Vermont Cooperative Summit
Thursday, October 14th 2010
Sheraton Hotel & Conference Center

Agenda

7:30  Registration Opens
     Continental Breakfast
8:00  Exhibitions Open

8:30  Opening Remarks
     Roberta MacDonald  Senior Vice President, Marketing Cabot Creamery Cooperative
     Joe Bergeron  President – Association of Vermont Credit Unions

8:45-9:30  Art Woolf “Co-ops In Vermont: How Big? How Important”

9:45-10:15  Paul Hazen “Co-ops-The Big Picture”

10:15-10:45  Adam Necrason “The 2010 Elections from a Co-op Perspective”

10:45-11:00 Break- Visit the Co-op Booths

11:00-12:00 Candidates Forum
     Gubernatorial Candidates

12:00-12:45 Lunch

12:45 Closing Remarks
     Roberta MacDonald
     Joe Bergeron

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WHERE DOES YOUR CO-OP’S MONEY SLEEP AT NIGHT? PRACTICES AND ALTERNATIVES FOR CO-OPS

Content: This interactive panel session will explore how co-ops manage their money, addressing such issues as liquidity, return, security, philosophy and other topics. What policies, procedures and practices do co-ops use in the arena of financial management? Attendees will hear from 2-3 co-ops about their practices. Attendees will also hear about opportunities available for investment in credit unions and cooperative-oriented non-profit lending institutions (aka Community Development Financial Institutions). What lessons have co-ops, credit unions and cooperative lending institutions learned from working together? There will be plenty of time for questions and participation.

TBD- Don Kreis

BUILDING A THRIVING REGIONAL ECONOMY, A CASE STUDY in progress. Neighboring Food Co-op Association’s (NFCA) strategic planning around building a thriving regional economy, which includes a healthy food system and cross sector co-op collaboration. Together, the NFCA includes over 64,000 individual members, annual sales of more than $161 million, and employ over 1,240 people (taken together, the VT member co-ops are one of the top 25 employers in the state). Reflecting their commitment to the local economy, NFCA members purchased over $33 million in local products in 2008 (sourced from within 100 miles or instate).

CO-OP MANAGEMENT TRAINING
Co-op management training and the Master of Management: Co-operatives & Credit Unions program at St. Mary’s University. Tom Webb could speak well to the need for such training and how the St. Mary’s program seeks to engage co-op managers in the Co-op Advantage. I think this could be an interesting session for co-ops seeking to take advantage of opportunities in the present economy.

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FINANCING OPTIONS FOR CO-OPERATIVES. WHERE DO CO-OPS GET ACCESS TO MONEY TO START, OPERATE AND GROW THEIR BUSINESSES?

Content: This interactive panel session will explore the sources of financing available for cooperatives (Vermont Employee Ownership Loan Fund) and include the perspective of lenders including alternative financial institutions (CDFIs and credit unions) as well as new and seasoned co-operatives. What works well, what obstacles do co-ops face, where are there financial gaps for co-ops and how are these gaps addressed? There will be plenty of time for questions and participation.

MULTI STAKEHOLDER COOPERATIVES: THE WEAVER STREET MARKET

Several food co-ops in Vermont have had serious labor problems, and some are now unionized. There is an inevitable tension between the interests of consumers and workers. A multi stakeholder structure can address this tension by giving worker members a place at the boardroom table and a share of patronage, leading to a more satisfactory discussion and resolution of issues. Could this model work in other sectors: Farmer/ consumer co-ops? Writer/ worker/ consumer media co-ops? VECOC and Friends

GROWING THE CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY: CO-OP SEEDING CO-OPS.

Whether in response to member or business needs, cooperatives are fertile ground for creating new cooperative business enterprises. Learn from a wealth of examples and take home an array of strategies for how your cooperative can be an even stronger engine of economic development in your community. CDI, NCBA and friends.

WHO’S HANDLING YOUR CREDIT CARD TRANSACTIONS?

Aaron Additon, Relationship Manager- Power Pay

If your business accepts plastic card payments, this is a session you cannot afford to miss. Aaron will explain exactly what card processing is and the different entities that are involved. He'll tell you how your processing fees are determined, what you're actually paying for, and how you can lower your fees. He'll answer questions such as, “Should I rent or own a terminal?” and “What are the benefits of accepting plastic card payments?” He'll touch on Payment Card Industry (PCI) data handling rules and discuss the many different ways card payments can be accepted. Most importantly, Aaron will provide insightful questions that all merchants should ask while vetting a prospective card processing company.

Exhibits remain open until 1:00