

Connections

NORTHWEST COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Fostering community economic development through the cooperative business model



Co-ops Respond to Biofuel Market

Transportation fuels represent an enormous investment for all of us. We in the tri-state Northwest will spend many tens of billions this year on road fuels. Most of that money immediately leaves our states and too much leaves the U.S. Finding ways to keep economic resources local will support the health of the local economy.

Co-ops are a way for groups to form locally-based businesses positioned to meet the needs of both fuel consumers and farmers. The Umpqua Bio-Alternatives Co-op (UBAC), based in Douglas Co. OR, is a co-op of consumers organizing to localize some of the region's fuel economy.

Initially UBAC seeks to create and operate a fuel distribution system for members, and have been experimenting with technologies and crops for biofuels production. Down the road, they seek to acquire and develop a site for biofuel production, and hope to create a network of biofuels co-ops.

Around the Pacific Northwest, groups who could not otherwise access biofuels have formed consumer co-ops to wholesale purchase biodiesel and retail it to members. No single consumer could justify purchasing a bulk container or "tote" of fuel alone, but buying as a group makes sense.

The Flower Power Biodiesel Co-op in Salem and the Bend Biofuels Co-op are two examples of Oregon consumers "taking matters into their own hands" to supply themselves with biodiesel.

Grower co-ops have been exploring how to increase their productivity with biofuels processing. For example, the Pendleton Grain Growers purchased an oilseed crusher and biodiesel processor to add value to their canola. In Washington State, two co-ops, the Odessa Union Warehouse and Reardan Grain Growers, have formed an LLC with local investors, Inland Empire Oilseeds.

The principles and mechanics of co-ops lend themselves to biofuels production. Local farmers can combine the feedstocks for biofuels and create the economy of scale that is required to effectively process biodiesel or distill ethanol. This is exactly what corn growers did in the Midwest to develop local markets for their commodities.



UBAC founding member Jerry Sabol pumps waste vegetable oil into a trailer which will be used to refine their process

Biofuels don't need massive infrastructure like the petroleum industry, such as pipe lines or 100 million gallon per year refineries. Fuel can be produced and distributed locally.

We now have an opportunity to build an energy economy focused on the local level. This will not be easy or happen overnight but can be achieved.

UBAC is currently seeking to expand their membership base around Douglas County. If this is a venture which would interest you, now is the

time to join to help steer the development process. For more information please contact UBAC's board president Jim Lon at jblong@dcwisp.net.

NWCDC is a 501(c)3 providing development services for co-ops. Founded in 1979, we serve WA, OR, ID and HI

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How You Can Support Your Local Co-op

The local co-op economy needs your assistance! Co-ops offer our communities proven solutions for economically challenging times. The Center has witnessed co-ops improve lives and strengthen communities through economic empowerment.

Co-ops return more profit to communities, provide expanded marketing opportunities, and leverage greater bargaining power. The cooperative business model is a powerful tool for community-based economic development. Be it farmers or consumers, co-ops help keep economic benefits in the hands of the member-owners.

Each year, from October through December, we solicit donations for the United Co-op Appeal (UCA) campaign. The UCA is a workplace-giving campaign supporting co-op economic development to help improve lives and strengthen communities.

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

Participating 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.

In the past, funding from UCA has been used to assist NW producer co-ops and food co-op development workshops to list a few.

Countless lives and communities have been enhanced through these efforts.

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 nationally.

Our annual donation request letter will arrive in your mailbox soon.

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

USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG) Awarded

On August 15, 2008 – Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced the award of more than \$4.5 million to fund 23 Cooperative Development Centers and related activities in 22 states. The Northwest Cooperative Development Center (NWCDC) is pleased to have been included within this list. The \$200,000 grant will be used to assist in the development of rural cooperative business ventures and NWCDC operations. It is estimated 11 new jobs will be created and 8 jobs will be saved as a result of this assistance.

With the funding provided through the RCDG and selected projects, NWCDC will provide technical, financial, and educational support to 13 new and on-going cooperative ventures, representative of five program focus areas.

Renewable Energy: Promoting renewable-resource cooperative businesses that encourage local jobs and ownership.

- HI BioEnergy Producers Co-op (HI)
- Junction City Anaerobic Digester (OR)
- Snohomish Co. Biofuel Growers Co-op (WA)
- Umpqua Biofuels Alternative Co-op (OR)

Cooperative Housing: Empowering residents to collectively take control of their housing future.

- Green Pastures Manufactured Home Conversion (OR)
- Hidden Village Manufactured Home Conversion (WA)
- Olympia Senior Housing Co-op (WA)

Community Grocery Co-ops: Promoting the creation of rural consumer-owned natural food and grocery co-ops.

- Waimanalo Community Market (HI)
- West End Co-op (WA)

Cooperative Marketing: Combining inventories and buying power to access markets not available to the small individual producer.

- Organic Seed growers (WA)
- Lost River Valleys Marketing Coop (ID)
- Pine Creek Village (WA)

Worker Cooperatives: Creating and maintaining sustainable jobs to improve the quality of life of the worker-members, allow for democratic self-management and promote community and local development.

- Black River Ranch Project (WA)
- Paradise Home Care Co-op (HI)

These projects were selected as part of NWCDC's work plan for the year (October 1 through September 30) based, in part, on their potential to promote new and emerging industries that encourage local jobs and ownership.

Throughout the year we will bring you periodic updates on the progress of these projects. Additionally, once a year NWCDC solicits potential projects to be included in the annual RCDG application to USDA. It is expected this process will begin again in January 2009. If you know of a co-op venture in a rural Northwest community needing assistance please feel free to contact us at :
diane@nwcdc.coop or 360.943.4241 for more information.





NW Cooperative Development Center

1063 Capitol Way #211

Olympia, WA 98501

www.nwcdc.coop

360.943.4241

Cooperative Event Calendar

November

6th Annual NW Regional Joint
Co-op Council Meetings &
Educational Seminar
Nov. 12-13, Bosie, ID
208-344-7691
www.idahoco-op.org

The Ralph K. Morris Foundation
banquet at the 11th Annual
Farmer Co-op conference at
the Crown Plaza Hotel St. Paul,
Nov. 18-19, with the banquet on
Nov. 18 at 6:30
uwcc.wisc.edu/farmecoops08

2nd Annual North Central
Washington
Farm-to-Table Workshop
Connecting Local Farmers with
Local Buyers
November 17, 9:00 to 3:00

Wenatchee Community Center
504 S. Chelan Avenue,
Wenatchee, WA 98801
Contact: Michel Wiman 509-
663-8181 x 235

Focus on Farming Conference
Lynnwood Convention Center
3711196th St. SW,
Nov. 20 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
focusonfarming.org
425-388-7492

December

ORECA 66th Annual Meeting
Embassy Suites Hotel @
Washington Square
9000 SW Washington Square
Rd., Tigard, OR
December 3rd & 4th, 2008
www.oreca.org

Later in the year...

Harvesting Clean Energy
Billings, MT at the Crowne
Plaza on, Jan. 25-27, www.harvestcleanenergy.org/conference 253-445-4575

Cooperative developer Melbah
Smith will be inducted into the
Cooperative Hall of Fame on
May 6, www.cdf.coop

*Co-op event submissions,
and brief articles are
welcome, please send them
to: ben@nwcdc.coop*