Another wave of food co-op start-ups are about to break. The Center has heard from more than 30 Northwest communities, from Medford to Fairbanks, where residents are trying to start food co-ops.

To meet this growing demand, Andrew McLeod has developed a three-part series of workshops. The final part will take place October 27-29, hosted by

First Alternative Co-op in Corvallis, OR.

To open a store, it is essential to establish what is feasible, and then find the financing with which to make that feasible idea a reality. This event will focus on these issues, and will include presentations by feasibility expert Pete Davis of

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Cooperative Development Services and financial coordinator Dana Allen of First Alternative.

The cost will be \$50 for those engaged in or exploring the creation of a food co-op.

Pre-registration is requested. Materials from previous workshops will be available.

For details, contact Andrew at: 360-943-4241





A Guide to Eating Cooperatively

October is Co-op Month: a great chance to support co-ops and build a more just and democratic economy. Do this by buying food from cooperatives.

This may seem to suggest shopping at natural food co-ops, but that is overlooking a major part of the cooperative food system: those who produce the food.

Agriculture co-ops are owned by farmers joining forces to improve their economic situations.

Many of the brands that you might perceive as "corporate" are actually farmer co-ops.

you might perceive as "corporate" are actually farmer co-ops. Frequently these products are not sold in natural food co-ops because they do not have an organic or natural line; for example, Ocean Spray or Florida's Natural. There are also plenty of natural food marketing and producer co-ops; for example, Equal Exchange and Organic Valley.

Anywhere you shop, you can still support the cooperative economy by purchasing food that is made by co-ops.

Members benefit by entering into marketing agreements and sometimes even creating their own production facilities.

Co-ops provide farmers a larger share of the final retail price and a better leverage for bargaining. By collectively creating a brand, they receive distribution and name recognition previously unavailable.

Ag co-ops have been essential tools to help farmers stay in business, independent and sustain rural economies.

The natural food industry is now largely dominated by large companies still marketed under the brands of the small companies they absorbed.

Meanwhile, many of the brands that



A Small Sample of Farm Co-ops

- Cabot Creamery
- Country Natural Beef
- Florida's Natural
- Frontier Natural Products
- Land O' Lakes
- Organic Valley
- Sun Maid
- Sunkist
- Tillamook
- Tree Top
- Welch's
- Ocean Spray
- Darigold

Give to United Cooperative Appeal

Each year, from Oct. through Dec., the Center solicits donations for the United Co-op Appeal (UCA) campaign. The UCA is a workplace-giving campaign supporting co-op economic development which helps improve lives and strengthen communities.

UCA focuses on long-term solutions to today's problems by empowering people through cooperatives.

To participate organizations host a workplace-giving campaign among their employees to support co-op development. Employees then can give through a payroll deduction, a one-time gift, or not at all.

UCA is purely voluntary, and complements other workplace campaigns.

The Center is one of several recipient agencies. Since its inception in 1992, the United Co-op Appeal has provided \$1,000,000 to support cooperative development projects.

Countless lives and communities have been enhanced through these efforts.

In the past funding from UCA has specifically has been used to assist NW producer co-ops, food co-op development workshops, minority co-op efforts, and small forest landowner co-op workshops.

If you or your workplace is interested in hosting the UCA, please contact us at 360.943.4241.





Join the Co-op Council's Annual Meeting & Education Seminar

November 28 - 29 is the 4th annual joint meeting of the Idaho Co-op Council, Agricultural Co-op Council of Oregon and the WA State Council of Farmer Co-ops' in Portland, OR.

Last year's meeting was a tremendous success and we look forward to another exciting and informative meeting this year.

This is the primary event for NW co-ops in the agriculture sector. The tri-state organizers have focused on issues which are crucial to the growth of co-op businesses. Attendance will help you keep informed, face challenges

and pursue opportunities. The sessions are an unrivalled opportunity to meet and network with key people in your industry.

A key topic at the event is Energy Innovation Opportunities; WSDA director Valoria Loveland will speak on Northwest energy issues.



The Seminar will support co-ops in achieving excellent governance. Breakout sessions will cover subjects such as fraud and

protecting personal information and human resources; updates on legal, tax, accounting and insurance issues will also be covered. Also important are the director training sessions during the second afternoon.

Participants will be equipped to become more effective and knowledgeable resources within their co-ops.

Contact: The Washington State Council of Farmer Cooperatives at 360.786.8180

For registration and agenda: www.idahoco-op.org

Rural Cooperative Development Grant Update

On Sept. 14, 2006 USDA Secretary Mike Johanns announced the award of \$4.3 million to fund cooperative development centers and related activities in 20 states.

The Center is pleased to have been included. The award of \$223,500 will be used to assist in the development of rural co-op business ventures. The Center is also excited to report that California and Alaska were funded to establish new co-op development centers as well.

Funds will provide technical, financial and educational support to the following new and on-going co-op ventures:

Cirgo Wireless

Bringing high quality/low cost wireless services to community centers. Tasks to be completed this year include: outreach, group training and repli-

cation documentation.

Harvesting NW BioEnergy Co-ops

An initiative to research and identify co-op opportunities and strategies throughout the emerging bio-energy industry in the region.

Heritage University

Elementary level co-op development classroom experiences taught by Heritage students

Lake Co. Home Care Workers Co-op

Business plan and pilot project

Island Grown Farmer' Co-op

Capacity building and new marketing venture

Rural Town Business Revitalization

Utilizing the co-op business model as a business retention tool

Methow Forest Owner's Co-op

Increased outreach to forestland owners

Olympia Biofuels

Business plan development

Stevens Co. Special Forest

Products

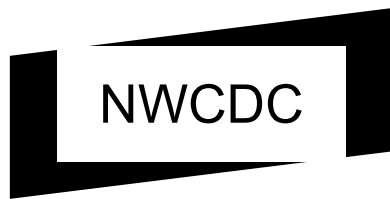
Feasibility research and outreach to community partners and potential worker member/owners.

Throughout the year we will bring you periodic updates on the progress of these projects.





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*Fostering community economic development primarily
 through the cooperative business model*

Center's Services:

- Organizational Development
- Feasibility and Market Studies
- Co-op Board Trainings
- Strategic Planning Facilitation
- Fundraising and Grant Writing
- Democratic Governance Training
- Business Planning
- Leadership Training



For more information contact NW CDC at 360.943.4241 or diane@nwcdc.coop

Inside:

<i>Eat Cooperatively</i>	2
<i>United Co-op Appeal</i>	2
<i>4th Annual Co-op Council</i>	3
<i>RCDG</i>	3