

voice

Your Co-op Community News from Mid America Cooperative Council

January 2008



MACC Mission:
*To Promote, Foster and
Enhance the Values of
Cooperatives*

MACC annual meeting

The MACC annual meeting is scheduled for June 20 at the Marten House Hotel and Lilly Conference Center in Indianapolis.

Annual meeting presenters include Dr. Michael Boelje and Dr. Allen Gray, Purdue University Center for Agricultural Business; Dr. Michael Cook, University of Missouri (Co-op Director Education); and Bob Cohen (Co-ops 101).

A forum discussion of issues facing co-ops will begin at 10 a.m. The focus will be on how co-ops can continue to serve the needs of their membership and still meet the needs of dynamic consumer markets.

Mark your calendars now.

You will not want to miss this enlightening cooperative discussion.

Directors' Education Program

Next month's Director Education Program, held at four different locations for your convenience, is worth your time for many different reasons.

Cooperative governance is a difficult subject. All co-op directors want to do it well, but there are not many guidelines out there.

A class like this, from one of the best co-op educators in the business, really gives directors a broader understanding of the do's and don'ts of co-op governance.

The one-day session features Dr. David Barton of Kansas State University. In addition to serving as the director of the Arthur Capper Cooperative Center at Kansas State, Dr. Barton is also a professor of agricultural economics. His unique background, experiences, and perspectives will help you guide your co-op to even greater success.

"Dr. Barton is one of the most down-to-earth academics I've ever been around," said Bart Baker, Shipman Elevator. "The interaction among attendees at his training sessions is excellent."

To register for this one-day workshop, visit www.macc.coop.



Dr. David Barton

MACC Cooperative Start-Up Forum

Starting a new co-op can be difficult - assistance is available at the MACC Cooperative Start-Up Forum, March 6th at the Center for Innovation and Food Technology (CIFT), 5555 Airport Hwy, Toledo, OH.

The day begins with the award-winning Co-ops 101 class. Then, from 3-8 p.m., a knowledgeable panel and individual break-out sessions will guide participants through the process of developing a cooperative business plan.

MACC & CIFT are partnering to sponsor this forum. Questions, visit www.macc.coop or call Rod Kelsay, 317-726-6910 or Rebecca Singer, 419-534-3710.

December MACC membership meeting

Lessons learned at the December MACC membership meeting, held last month in Dublin, Ohio:

Focus on how co-ops meet local membership needs – John Florian, Ohio Credit Union League.

John talked about how he most effectively educates the Ohio state legislature and United States Congress about co-ops. To make meaningful connections with these legislators, he talks about how co-op members come together, in a common cause, to serve their local needs and share in the profits.

Need for an in-depth program for prospective cooperative directors – MACC members

MACC members explained that prospective cooperative directors need more information on their role. This two-day director workshop, which is being guided by Tom Schlenker, Farm Credit Services of Mid America, and Bruce Ingraham, Beacon Credit Union, is scheduled for January, 2009.

Concrete data on how co-ops impact our society – Dr. Brent Hueth, University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Hueth is conducting a large research project to identify the size and scope of co-op influence on American society. His work will help our members – and our communities – better understand the value of the co-op structure.



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Indiana co-op summit

Adam Schwartz of the National Cooperative Business Association, a speaker at the recent Indiana Co-op Summit, did an excellent job summarizing key cooperative marketing advantages as he pitted co-ops "head-to-head" against stock companies.

What cooperatives do...

- + Distribute capital widely among Americans
- + Keep capital **in** the community
- + Exemplify the "ownership society"
- + Have an **open** and inclusive governance
- + Have both economic and social goals
- + Police themselves

What stock companies do...

- Concentrate capital
- Export capital elsewhere
- Concentrate ownership in investor class
- Have a **closed** governance
- Have primarily economic goals
- Are overseen and controlled by government

"Co-ops just do it right!"

- Jim Blaine, president of the North Carolina Union League.

www.macc.coop



Thoughts from Rod

What are the unintended consequences of co-op members not understanding the unique relationship they have with their co-op?

I believe that the key co-op business advantage is its core purpose – **to serve the needs of its membership profitably**. In contrast, the core purpose of an investor-owned company is to provide the highest economic return to its owners. There is a big difference between these two purposes.

I'm sure each of us has been frustrated at some point with the "quest for profits" that dominates an investor owned company, a quest that typically leaves no room for understanding the needs of its customers. Those of us who work in the co-op structure believe that serving member needs is just as important as earning profits for those members.

When our members and employees understand the difference between the structures, you'll see more willingness to change and a newfound respect between employee and member owner. **In fact, research shows that member loyalty grows with understanding of their cooperative.**

Wishing your co-op all the best in the New Year,
 Rod Kelsay
 Executive Director

Mark Your Calendar Now! Upcoming training sessions

Director Training with Dr. David Barton

- February 12** in Springfield, IL (hosted by Association of IL-REC)
- February 13** in Vincennes, IN (hosted by Vincennes University)
- February 14** in Wabash, IN (hosted by North Central Co-op)
- February 15** in Dublin, OH (hosted by Ohio Credit Union League)

MACC Cooperative Start-Up Forum

March 6 in Toledo, OH (held in conjunction with Co-ops101 class)

Co-ops 101

- March 6** in Toledo, OH at the Center for Innovative Food Technology, 5555 Airport Hwy
- June 12** in Louisville, KY at Farm Credit Services of Mid America, 1601 UPS Drive
- June 20** in Indianapolis, IN at the Marten House Hotel, 1801 W. 86th Street
- July 24** in Kettlersville, OH at Advanced Agri-Solutions, 8977 St Rd 274
- August 19** in Goshen, IN at Farm Bureau Credit Union, 300 W. Lincoln Ave.

MACC Annual Meeting

June 20 in Indianapolis, IN

Did you know: MACC provided cooperative education to 790 participants in 26 separate programs in 2007

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