

October is Co-op Month

Co-op Enterprises Build a Better World

BY SARAH JOHNSON

The statistics are staggering. In the United States, cooperatives contribute annual sales of more than \$652 billion and generate 2 million jobs according to the National Cooperative Business Association. Cooperatives are businesses that operate for the benefit of their member-owners, are governed by democratic principles, and contribute to socio-economic development in fields ranging from banking and insurance to utilities and grocery. More than a billion people count themselves as cooperative members around the globe.

In recognition of the tremendous impact this model makes worldwide, the United Nations has designated 2012 as "The International Year of Cooperatives." International Years are declared annually by the U.N. on one or several topics in an effort to draw attention to and encourage action on major issues. The year 2005 marked the International Year of Microcredit followed by Bangladeshi economist Mohammad Yunus receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his work in this area.

While the initiative focuses on the cooperative as a worldwide enterprise, each remains a local business at its core. "Cooperatives serve a need that is not being met and are often recognized as local innovators and trend setters," says Adam Schwartz, vice president of public affairs and member services for the National Cooperative Business Association. "With this designation, we hope to raise the profile of cooperatives, help people get to know them better and make it easier to do business with them."

After the declaration, Pauline Green, board president of the International Cooperative Alliance, remarked, "The cooperative model is a better choice and offers the basis for a more



PHOTOGRAPHS PROVIDED BY ALAFFIA

Members of Alaffia's shea butter cooperative.

"The cooperative model is a better choice and offers the basis for a more sustainable way to do business."
—Pauline Green, board president, International Cooperative Alliance

sustainable way to do business when compared to traditional capitalist models now under scrutiny. What sets this model apart from others is that all cooperatives, whether they are small farmers or large consumer-owned entities, share the values of democracy, solidarity, equality, self-help, and self-responsibility, creating businesses that serve the greater good as opposed to maximizing profit for the very few." There is also a resolution pending in the U.S. Senate designating 2012 as

"The International Year of Cooperatives" and both Minnesota senators have joined as co-sponsors of this legislation.

With the slogan "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," this initiative will be officially launched at the United Nations New York headquarters in October. Also during that month, the National Cooperative Business Association will take its annual conference on the road for the first time and hold their meetings in Minneapolis, Oct. 4–7.

In the words of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, "Cooperatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic vitality and social responsibility." Watch for more information on this initiative in future issues of the Mix.

Sarah Johnson is a local food enthusiast and proud member of the Linden Hills Co-op. She has written on health and nutrition topics for local websites including Simple, Good and Tasty and Twin Cities Daily Planet.

mix
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www.themix.coop

Member Stores

BURNSVILLE
Valley Natural Foods
www.valleynaturalfoods.coop
13750 County Road 11
952-891-1212
Mon.–Thurs. 8:00–9:00;
Fri.–Sat. 8:00–8:00
Sun. 10:00–8:00
Java Drive Mon.–Sat. 6:30–8:00; Sun. 9:00–8:00

CAMBRIDGE
City Center Market
122 N. Buchanan St.
763-689-4640
Mon.–Sat., 8:00–9:00
Sun., 10:00–5:00

CHANHASSEN
Lakewinds Natural Foods
www.lakewinds.coop
435 Pond Promenade
952-697-3366
Mon.–Sat., 8:00–9:00
Sun., 9:00–8:00

LONG LAKE
Harvest Moon Natural Foods
www.harvestmoon.coop
2380 Wayzata Blvd.
952-345-3300
Mon.–Fri., 7:00–9:00
Sat. 8:00–9:00
Sun., 9:00–8:00

MINNEAPOLIS
Eastside Food Co-op
www.eastsidefood.coop
2551 Central Ave.
612-788-0950
Daily 8:00–9:00
Linden Hills Co-op
www.lindenhills.coop
3815 Sunnyside Ave.
612-922-1159
Daily 8:00–9:00

Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli
www.seward.coop
2823 E. Franklin Ave.
612-338-2465
Daily 8:00–10:00

Wedge Co-op
www.wedge.coop
2105 Lyndale Ave. S.
612-871-3993
Mon.–Fri., 9:00–10:00;
Sat.–Sun., 9:00–9:00

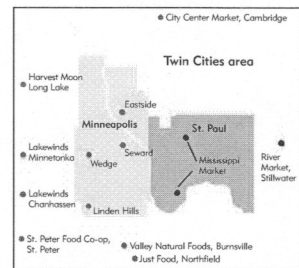
MINNETONKA
Lakewinds Natural Foods
www.lakewinds.coop
17501 Minnetonka Blvd.
952-473-0292
Mon.–Sat., 8:00–9:00;
Sun., 9:00–8:00

NORTHFIELD
Just Food Co-op
www.justfood.coop
516 S. Water St.
507-650-0106
Mon.–Sat., 8:00–9:00;
Sun., 10:00–7:00

ST. PAUL
Mississippi Market
www.msmarket.coop
622 Selby Ave.
651-310-9499
Daily 8:00–9:30
1500 W. 7th St.
651-690-0507
Daily 8:00–9:00

ST. PETER
St. Peter Food Co-op
www.stpeterfood.coop
228 Mulberry St.
507-934-4880
Daily 7:00–9:00

STILLWATER
River Market Community Co-op
221 N. Main St.
651-437-0366
Mon.–Fri., 8:00–9:00;
Sat., 9:00–8:00;
Sun., 9:00–7:00



Map not to scale.