**Sample Newsletter Story for Food Co-op Newsletters, Blogs and Social Media**

**Neighboring Food Co-ops Celebrate 7th Annual Meeting**

*Please edit this article as you see fit for use in your co-op or organization’s newsletters, e-newsletters, or website — and* ***include a quote from your attendees****! Remember to link up with photos from the Annual Meeting on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Neighboring), as well as workshops and presentation posted at* [*http://nfca.coop/membergatherings*](http://nfca.coop/membergatherings)*.*

*For more resources or images, please e-mail* [*erbin@nfca.coop*](mailto:erbin@nfca.coop) *or visit* [*http://nfca.coop*](http://nfca.coop)*.*

**Neighboring Food Co-ops Annual Meeting: Building an Inclusive Economy**

On March 17, co-operators from across our region gathered at Greenfield Community College in Greenfield, MA, for the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA), “Building an Inclusive Economy: The Co-operative Difference.” The meeting brought together 140 representatives from more than 50 food co-ops, start-up initiatives, and partner organizations, including [*add in your co-op, start up or organization name.*].

Keynote speaker for the day was Doug O’Brien, President and CEO of the National Cooperative Business Association, CLUSA International (NCBA CLUSA), who presented the organization’s vision for a more inclusive economy, inviting input from attendees on how co-ops can mobilize their shared strength to empower people in our own communities and around the world.

“People are looking for alternatives to improve their lives and communities,” said O’Brien. “And we believe that one of the best alternatives is this co-op business model.”

In addition to reports from the NFCA Board of Directors and Staff, networking opportunities provided space for peer-to-peer dialogues on healthy food access and inclusion, using technology to compete, board development, and communicating impact. Afternoon workshops shared successful strategies growth, creating strong, resilient boards, and tools for membership development.

[***Use this space for a quote from one of your attendees, or use ONE or TWO of the following***:

“I left NFCA’s Annual Meeting with exactly what I wanted: a reinvigorated passion for co-ops!” said Ruth Garbus, Shareholder Services Coordinator at Brattleboro Food Co-op in VT.

“I left the Annual Meeting excited about next steps for our Start-Up,” said Alison Brown, Board President of Dorchester Food Co-op (MA). “I learned great tips on managing challenging conversations at the Board level and tools for on-boarding new Board members.  I also left recognizing the need for racial diversity in the food co-op movement so we can create an authentic inclusive economy.”

“What a fabulous event--one of the best and most inspiring Co-op events I’ve ever attended!” said Don Kreis, Board Member of Co-op Food Stores in NH/VT. “Thank you!”

Elections chair Joanne Todd (Board, Willimantic Food Co-op, CT), announced the election of David Durfee (Wild Oats Co-op, MA), Neomi Lauritsen (Springfield Food Co-op, VT), and Chris Whiton (Littleton Food Co-op, NH) to the NFCA Board of Directors. Continuing on the Board of Directors are Katharine Arnold (Buffalo Mountain Co-op, VT), Kari Bradley (Hunger Mountain Co-op, VT), Faye Conte (City Market/Onion River Co-op, VT), John Crane (Portland Food Co-op, ME), Sue Miller (Upper Valley Food Co-op, VT), and Michael Wells (Putney Food Co-op, VT).

Faye Conte, NFCA Board Chair and President of City Market/Onion River Co-op, thanked outgoing Board Members Suzette Snow-Cobb and Joanne Todd for their service and named Roger Noonan, President of the New England Farmers Union (NEFU) with the 4th Annual “Neighboring Co-operator” award, acknowledging his leadership and advocacy for our region’s farmers and producers in DC. Individuals and organizations are invited to make a tax-deductible contribution in honor of Roger Noonan to the Bowers Fund, which supports training and education for food co-op staff, managers, and board members: [www.cdf.coop/nfca](http://www.cdf.coop/nfca).

***The Neighboring Food Co-op Association includes 40 food co-ops and start-up initiatives across New England and New York, locally owned by over 130,000 people like you! For more information, please visit***[*www.nfca.coop*](http://www.nfca.coop)*.*

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