

## Strengthening Northern Co-operative Connections and Identity Key Objectives of Sudbury Regional Conference

**Sudbury, February 26, 2014.** As part of a series of regional conferences being organized by the [Ontario Co-operative Association](#) (On Co-op) throughout 2014, Sudbury will host “Co-op Connections” on March 20, 2014 at the United Steelworkers Hall. Ottawa and London conferences will take place on March 18 and 27 respectively, with other conference dates and locations throughout the province yet to be announced.

Each conference aims to build and strengthen regional co-operative identities by connecting people and co-op businesses in their communities, while providing valuable learning and reciprocal mentoring opportunities to its participants. The overall programming is similar, but workshops have been tailored to the characteristics that make each region distinct.

*“We’re using this format because co-ops are built to serve their unique communities... what works in one area won’t always be the right choice in another,”* notes Peter Cameron, Co-op Development Manager with On Co-op. *“Each conference will feature presentations with local success stories and made-in-your-area solutions.”*

Hosted by On Co-op in partnership with the conference sponsor, [Sudbury Credit Union](#), the day’s agenda incorporates both engaging and interactive sessions that will provide participants with new tools and ideas to bring back to their co-operative businesses and organizations.

*“We are excited to support an initiative that will bring together local co-op and credit unions in the community to share their experience and expertise, and build regional connections that may not have previously existed...it’s truly a wonderful opportunity for learning and networking!”* comments Mike Moore, Chief Operations Officer with Sudbury Credit Union.

The first speaker will highlight two unique co-operatives that have undergone – or are in the process of undergoing - business successions, referred to as “co-op conversions” - [Moonbeam Co-operative](#) and [Gulliver’s Bookstore Co-operative](#). The second speaker, from [Eat Local Sudbury](#) - a successful retail and distributing co-op - will share her experience in running a co-operative business, including the importance of long range and strategic planning.

Kerr Smith, Education Manager with On Co-op, will present the expanded [All 4 Each program](#), which introduces the co-operative business model to a new generation of co-op leaders in classrooms across Ontario. Mark Ventry, On Co-op’s Executive Director, will lead a discussion to help identify changes to the *Ontario Co-operative Corporations Act* – and the impact each individual can have to make these changes happen.

To round off the day’s programming, Cameron will share the benefits of working together to build the co-operative identity in Northern Ontario, offering practical tips and examples from across the country. His key point: Co-operatively, we can harness the momentum of 2012, the International Year of Co-operatives, and communicate the benefits of being part of the movement.

*“Building awareness, partnerships and strengthening regional identities is the key to creating a more unified co-op movement...and supports one of the principle objectives of the International Co-operative Alliance’s [Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade](#),”* adds Maureen Strickland, Regional Manager for Northern Ontario.

To learn more about the Sudbury and other Regional Conferences, visit [http://www.ontario.coop/programs\\_services/engagement\\_and\\_awareness/conferences\\_round\\_tables\\_local\\_clusters](http://www.ontario.coop/programs_services/engagement_and_awareness/conferences_round_tables_local_clusters) or contact Peter Cameron, Co-op Development Manager, Ontario Co-operative Association, at [pcameron@ontario.coop](mailto:pcameron@ontario.coop).

-30-

The Ontario Co-operative Association believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade association that develops, engages, educates and advocates for Ontario’s 1,300 co-operative businesses. On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to *lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives*. Visit [www.ontario.coop](http://www.ontario.coop).



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