

International
Year of
Co-operatives



2012 Matters

Co-operative enterprises build a better world

Preparing for 2012: there's no time like the present!

In just over nine months, the International Year of Co-operatives will be upon us. While nine months might seem like a long time, it can go by very quickly...and there's a lot that can be done right now to prepare for the International Year.

As you will see in this issue of *2012 Matters*, there's a lot of 2012 planning that is already under way. From sea to sea to sea, co-operators are talking about ways to take the greatest advantage of the opportunity the International Year will provide to raise the profile of co-operatives and credit unions. People are submitting all kinds of ideas to our [IYC2012 blog](#) and at least one group -- representing a variety of local co-ops and credit unions in Calgary -- have already created an [IYC2012 Facebook page](#).

So how do we -- members or employees of a co-operative or credit union -- get involved without feeling overwhelmed? There are many things you can do right now to start getting ready for the International Year.

- Talk to everyone you know both in person and online. Drum up interest in the International Year using social media. If you have a Facebook account, post interesting links about co-operatives and the International Year, even if many of your Facebook friends don't know anything about co-ops...they'll learn fast! If you're on Twitter, follow and participate in the chat by using [#IYC2012](#) in your tweet. Retweet messages and join the conversation.
- If you haven't already, start an International Year committee within your own co-op or credit union. Or post a flyer on the wall of your co-op asking members and employees to submit ideas on celebrating the International Year.
- Brainstorm ideas. Ideas that have come into our blog range from hanging a banner on your credit union, to a "Buy Co-op Day", and a festival in one of our larger Canadian centres with a parade, music, food, and the co-operative spirit of people.

Like they say, "many hands make for light work". With your efforts, both big and small, we can work together to increase awareness and

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understanding of the co-operative model and make 2012 a truly successful International Year of Co-operatives.

Working co-operatively in Atlantic Canada

Co-operative organizations in Atlantic Canada have begun actively planning 2012 activities together. Through conference calls, Co-op Atlantic, the four anglophone provincial associations, Atlantic Central, the three francophone co-operative councils and the Fédération des caisses populaires acadiennes have begun to lay the groundwork for celebrating the International Year.

Many of these participating organizations have already begun their own 2012 planning: for example, Co-op Atlantic and the PEI Co-operative Council have both formed 2012 committees. While each group had different ideas for province-specific projects, some common themes emerged: special publications, such as calendars and co-op directories; engaging youth, lobbying provincial governments for improvements to co-op legislation and holding special events throughout the International Year. One idea that emerged in both the English- and French-language conference calls was the notion of encouraging artists to create plays, songs, artworks and other co-op themed cultural products in honour of 2012.

Meanwhile, Co-op Atlantic has approached the National Film Board and filmmaker co-operatives in the region about the possibility of making films on co-operatives during the International Year. Co-op Atlantic will also be developing a toolkit for its member co-ops to help them plan and build a calendar of events in their communities.

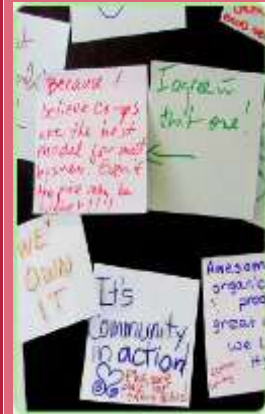


Co-operation among co-operatives in Calgary

One of the main priorities for the International Year of Co-operatives is to develop legacy initiatives -- projects, partnerships or collaborations that will continue beyond the end of 2012. Co-operators are taking this priority to heart and there are a number of projects already in the works.

In Calgary, there have already been two meetings of many of the co-operatives and credit unions in the city discussing what co-operative organizations in Calgary can do to raise the profile and recognition of co-operatives in that city.

The group is currently discussing the idea of creating a co-operative park and donating it to the City of Calgary. The park could include an outdoor space for year-round use, a co-operative playground and



No idea is too big or too small: post your ideas and comments on our blog site:

<http://yourideas.wordpress.com>



There has been ``a gift' given to us in the shape of the UN declared International Year of Co-operatives in 2012...

[It] is a serious opportunity to lift the visibility of our model of business in the consciousness of the public, and thereby enhance our opportunity to influence global decision-makers, and access key funding from public and private development donors for the development of new co-ops and the growth and diversification of existing ones"

- Dame Pauline Green, President of

climbing structures, a covered stage for events, local and commissioned artworks and information in the park about co-operatives and credit unions.

The park initiative is still in development, but one legacy has already been created: there had never before been a meeting of co-operatives and credit unions together in Calgary! By working together, Calgary co-operators will likely come up with a lot more ideas for 2012...and for years to come.

As you think about what your co-operative or credit union can do for 2012, consider reaching out to other co-operatives and credit unions in your community.

[CLICK HERE](#) to follow the development of Calgary's 2012 legacy project on their Facebook page.

2012 legacy project: making Vancouver a "Co-operative City"

"Cities are a product of co-operation."

That's the first line in a proposal which the British Columbia Co-operative Association (BCCA) has made to the City of Vancouver, urging the City to promote co-operatives as part of its sustainability agenda.

BCCA outlined its proposal in a paper entitled "The Co-operative City", written by BCCA executive director John Restakis. The paper recommends a long-term partnership between the co-op sector and the City of Vancouver, as the "Co-operative City project is a unique opportunity for both the City and the co-op movement to come together in the promotion of co-operation as a means for realizing the sustainability agenda." The partnership would be a legacy project in recognition of the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives.

The paper makes a wide range of suggestions on how the City could use co-ops to make Vancouver more sustainable, from partnering with renewable energy co-ops and developing more co-op housing to creating "pocket" farmers' markets in different neighbourhoods and using social co-ops to organize city events.

[CLICK HERE](#) to download the full text of BCCA's proposal.

ICA



It's never too early to start spreading the word about the International Year of Co-operatives. Follow the Canadian Co-operative Association on Twitter ([@coopscanada](#)) and look for the hashtag #IYC2012 for the freshest news about the International Year. Join in the conversation by using the #IYC2012 hashtag when you share your plans, ideas and dreams for the International Year.



Cross country check-in

Employees and members of **Arctic Co-operatives Limited** have been brainstorming IYC ideas. Some of the ideas they have discussed include school scholarships and sporting events, as well as engaging youth -- through governance, through social media or essay competitions; and providing inspiration through video messages from elders.

The **Ontario Co-operative Association** (On Co-op) has been posting IYC ideas in its bi-weekly electronic newsletter since the beginning of January. On Co-op has also formed a provincial IYC committee of interested co-operators throughout the sector.

Contact your provincial association to get more information on planning being done by credit unions and co-operatives in your area:

[British Columbia Co-operative Association](#) (BCCA).

[Alberta Community and Co-operative Association](#) (ACCA).

[Saskatchewan Co-operative Association](#) (SCA).

[Manitoba Cooperative Association](#) (MCA)

[Ontario Co-operative Association](#) (On Co-op)

[Newfoundland and Labrador Federations of Co-operatives](#) (NLFC)

[PEI Co-operative Council](#) (PEICC)

[Nova Scotia Co-op Council](#) (NSCC)

[Co-operative Enterprise Council of New Brunswick](#) (CECNB)

Please share with us any of your plans and we will include them in future issues of *2012 Matters*.

Contact tanya.gracie@coopscanada.coop.

AGM presentations to focus on IYC2012

For many of CCA's member organizations, it's the season for Annual General Meetings. And what better occasion than an AGM to talk about plans for the International Year!

Representatives of CCA will be making presentations on 2012 at several upcoming Annual General Meetings. These include:

- Credit Union Central of Manitoba, March 25, Winnipeg
- Northumberland Dairy, March 25, Miramichi
- Alberta Central, March 30 (evening), Calgary
- Granny's Poultry, April 6, Winnipeg
- Atlantic Central, April 9, Halifax
- SaskCentral, April 13, Regina
- Credit Union Central of Canada, May 2, Niagara Falls
- Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., May 4, Winnipeg
- Co-op Atlantic, May 27, Moncton
- Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, May 28, St. John's

Coming soon...

Any day now, we are expecting the official announcement and release of the UN logo for the International Year. The logo will complement the theme: *Co-operative enterprises build a better world*. Following the UN announcement, CCA member organizations will receive information on logistics, access and use of the logo and theme.

canada2012.coop website update

Construction is well under way on the official Canadian website for the International Year of Co-operatives with an expected launch in May. Built in partnership with the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) and the federal government's Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat, canada2012.coop will be the hub for all the latest news and updates related to the International Year in Canada.

A number of interactive features built into the site will help co-operators from across the country share their excitement. including a map of 2012 events across Canada, a space to share ideas and a photo gallery.



Events and links

There are plans and preparations currently underway at all levels of the sector. Official international dates are as follows:

UN launch of the International Year October 31, 2011, New York City

ICA launch November 14-18, 2011, Cancun, Mexico

Useful links:

For information about United Nations and to see the official website on the International Year of Co-operatives, see:

<http://social.un.org/coopsyear/>

International Co-operative Alliance has set up the *ICA Working Group on International Year of Co-operatives* whose objective is to provide strategic guidance on the planning and celebration of the International Year of Co-operatives. For more information on the ICA plans for 2010: <http://www.ica.coop/activities/iyc/index.html>

For more information on the US involvement with IYC2012, see:

<http://www.fyi.coop>

2012 Matters, an electronic newsletter published by the Canadian Co-operative Association, is distributed by e-mail. It is available free of charge to anyone with an e-mail address and an interest in 2012 UN International Year of Co-operatives. *2012 Matters* aims to provide news, updates, information and links about all things related to the International Year in Canada and around the world.

We welcome comments about the publication, about stories we have run, or suggestions for stories we should run. Send your correspondence to Tanya Gracie, Project Manager at tanya.gracie@coopscanada.coop or call her at 613-238-6711, ext. 243

