**Sample Newsletter Story for Newsletters, Blogs and Social Media**

**Neighboring Food Co-ops Celebrate 6th 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, 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 Celebrate Six Years of Co-operation**

On March 18th, co-operators from across our region gathered at Greenfield Community College in Greenfield, MA, for the Sixth Annual Meeting of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA), “**Building a Co-operative Future: Inclusive, Diverse & Resilient.**” The meeting brought together 150 representatives from more than 35 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 Cornelius Blanding, Executive Director of the Federation of Southern Co-operatives/Land Assistance Fund, as his organization celebrated 50 years of helping African Americans across the South to retain their farms and build economic security through co-operative enterprise.

Blanding challenged attendees with the simple question of *What If…?* “What if the residents of communities truly owned the economic base and infrastructure of their communities?” he asked. “Well, what if is possible. Because what we’re talking about are co-operatives. Organizations, businesses, economic bases, infrastructure that are owned by the people that use and benefit from them.” The answer to the challenge of food justice, continued Blanding, is ownership through co-ops.

In addition to reports from the NFCA Board of Directors and staff, networking discussions provided opportunities for peer dialog on key issues identified by member food co-ops, including legislative advocacy, marketing and messaging, and healthy food access. Afternoon workshops explored diversity, inclusion and participation in food co-ops, strategies for successful expansions and remodels, and financial tools for start-ups.

[*Use this space for a quote from one of your attendees, or use ONE of the following*: “What a great day,” said Judy Trow of Great River Co-op, a start-up in New Hampshire. “Full of energy and inspiration to move forward.”

“This has been the most provocative NFCA meeting!” said Trish O’Brien, Board President of Littleton Food Co-op in New Hampshire. “Loved the speakers!”

“Thank you for such a great meeting,” said Alice Rubin, General Manager of Willimantic Food Co-op in Connecticut. “It really brought back to me why we all do this — a great look at the bigger picture!”

“Thanks for a great Annual Meeting. From start to finish, it was very insightful and well planned,” said Kevin O’Donnell, Operations Manager at Hunger Mountain Co-op in Vermont. “It was a pleasure to attend.”

“What a great meeting,” said Sue Miller, General Manager of Upper Valley Food Co-op in Vermont. “I came home energized and inspired.”

Newly elected to the NFCA Board of Directors were Kate Arnold (Buffalo Mountain Co-op, VT) and John Crane (Portland Food Co-op, ME), joining re-elected Board Members Kari Bradley (Hunger Mountain Co-op, VT), Faye Conte (City Market/Onion River Co-op, VT), Sue Miller (Upper Valley Food Co-op, VT), and Michael Wells (Putney Food Co-op, VT). Continuing on the Board of Directors are Davie Durfee (Wild Oats Co-op Market, MA), Suzette Snow-Cobb (Franklin Community Co-op, MA), and Joanne S. Todd (Willimantic Food Co-op, CT).

To wrap up the day, founding Board Member Glenn Lower, General Manager at Middlebury Natural Foods Co-op (VT) was thanked for his service, and NFCA President Suzette Snow-Cobb named outgoing Board Member Kay Litten the 2017 “Neighboring Co-operator” for her special contributions to the advancement of the vision of the NFCA. A former Board Member and past President of the Hanover Consumer Co-operative, Litten has served two terms on the NFCA Board of Director and has been a tireless cheerleader for our work together. Individuals and organizations are invited to make a tax-deductible contribution in honor of Kay Litten 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 more than 35 food co-ops and start-up initiatives, locally owned by over 100,000 people across New England. For more information, please visit***[*www.nfca.coop*](http://www.nfca.coop)*.*

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