

# 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

## EDUCATION

Cooperative education is critical to grow and sustain a thriving cooperative sector. In 2017, the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) developed a range of education and professional development programs for cooperative leaders:



### CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Hosted by UWCC and the Twin Cities area food cooperatives, CCMA brought together over 400 food cooperative leaders in Minneapolis, MN. Under the theme “Our North Star: Cooperate to Differentiate”, participants shared ideas and inspiration, visited local co-ops and producers, and discussed critical issues impacting grocery cooperatives.



### FARMER CO-OPS CONFERENCE

Our Farmer Cooperatives Conference welcomed a record number of agricultural cooperative leaders to St. Paul, MN. The conference provided a closer look at several topics of current interest including mergers and consolidation, challenges to defining membership, cybersecurity, and impacts of recent policy developments.



### CO-OP DIRECTOR FORUM

In collaboration with Cooperative Network, UWCC hosted two Co-op Directors Forums in April and December. Over 100 attendees from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan took part in the programs, which featured topics such as risk management, cybersecurity, CEO recruitment and evaluation, board recruitment, and succession planning.



### EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP SOLUTIONS

UWCC hosted a one-day workshop on the use of the employee ownership model as an effective strategy for keeping businesses, jobs, and wealth in local communities. The workshop highlighted conversion case studies from a diverse range of industries including solar energy, manufacturing, and insurance.



### SMALL AND STRONG FOOD CO-OPS

UWCC is excited to be part of Small & Strong, an initiative that provides support and training to small grocery cooperatives that may not have regular access to peer learning opportunities or consulting services. Serving co-ops in the Upper Midwest, the initiative provides support via webinars, education at a one-day conference and one-on-one consultations.

### FUTURE COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP

UWCC educates future cooperative leaders through on-campus classes. Additionally, UWCC staff train future co-op developers at the CooperationWorks! professional development course The Art and Science of Cooperative Development.

### INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS

UWCC welcomed delegations of cooperative leaders from Brazil in August and Canada in October for tailored cooperative education programs and tours of local cooperatives.



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## RESEARCH

### MEASURING THE CO-OP ECONOMY

UWCC pursues foundational work to develop the data resources for measuring the economic impact of cooperatives:

- The U.S. Office of Management and Budget announced that the 2017 Economic Census will include a question to identify cooperative businesses. Ending a nearly 20 year-long absence of federally-reported data on co-ops in the U.S., the data gathered will provide more timely and relevant picture of the cooperative economy. With support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and that National Cooperative Business Association, UWCC will report on cooperative business as part of the Economic Census. For more information, see the Measuring the Cooperative Economy website.
- UWCC's ongoing research to identify and measure the impact of cooperatives using historical data is available to qualified researchers at any of the nearly thirty Federal Statistical Research Data Center locations. Researchers who are interested in accessing these data should contact Brent Hueth.

## OUTREACH

### RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

UWCC received a \$200,000 Rural Cooperative Development Grant from the USDA. Together with our grant partner, Cooperative Network, UWCC will provide technical assistance to groups forming new cooperatives, businesses converting to a cooperative structure, and established cooperatives in rural areas in the Upper Midwest. Grant activities will focus on food systems, employee ownership, rural healthcare, and several cooperative education initiatives.

### MADISON COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT COALITION

UWCC provided leadership to the Madison Cooperative Development Coalition, which is made up of community based organizations, labor groups, and cooperative developers to implement the City of Madison-funded initiative to form worker cooperatives. The initiative is designed to address income inequality and racial disparities by creating cooperatives that provide living wage and union jobs.

### TAILORED CO-OP START-UP TOOLS

With the goal of expanding access to the cooperative model, UWCC collaborated with partners to develop tailored co-op start-up tools. In partnership with the Intertribal Agriculture Council, UWCC developed tools for Tribal cooperative development. UWCC also collaborated with the Latino Economic Development Center in Minnesota to create a Spanish language cooperative development course for Latino community organizers.

## PUBLICATIONS

In 2017, UWCC published several new reports and staff papers that can be found on the UWCC website:

- *Coordinating Farm Labor Across Farms: A Toolbox for Diversified Farmers and Farmworkers* by Courtney Berner, Erin Hannum, and Kelly Maynard in collaboration with Farm Commons
- "State of the Co-op Economy" by Brent Hueth in *Cooperative Business Journal*
- "Shine On: Solar energy provider converts to worker owned cooperative" by Megan Webster in *Rural Cooperatives Magazine*