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# NATIONAL REPORT



PROVIDING CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS WITH AN UPDATE OF ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

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Fall 2009

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### CCA LOBBIES FOR CO-OP INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Canadian Co-operative Association has followed up on its pre-budget submission with a lobbying campaign aimed at the establishment of a federal Co-operative Investment Strategy.

CCA AND CCCM MEET WITH MINISTER BLACKBURN; CDI AGREEMENT SIGNED

The strategy would have two components:

- A Co-operative Investment Plan, similar to one that exists at the provincial level in Quebec, which would allow members of agricultural and worker co-ops to receive tax credits for investing in their co-operatives; and
- A Co-operative Development Fund, which would be a self-sustaining repayable loan fund that co-ops could access when in need of capital investments.

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On November 23 and 24, CCA board and staff members met with 16 Members of Parliament to urge that these measures be included in the next federal budget.

John Anderson, CCA's Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, said the vast majority of MPs were positive about the strategy, particularly the Co-op Investment Plan.

CCA ADOPTS GENDER POLICY

2010 GOVERNANCE AWARDS LAUNCHED: NEW AWARD ADDED

"The MPs realize that the Co-operative Investment Plan costs the government very little and can leverage significant investment in co-operatives, which translates into more jobs," he said. "We realize that we're competing with a lot of other priorities for the next budget, but we were delighted with the positive response from MPs of all political stripes."

For more information on the strategy, go to [www.coopscanada.coop/en/gov\\_affair/InvestStrategy](http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/gov_affair/InvestStrategy).

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### CCA AND CCCM MEET WITH MINISTER BLACKBURN; CDI AGREEMENT SIGNED

On November 3, CCA Executive Director Carol Hunter and John Anderson, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy, together with Brigitte Gagné, Director General of the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) met with Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture) Jean-Pierre Blackburn at his Ottawa offices.

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The highlight of the meeting was the signing of the Co-

operative Development Initiative (CDI) agreement, which will provide the two national associations and the co-operative sector with \$16 million for co-op development over the next four years. CDI received 194 applications for the first round of funding and has recommended 56 projects to the Minister for approval. The deadline for the second round of funding is December 31.

Other issues discussed with the Minister included the upcoming vote at the UN General Assembly to proclaim 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives and CCA's campaign for a Co-operative Investment Strategy. Minister Blackburn expressed his support for both the 2012 proposal and the Co-operative Investment Plan.

### **DECISION ON INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES EXPECTED IN EARLY DECEMBER**

The United Nations General Assembly is expected to decide on or around December 5 on whether to proclaim 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives, and if it happens, CCA will be actively involved in the celebrations.

The resolution to proclaim the International Year was unanimously approved in October by the UN's Third Committee, which deals with social, humanitarian and cultural issues. As a result, it is likely to receive the approval of the full General Assembly.

The International Year of Co-operatives will provide an important opportunity to promote the contributions of co-operatives and credit unions in Canada and around the world. While the Government of Canada has not officially announced how it will vote on the resolutions, CCA has received letters of support for the year from both Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon and Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State for Agriculture, who is also responsible for the federal Co-operatives Secretariat.

CCA will keep you posted on future developments regarding the International Year. For more information, go to [http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/International\\_Year](http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/International_Year).

### **SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS OF 2010 CCA CONGRESS**

*Co-operation and sustainability: the way forward* will be the theme of CCA's 2010 National Congress, which will be held at the Westin Bayshore in Vancouver from June 14-16, 2010.

Held in partnership with the British Columbia Co-operative Association (BCCA), the 2010 Congress will focus on sustainability in every sense of the word: how co-ops and credit unions can ensure their own sustainability; the ways in which co-ops and credit unions are more sustainable than other types

of businesses; and how they can be leaders in environmental, economic and social sustainability.

The Congress will begin on Monday, June 14 with co-op tours and a welcome reception; CCA and BCCA's Annual General Meetings, as well as a gala dinner, will take place on Tuesday, June 15 and a full roster of speakers and panel discussions will be featured on Wednesday, June 16, as well as the presentation of CCA's Governance Awards.

Detailed information on the conference program will be available in early 2010.

Discussions have also begun regarding the planning of CCA's 2011 Congress, which will be held in Nova Scotia jointly with the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) and the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council.

### **KATHY BARDSWICK ELECTED TO ICA BOARD**

Kathy Bardswick, President and CEO of The Co-operators, was elected to the board of the International Co-operative Alliance at ICA's General Assembly, held in Geneva on November 19-20.

She was one of four CCA representatives attending the General Assembly: the others were CCA President Claude Gauthier (GROWMARK, Inc.), Board member Beryl Bauer (Federated Co-operatives Ltd.) and Executive Director Carol Hunter.

Dame Pauline Green, who retired as Chief Executive of Co-operatives UK in October, was elected to the ICA presidency, the first woman to hold that position.

Five special resolutions were adopted at the ICA assembly: one of them, a resolution on co-operatives and peace, was co-presented by Canada and Israel.

Resolutions were also passed on co-operative enterprise and the economic crisis, sustainable energy economies, co-operatives and nuclear disarmament and the co-operative agenda on climate change. CCA abstained on the climate change resolution, which called on ICA and its members to communicate key messages to their governments, including commitments on targeted greenhouse gas emission reductions. CCA representatives felt CCA could not take a position on behalf of its members without consulting with them in advance.

For more information on the ICA General Assembly and the resolutions go to [www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009/index.html](http://www.ica.coop/calendar/ga2009/index.html).

### **NEW CO-OP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES PLANNED WITH CDI FUNDING**

CCA and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité (CCCM) have agreed to work collaboratively on new joint national co-op development initiatives that will build on the provincial/territorial and sectoral delivery mechanisms put in place by member associations. This will be funded by the Advisory Services component of the Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI).

CCA and CCCM will create and maintain a new co-operative information and referral service that seeks to make information on co-op development easy for people to access and at no cost to them.

CCA and CCCM are also proposing to develop two new tools this fiscal year to help information providers:

- the creation of a co-op development referral guide that will provide contact information and descriptions of the most popular sources of information such as provincial departments that incorporate co-ops, sector federations, sources of funding as well as key co-ops in each sector. This guide will be shared with member associations only.
- new web pages on co-op development which will be added on both the CCA and CCCM websites.

### **CCA ADOPTS SUSTAINABILITY POLICY, CREATES AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT**

CCA's board has approved a new environmental sustainability policy which would commit the association to considering environmental factors in its program management internal operations.

The policy would require CCA to develop an annual strategy to integrate sustainability into its own practices, establish internal targets in such areas as reduced greenhouse gas emissions and develop indicators for measuring its progress.

The policy includes the creation of a new ad-hoc committee of the CCA board which will allow co-operators from across Canada to exchange ideas and share best practices on environmental sustainability, as well as recommend public policy positions to the board related to the environment. The committee will be made up of representatives of co-operatives and credit unions. A call for expressions of interest to sit on the committee was sent out in September.

Committee members will cover their own costs of participating in the committee. The first meeting of the committee is scheduled for early in 2010.

For more information about CCA's environmental sustainability policy, contact John Anderson, Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy at [john.anderson@coopscanada.coop](mailto:john.anderson@coopscanada.coop).

## CCA ADOPTS GENDER POLICY

CCA's board has adopted a new gender policy for the organization, aimed at promoting and supporting equality between women and men through CCA's organizational practices, policies and programmes.

While the new policy is rooted in the principle that equal participation and representation of women is essential to co-operative development, it also makes it clear that gender equality is not just a women's issue -- it concerns and affects women and men, boys and girls.

The policy means that CCA will consider the potential impact on women and men in developing, implementing and evaluating its programs, promote balanced representation between women and men in meetings and decision-making bodies, and internally, pursue family-friendly work practices that enable both women and men to participate fully in work and family life.

CCA will also support research to better understand the situation of women in Canadian co-operatives and give special attention to communicating good practices and lessons learned by CCA in promoting gender equality.

## 2010 GOVERNANCE AWARDS LAUNCHED: NEW AWARD ADDED

CCA has posted the Call for Entries for its 2010 Governance Awards, including the newly-created Brown Governance Co-operative Award for Boardroom Culture.

This is the third year CCA will be presenting the Leadership in Co-operative Governance Award, which recognizes governance innovation and excellence in co-operatives and credit unions across Canada. The Brown Governance Award, co-sponsored by [Brown Governance Inc.](#), recognizes that the unwritten norms underlying governance power structures are crucial in ensuring organizational success. Individual personalities, personal relationships, decision-making processes, and the use of benchmarks and performance measurements are all factors of boardroom culture.

The deadline for entries is February 26, 2010. The awards will be presented at CCA's National Congress in Vancouver on June 16. For more information on how to apply, go to <http://tinyurl.com/GovernanceAwards>.

## YOUTH CAUCUS, COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK IN THE WORKS

In an effort to more fully engage people under 30 in the co-operative sector, CCA is in the process of creating a Youth Caucus.

The Youth Caucus will assist and provide direction to the CCA board and staff on strategies and activities aimed at youth engagement. The Caucus will be composed of between nine and 12 members, at least half of whom must be under 30.

CCA has written to all member organizations asking them to recommend possible Caucus participants; the deadline for expressions of interest is December 9.

CCA is also creating a Communications Network that will bring together those involved in communications within CCA member organizations. A steering committee composed of communications staff in 10 member organizations, as well as two CCA communications staff people, held its first meeting in November.

The purpose of the Network will be to foster relationships among CCA communicators with a view toward working together on communications issues of common concern, exchanging information and enhancing skills. The Network, which will have its own website where members can discuss issues and download materials, will be officially launched early in 2010.

### **REACH GOVERNANCE TRAINING WELL-RECEIVED BY GAY LEA DIRECTORS AND DELEGATES**

CCA's Research, Education and Co-operation Hub (REACH) has been received a positive response to the first three modules in its "Leadership in Governance: by Farmers for Farmers" training program designed for directors and delegates at Gay Lea Foods.

The first three modules -- dealing with the roles and responsibilities of delegates and directors, communications and dairy co-ops in the wider co-op movement -- have already taken place and have received positive evaluations from participants.

Future modules will deal with finance for non-financial directors, strategic business direction, improving board effectiveness and chairperson skills.

For more information about REACH, which develops customized training programs on a fee-for service basis, visit [www.coopscanada.coop/en/hub/WelcomeReach](http://www.coopscanada.coop/en/hub/WelcomeReach) or contact Quintin Fox at [quintin.fox@coopscanada.coop](mailto:quintin.fox@coopscanada.coop).

### **DECISION ON RESEARCH FUNDING EXPECTED IN JANUARY**

CCA will likely know in January whether its proposal for a Community University Research Alliance (CURA), which would provide \$1 million in funding for research on the economic, social and environmental impact of co-ops in Canada, is accepted by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

CCA submitted the proposal to SSHRC, the federal funding agency for research in the humanities and social sciences, in September. The CURA would be a partnership between the co-operative sector and several academic institutions, including the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Victoria, St. Mary's University and Mount Saint Vincent University.

### STAFFING NEWS

Christa McMillin is CCA's new Manager, Member Services, replacing Quintin Fox, who is now working full-time as Director of Consultancy and Training.

Ingrid Fischer is now CCA's Regional Director for Africa, based in Kampala, Uganda. Uwe Foehring has taken Ingrid's place as Field Manager in Sri Lanka.

Rodd Myers has been appointed Acting Director of Business Development in the International Development Unit for a six-month period effective December 1. Erin Mackie has been appointed Acting Senior Program Manager to replace Rodd during that period.

Laurie Tennian has been appointed CDF Manager for the duration of Julie Breuer's maternity leave, commencing in January 2010. Laurie's existing duties will be assumed by Kati Clark and John Julian and Shannon Arnold has been hired on a temporary, part-time basis as a Communications Assistant in International Development.

Claire Scanlan has been hired on a temporary basis until the end of January 2010 to replace Chantal McDonald, Executive Assistant, who is on short-term sick leave.

Amanda Wilson, a recent labour studies MA graduate of McMaster University, is the new intern in Government Affairs and Public Policy, hired through the Ontario Co-operative Association's internship program.