**CO-OP MONTH 2012**

**Sample Press Release for NFCA Member Food Co-ops**

**For an electronic copy, e-mail** [**info@nfca.coop**](mailto:info@nfca.coop) **or visit** [**http://nfca.coop/press**](http://nfca.coop/press)**.**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 1st, 2012:**

[*Your Co-op*] **Celebrates Co-op Month**

***Joins Nationwide Celebration of the International Year of Co-ops***

[*Your Town*] – This October, communities across the country will celebrate Co-op Month. And the theme this year —*Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World*—positions Co-op Month as the pinnacle of International Year of Co-operatives celebrations.

“Co-op Month is a significant opportunity for our businesses to tell their stories,” says Erbin Crowell, Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association and board member of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA). “In this economy, people are hungry for alternatives, and co-ops offer a viable business model that is more sustainable, owned by the people it serves, and accountable to our communities.”

The United Nations designated 2012 the “International Year of Co-ops” in recognition of the contribution of co-operatives to economic development, poverty reduction, employment and food security.[[1]](#footnote-1) Around the world, an estimated 1 billion people are members of co-ops – more than directly own stock in publicly traded corporations. And according to the NCBA, sponsor of Co-op Month, co-ops have a dramatic impact on the national level:

* There are nearly 30,000 co-ops in the U.S., serving more than one in every four Americans;
* Co-ops operate in every industry of the economy, from food co-ops to farmer co-ops, worker co-ops to credit unions, housing co-ops to healthcare, and insurance to energy and utilities;
* Co-ops in the United States operate 73,000 establishments that provide over 2 million jobs.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Co-ops are also important to local economies. For example, the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) includes more than 30 food co-ops with over 80,000 members and $200 million in annual revenue. Together, these co-ops employ over 1,400 people. Member food co-ops in Vermont, taken together, would be among the top 25 employers in the state. An independent study found that in 2007 the members of the NFCA purchased more than $33 million in local products.

Despite their diversity, co-ops are guided by shared values and principles including democracy, self-help and social responsibility. In contrast to other business models, co-operatives are owned and democratically governed by the people who use their products or services, or are employed by the business. And a recent study by the International Labour Organization found that co-ops have been particularly resilient during the global recession, preserving jobs, infrastructure and livelihoods at home and around the world.[[3]](#footnote-3)

“Co-operatives are arguably the single most successful initiative for taking people out of poverty with dignity that the world has ever seen,” argues Dame Pauline Green, president of the International Co-operative Alliance. “What's more it is a business model that puts people at center of the economic model, rather than at its mercy!”

[Locally…*Use this space to give specifics about any events or activities you have planned for Co-op Month, or aspects of your co-op that you feel exemplifies co-operative principles and values*.]

For more information about Co-op Month, please visit: [www.nfca.coop/go](http://www.nfca.coop/go).

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1. http://social.un.org/coopsyear/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.ncba.coop/ncba/about-co-ops/research-economic-impact [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.copac.coop/publications/2009-ilo-coop-resilience.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)