Welcome to our New Monthly Newsletter!

Welcome to the first Ohio Cooperative Development Center Monthly Newsletter!

We are sending this special newsletter to keep you informed about all of the exciting cooperative development events and successes in Ohio and West Virginia.

We hope that you will look forward to receiving this informative newsletter each month. Our goal is to continue to share important and useful information with all of our cooperative development partners.

If you have an article idea or would like to write something yourself, please email Kimberly Roush at roush.143@osu.edu. New articles and ideas are always welcomed.

On behalf of all the contributors to this issue, we welcome you!

Partnership Listserv

Use the OSU-WVU Partnership Listserv to communicate...ask questions and get input

Effective communication is key to any successful endeavor. It reinforces a vision, connects participants, fosters teambuilding, facilitates change, and drives results.

In today’s work environment, teams must be able to share thoughts and ideas to work together and achieve success.

To address this need, we have created a discussion group listserv. A listserv is an electronic mailing list or email list that allows for widespread distribution of information to many internet users.

“It’s a great believer that any tool that enhances communication has profound effects in terms of how people can learn from each other and how they can achieve...”

~ Bill Gates

To share exciting news, educational information, or to ask questions, or just network with your fellow cooperative development partners, use the following email address: osuwvu_partnership@lists.service.ohio-state.edu.

The listserv has been populated with all of the partnership email addresses. This is a closed group for the OCDC OSU-WVU Extension Partnership only. When you reply to a listserv email, your response or question will go out only to group members.

Join in the cooperative conversation!
Seed Grants Available for New and Emerging Cooperatives

Final deadline to submit application is May 31

The Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC) at The Ohio State University South Centers is offering reimbursement seed grants to groups interested in exploring or growing a cooperative.

Groups interested in forming a cooperative may request up to $1,000 for research and early planning, feasibility study, and formation services. Examples include legal and/or professional fees, focus groups, development of articles of incorporation, financial projections, and other feasibility and/or formation work.

Incorporated cooperatives or member-controlled businesses may request up to $2,000 for assistance with the expansion of the cooperative into new markets and/or enterprises. Examples of eligible expenses include marketing and promotions, contract services, training and development, accounting systems, bylaws completion, and contractual document development.

Recipients must provide 25% matching funds for project costs with their own resources. This is a reimbursement program and the project must be completed and proper documentation provided for reimbursement.

If your existing or emerging cooperative is interested in applying for this program, email Kimberly Roush at roush.143@osu.edu, call 740-289-2071 x232, or go to http://ocdc.osu.edu under the Seed Grants Tab to download an application.

Ohio Cooperative Development Center

www.ocdc.osu.edu

Assistance Offered through the Ohio Cooperative Development Center

- One-on-one technical assistance
- Feasibility studies assistance
- Start-up formation kit provision
- Bylaws and board development training workshops
- Business plan development
- Business financial planning
- Linkage to funding, grants, services, and resources
- Seed grants for start-up or implementation
- Facilitation for cooperation among cooperatives

USDA Rural Development’s bi-monthly magazine contains articles and news items relevant to agricultural and non-agricultural cooperatives.

The United States Department of Agriculture’s Rural Cooperatives magazine carries a wide variety of articles about the nation’s farm and utility cooperatives, with the goal of expanding understanding and use of the cooperative business model.

The November/December 2012 issue of Rural Cooperatives magazine has been posted to the Internet.

This resource is published six times a year. To subscribe using an email address, please go to:
http://www.rdlist.sc.egov.usda.gov/listserv/mainservlet
Local Foods Cooperative Development and Support Services Partnership

A local foods cooperative development and support services partnership program is being offered to Ohio and West Virginia Extension Educators by the Ohio Cooperative Development Center (OCDC).

The OCDC OSU-WVU Extension Partnership is in year two of developing a well-trained two-state support team working together to increase the quality, number, and size of local foods-based businesses including growers, local foods stores, markets, process kitchens, distribution systems and more.

An increasing interest in the development and assistance services targeted at local foods businesses is exploding in our OCDC two-state service area and in the nation. Local Extension Educators are essential partners in the development of a cooperative supply chain structure of local foods businesses.

The cooperative development and support program targets existing and start-up businesses operating in the local foods supply chain.

OCDC provides a train-the-trainer program, support services, and materials to strengthen the ability of Extension Educators to provide services needed to support new and emerging cooperatives.

What is a Cooperative?

A cooperative is a user-owned and user-controlled business that distributes benefits to its members on the basis of use. User-owned means that the patrons of the cooperative are the owners because they are the ones financing and investing in the cooperative. User-controlled means that the members/patrons to the co-op are the decision makers because they have democratic control of the co-op with a one member, one vote policy.

The Cooperative Principles

The following seven principles distinguish cooperatives from most other forms of business.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

What business industries can form a cooperative?

A: Virtually all sectors

Agriculture, Child Care, Consumer Retail, Energy, Forestry, Health Care, Housing, and Worker-Owned businesses to name a few.*

* Please check your state regulations to confirm cooperative options available in your area.
Connect using Skype!

What is Skype? Skype is used for calling, seeing, messaging, and sharing with others—wherever they are.

Use it to stay in touch at home, at work, or on the go. Skype is available on your computer, mobile, tablet, and more.

Here are just a few of the great things you can do:
- Video or voice call to anyone on Skype
- Host group meetings
- Share files
- Instant message

All you need to get started is Windows XP, Vista or 7, a webcam for video calls, and a microphone.

For more information on the Free and Fee-based provisions of Skype, go to www.skype.com.

Co-op Online Directory…

CooperateUSA

Use the CooperateUSA.coop online directory to search for area cooperatives

CooperateUSA is a free resource developed by the National Cooperative Business Association and others to provide easy access to cooperatives for consumers seeking value-based businesses.

The CooperateUSA.coop online directory offers a co-op locator to search local as well as national co-ops.

The cooperatives are broken down into five business types:
- Consumer—owned by the people who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative
- Producer—owned by producers of farm commodities or crafts that band together to process and/or market their products
- Worker—owned and democratically governed by their employees
- Purchasing/Shared Services—owned by small, independent businesses, municipalities or other like-minded organizations that band together to enhance their purchasing power
- Hybrid—developing multi-stakeholder hybrids, which seek to balance sometimes conflicting needs

Use the locator to search categories including: Agriculture, Childcare, Education, Financial, Food and Drink, Grocery and Retail, Health, Home, Housing, Professional, Purchasing, Resources, Services, Travel and Fun, Utilities, and Worker.

You can also search for a specific co-op name or even search a specific city, state. In the Advanced Search option when a city and state are selected, you can specify a Radius from 25 to 400 miles.

The search results provide information about the cooperative and supplies a web link to each cooperative.

Use the CooperateUSA.coop online directory to search for area cooperatives.

Online and Mobile App directory offers access to more than 29,000 U.S. cooperatives.

To access the directory, go to www.cooperateusa.coop or download the CooperateUSA app.
I met with Tom Snyder from The Ohio State University on four or five different occasions to get him up to speed on what the kitchen exhaust industry is and why we needed their help. We came to the conclusion that a cooperative business model made sense, so we put together a group of seven companies across the United States. We met on the Ohio State University Campus, and began developing the framework for Uni-Serve USA, Inc. Like IKECA, Ohio State University has been a source and a great partner for our member-owners.

Tom Snyder invited me to be a part of several meetings with the United Regional Purchasing Cooperative (URPC). They taught me how to manage this great company. First, we developed a board of directors and the board started to work on our preferred vendors list and potential member-owners. After months of meetings, we ended up with 20-plus companies as member-owners and a preferred vendors list that reduces the cost of doing business by acting as one company instead of several small companies. The URPC along with Biz-Unite and Employees Perk benefits allows our member-owners to get deep discounts from National Vendors. Examples: Sprint, Grainger, and ADP.

Uni-Serve has reduced the cost of doing business for our member-owners. Therefore, we are able to compete with the National Subcontractors. I feel that Tom Snyder with the Ohio Cooperative Development Center located at The Ohio State University South Centers campus along with the URPC have basically changed the landscape of companies across the country for the best interest of our industry.

www.uni-serveusa.com

The Cooperative Impact...

- More than 29,000 cooperatives operate in every sector of the economy and in every congressional district; Americans hold over 350 million co-op memberships.
- U.S. cooperatives generate 2 million jobs and make a substantial contribution to the U.S. economy with annual sales of $652 billion and possessing assets of $3 trillion.
- The majority of our country’s 2 million farmers are members of the nearly 3,000 farmer-owned cooperatives. They provide over 250 thousand jobs and annual wages of over $8 billion.
- More than 7,500 credit unions provide financial services to 91 million U.S. consumers.
- More than 900 rural electric co-ops deliver electricity to more than 42 million people in 47 states. This makes up 42 percent of the nation’s electric distribution lines and covers 75 percent of our country’s land mass.
- Approximately 23.3 million people are served by insurance companies owned by or closely affiliated with co-ops.
- Food co-ops have been innovators in the areas of unit pricing, consumer protection, organic and bulk foods, and nutritional labeling.
- More than 50,000 families in the U.S. use cooperative day care centers, giving co-ops a crucial role in the care of our children.
- About 1.2 million rural Americans in 31 states are served by the 260 telephone cooperatives.

The demand for local, healthy food is reshaping the landscape of our current food system. Local Foods Hubs are leading the way in developing solutions to supply locally-produced foods to consumers. In addition, these emerging cooperatives are enhancing the economic development of the communities which they serve.

Interest and demand for locally produced foods continues to increase. Providing customers access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food is high on community priorities.

To help fill this growing demand, new and emerging cooperatives are forming to create Food Hubs. According to USDA Rural Development, a food hub is a facility that is central to producers and has a business management structure that facilitates the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution or marketing of locally or regionally produced food products.

Food hubs differ from decentralized markets, where producers and consumers are directly linked — as occurs at farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) associations, produce stands, or any other direct sales arrangements by individual farmers. (Source: [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/nov10/food.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/pub/nov10/food.htm))

The cooperative business structure is a good fit for food hubs. It allows for the group to pull on the expertise of its member-owners that it serves as a source of economic growth and job creation, and increases the interaction among all levels of the food chain.

Through purchasing, marketing, or shared services, cooperatives achieve greater economies of scale, can adopt new technologies, gain market intelligence, and expand the scope of operations otherwise not attainable by a single enterprise.

OCDC and the OSU-WVU Extension Partners are working closely with area food hubs to develop a profitable, sustainable process to grow, aggregate, and distribute healthy, locally-produced foods.

The conference is open to farmers’ market managers, vendors, and community leaders. For more information, log on to [http://ohiofarmersmarkets.osu.edu](http://ohiofarmersmarkets.osu.edu)

**Ohio Farmers’ Market Conference**

**Monday, March 11 - Tuesday, March 12, 2013**

The Ohio State University - Ohio 4-H Center

Columbus, Ohio

**Call 800-297-2072 ext. 222 to register.**