

# CoMinnesota

## Annual Report 2016



### Why CoMinnesota?

Cooperatives contribute to greater social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic fairness.

There's much to do.

We have much to offer.

## Building a Cooperative Community

CoMinnesota is an expanding organization of Minnesota cooperators and allies sharing how cooperative enterprises build a better world.

- We are creating, sponsoring, and promoting programming that contributes to greater social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic fairness.
- We are creating social and enterprise networks that help cooperative partners and allies pursue collaborative work.
- We are building an online communications platform, including web site, e-news distribution list, and other tools to promote cooperative solutions.
- We are building a cooperative community that is working toward a more fair and sustainable world.

## Transition to a Membership Organization

CoMinnesota started in late 2011 in response to questions: “Why in the state of Minnesota, which has the most cooperatives of any state, isn’t there more cross-sector collaboration and promotion of the cooperatives? What can be done about that?”

Since then, a fluid network of cooperative volunteers has responded to this challenge by comingling people interested in cooperatives at ongoing programming ranging from special events to regular brown-bag topic lunches and happy hours. We have also maintained the skeletal infrastructure of a Steering Committee, a website and an email newsletter sent to a list of almost 700.

Over the last year the Steering Committee came to the conclusion that in order to secure a sustainable future, CoMinnesota needed a defined membership structure and base from which it can draw governance, financial, and volunteer support.

At the start of 2017, the Steering Committee conducted a survey of its 700 email list contacts and received enough encouraging results to move forward with a membership drive. (The survey results can be found on the [cominnesota.coop](http://cominnesota.coop) website.)

### For the coming year, we envision:

- Establishing CoMinnesota as a dues-paying membership organization and working to grow membership;
- Sharing information on upcoming co-op events and activities through our e-newsletter and updated website.
- Hosting regular happy hour networking events and brown-bag educational discussions; and,
- Creating at least one larger public event, in addition to our Annual Meeting.

Financially, we need to be supported by annual dues from individuals and sponsorships from co-ops and allies. Programs will be available to everyone, regardless of membership status. The value of membership is to be directly involved in CoMinnesota’s governance and strategic direction, as well as to provide the financial capacity for the work to continue.



## CoMinnesota is for

Anyone who is, has been, or wants to be part of the work of cooperatives.

Co-ops and organizations that want to collaborate on better world projects.

Anyone who wants to network with co-op enthusiasts and allies.

## CoMinnesota is driven by

### Steering Committee

Elected annually by CoMinnesota Membership to coordinate organization.

### CoMingle Committee

Coordinates the monthly CoMingle events.

### Members

Provide volunteer, financial, and inspirational support to CoMinnesota.

## 2016-17 CoMinnesota Programming

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### March 2016:

Cooperative Trivia Contest at Pizza Luce

### April 2016:

Annual Meeting

Worker Co-ops seminar

First of Community Ownership Series, a collaboration of Cooperative Development Services, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, and CoMinnesota.

### May 2016:

Lunch CoMingle: Federal Interagency Cooperation overview by Tom Pierson

Housing Cooperative Workshop seminar  
Community Ownership Series

Happy Hour CoMingle at Sober Fish

### June 2016:

Lunch CoMingle: Worker Cooperatives - Building Community Wealth

### July 2016:

Lunch CoMingle: Intentional Communities Ordinance/Co-op Housing Ordinance for City of Minneapolis.

Community Investment Co-ops seminar  
Community Ownership Series

CoMingle Happy Hour at FairState Brewing

### September 2016

Lunch CoMingle: The Evolving Role of Food Co-ops in Community Wealth Building.

Artist Cooperatives seminar

Community Ownership Series

CoMingle Happy Hour: Insight Brewery

### October 2016:

Lunch CoMingle: Co-op or Faux-op

MCEF: Student Housing history presentation

### December 2016:

Annual Holiday Party at Seward Co-op Creamery

Building a Cooperative from the Ground Up Workshop (led by Twin Cities LISC, in partnership with Shared Capital Cooperative, Cooperative Development Services, City of Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development, and CoMinnesota)

### January 2017

Launch of new logo and website

Membership survey

CoMingle Happy Hour at Sober Fish

### February 2017

National Farmers Union Foundation College Conference on Cooperatives Luncheon

CoMingle Happy Hour at Seward Co-op Creamery

### March 2017

Membership recruitment launch and CoMingle Happy Hour at Seward Co-op Creamery

### April 2017

Lunch CoMingle: E.G. Nadeau's book, Cooperative Society

CoMingle Happy Hour at FairState Brewing

[www.CoMinnesota.coop](http://www.CoMinnesota.coop)

Sign up for newsletters and become a member!

## 2016-17 CoMinnesota Committees

### Steering Committee

- Kevin Edberg  
Cooperative Development Services
- Christina Jennings  
Shared Capital Cooperative
- Gretchen Nicholls  
Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
- Dan Nordley  
Triangle Park Creative
- Charlene Vrieze  
MN Cooperative Education Foundaton

### CoMingle Committee

- Louis Doering
- Jesus Lucero
- Charlene Vrieze
- Dan Nordley
- Yeamah Brewer

## Thanks to our Partners and Sponsors!

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

- Cooperative Development Services (fiscal agency)
- GrowthWorks (facilitation)
- MN Cooperative Education Foundation (food and other)
- Seward Co-op (food, meeting space)
- Tom Pierson (presentations)
- Triangle Park Creative (web and print design)
- Wedge Co-op, (food, meeting space)

## 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.