

CoMinnesota Annual Report 2015



*Co-mingling
cooperators for fun
and collaboration*



Value Statement:
CoMinnesota values actions that contribute to greater social and economic justice, and that advance racial equity.

CoMinnesota objectives for 2015:

- Create welcoming spaces and events where all persons can learn about the cooperative model, and the ways that the model has been or could be used in Minnesota.
- Work to establish a communications network that connects cooperative partners to cross-sectoral events, discussions and social events.
- Grow its ability to support and connect cooperatives and diverse communities throughout the state of Minnesota.
- Develop systems that 1.) enable more effective planning and execution of events and activities, and 2.) inform future events and document our achievements.

2015 Accomplishments

CoMinnesota is an expanding community of Minnesota cooperators from a wide range of cooperative models who are working together to create and promote activities that tell the story of how cooperative enterprises build a better world.

This initiative started during the UN's International Year of the Cooperative – 2012, and we intend to keep it going for many years.

Our main activities include:

- Maintaining a CoMinnesota communications platform, including web site, list serve, and other tools,
- Sponsoring, promoting, and creating cooperative oriented events, and
- Building an online community of cooperators who can connect and engage in discussions.

CoMinnesota Retreat – January 28, 2015, CoMinnesota members gathered to discuss how to work together to advance the movement of cooperative enterprises in Minnesota.

- An outcome of the retreat was an organizational structure to oversee the priorities and activities of CoMinnesota, and to establish a General Membership meeting to convene quarterly.

Established “Co-Mingle”, a monthly gathering of cooperators converged to discuss a range of topics:

May	National Cooperative Movement
June	Solar Energy in Minnesota
July	International Cooperative Alliance: Principle 5 Discussion
August	Tour of Co-op Partners Warehouse
September	Cooperatizing Technology: Broadband Access and Cooperative Software Sharing
October	Coop History at Fair State Brewery with the Alberta Community and Cooperative Association
November	none
December	Holiday Happy Hour

Participated in local (**Bush Connect**) and national (**Annual Coops Week – Washington DC**) conferences.

Helped to advance cooperative start-ups through the workshop **Building a Cooperative from the Ground Up** (led by Twin Cities LISC, in partnership with Shared Capital Cooperative, Cooperative Development Services, City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development, and CoMinnesota) in October 2015.

Building the Capacity of CoMinnesota

Pick your level of engagement!

Minnesota Cooperators are invited to get involved in a variety of ways:

CoMinnesota is driven by:

Steering Committee
Elected annually by CoMinnesota Membership to oversee administrative

CoMingle Committee
Coordinates the monthly CoMingle events

Events Committee
Provides support to CoMinnesota events

CoMinnesota does:

CoMingle
Monthly series of cooperative topics (brown bag and happy hour events)

General Assembly
Cooperators meet quarterly to authorize the and oversee

Events
Convene cooperators to advance cooperative models

CoMinnesota is for:

Steering Committee
Elected annually by CoMinnesota Membership to oversee administrative

CoMingle Committee
Coordinates the monthly CoMingle events

Events Committee
Provides support to CoMinnesota events

To find out what's happening and how to get involved:

The **CoMinnesota website** (www.CoMinnesota.coop) hosts information on CoMinnesota news, events, and registration.

CoMinnesota facebook page helps to connect people with events through social media.

CoMinnesota On-line Newsletter provides updates on cooperative happenings and opportunities.

Anyone interested may sign-up for **notification about upcoming events and activities**
To sign up for e-blast notifications, contact: vicky.chaput@cooperativenetwork.coop

Looking Ahead to 2016

- **Expand CoMinnesota membership and participation**
- **Build connections with national cooperative groups and efforts**
- **Promote support services for emerging and existing cooperative businesses**
- **Actively contribute to greater social and economic justice that advances racial equity**

2015 CoMinnesota Committee Members:

Steering Committee

Kevin Edberg, Cooperative Development Services

Christina Jennings, Shared Capital Cooperative

Gretchen Nicholls, Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Emily Anderson, The Wedge Co-op

Ruby Levine, P6

CoMingle Committee

Emily Lippold Cheney, Cooperative Youth Council

Leslie Watson, Northeast Investment Cooperative

Char Vrieze, MN Cooperative Education Foundation

Natalie Locke, Aynah / USA CYC

Dan Nordley, Co-op Grocer Network

Shari Wormwood, Minnesota Rural Electric Cooperative

Events Committee

Tom Pierson, Shared Capital Cooperative

Sarah Pike, Association of Cooperative Educators

Thanks to our Partners and Sponsors!!

CoMinnesota is supported primarily by in-kind and volunteer support from members of the cooperative community.

Thank you to our sponsoring organizations that donated food, meeting spaces, and accounting services in 2015:

- MN Cooperative Education Foundation (food)
- Walker Church (meeting space)
- The Wedge, Seward Co-op (food)
- Cooperative Development Services (accounting services)
- Triangle Park Creative (web site support, graphic design)

Co-operative Identity, Values and Principles

Definition

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity, and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.



1. Voluntary and Open Membership
Co-operatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2. Democratic Member Control
Co-operatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.

3. Member Economic Participation
Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually received limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with

the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4. Autonomy and Independence
Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5. Education, Training & Information
Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public – particularly young people and opinion leaders – about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6. Co-operation among Co-operatives
Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working through local, national, regional and international structures.

7. Concern for Community
Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.