

Or contact individuals listed for specific events—see below



OCTOBER IS CO-OP MONTH

Cooperatives in Maine Help Build Local Economies

October is Co-op Month. To celebrate it, **Cooperative Maine** has helped to organize and is promoting a number of events about cooperatives and credit unions or featuring a specific Maine co-op that will be held in Maine in October. Co-op Month is a national series of events throughout the country to make cooperatives more visible in their contributions to local economies and to the country. **Cooperative Maine** is a statewide group supporting the 165+ co-ops in Maine (including credit unions), promoting the development of new cooperatives as a way to benefit the Maine economy. It has also published:

STRONGER TOGETHER: *A Directory of Maine's Cooperative Economy*

available for FREE PDF download at www.cooperativemaine.org/directory.pdf

Cooperative Maine is an organization that has emerged over the past 3 years to connect, strengthen and support cooperatives and their allies across the state. It believes that cooperatives are powerful and effective tools in the work of creating a more sustainable, equitable and democratic economy in Maine. The purpose of **Cooperative Maine** is to increase the visibility of the cooperative model as an economic development strategy for Maine communities, to support existing cooperatives in their work, and to encourage new cooperative efforts.

FACTS about the national cooperative movement and its impact on the US economy:

- * The top 100 cooperatives in the US had total revenues of \$150 Billion in 2006.
- * All US co-ops employ over 600,000 people, with revenues estimated at \$500 Billion.
- * Agricultural co-ops market about one third of all farm products in the US.

- * About 8,500 credit unions, which are financial cooperatives, have about 90 million members and \$750 Billion in assets.
- * And electric cooperatives serve 39 million customers.

Below is a partial list of some of the events and activities sponsored by and involving Maine cooperatives during the month of October (& one at the end of September).

End of September (could not wait until October to announce): A brand new Portland Food Co-op store will soon open its doors to the public and its members. The Co-op, which has operated as a pre-order since 2006, announced it has received a donation of a free, five-year lease on a building at 60 Hampshire St. at the bottom of Portland's Munjoy Hill. It plans to renovate the building and open early in 2011, both as a larger pre-order and, on a limited but expanding basis, as a storefront. The Co-op currently orders an estimated \$8,000-10,000 per month in food and other grocery items, of which about 40 percent comes from Maine. When it appealed for equity from members to support the new space, the PFC exceeded its goal of 150 initial members. For more information about the Co-op's exciting plans, contact PFC board member Emily Graham at info@portlandfoodcoop.org or see the website, www.portlandfoodcoop.org.

October 1: Faire Bande à Part Housing Cooperative (Faire-Op) will begin accepting applications for residential co-ownership of the Faire-Op cooperative house in Lewiston. Begun in 2008, Faire-Op resident owners wanted to collectively own and control their own property and make a greater commitment to the Lewiston community. All residents plan and budget for improvements, set rents, share chores, and even have weekly group meals. To apply for co-ownership of the building and live in a three-bedroom unit in Faire-op, contact Denise Dill, at faireop@gmail.com or 207-408-6036.

October 4: "The film "The Take" shown, 7 PM, Gates Auditorium, College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor. It is about the worker takeover and operation of an auto parts factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina. When the plant was shut down by owners, workers refused to leave and eventually began to run the plant themselves. The film will be followed by a discussion with Davis Taylor. The film is free and the public is invited. For more information: Davis Taylor, 207-801-5711 or davisftaylor@gmail.com

October 9: The Co-opARTive Fiesta in Willimantic, CT with participation by Maine cooperatives, including [Local Sprouts](#) - a worker cooperative bakery & café in downtown Portland, ME, planning by [Cooperative Development Institute](#) volunteer Jane Livingston of Veazie, ME, and music, product demonstrations, co-op food, & much more. For more information: Jane Livingston, Jane_Livingston@myfairpoint.net

October 16: Information about the Falmouth Corner Co-op Preschool will be available at its benefit yard sale, 8 AM-1 PM at West Falmouth Baptist Church, 18 Mountain Rd., Falmouth. For more information: Shawna Jette, smjette@maine.rr.com

October 17-23: International Credit Union Week celebrated by Maine's 65+ credit unions. From the [Maine Credit Union League](#): Maine's credit unions, with more than 600,000 members, demonstrate the cooperative spirit, philosophy and values of co-ops every single day. By using a credit union, Maine consumers save \$73 million annually through lower and fewer fees and better rates. Nearly all of Maine's credit unions will be celebrating International Credit Union Week. There will be special events and activities and opportunities for both existing members and potential new members to learn more about the benefits of using a financial cooperative. Culminating with International Credit Union Day on Thursday, October 21, many credit unions in Maine will be holding open houses, special promotions, giveaways and a variety of other free events and happenings. For more information, visit www.mainecreditunions.org or call Jon Paradise at the Maine Credit Union League, 1-800-442-6715.

October 20: "Right for These Times" is the theme of the showing of the film "Democracy in the Workplace: Three Worker-Owned Businesses in Action" and excerpts from a second film, "The Mondragon Experiment," both shown at 6 PM at the Belfast Free Library, Belfast in conjunction with [Co-op Month](#). The first film describes how workers have organized as a cooperative to operate their businesses; the second is a history of one of the world's largest cooperatives, in the Basque region of Spain. A discussion about local cooperative development will follow the film. It is sponsored by **Cooperative Maine**, the [Belfast Co-op Store](#), and the Peace and Justice Group of Waldo County. Contact Fran Clemetson, 207-338-2532 or education@belfast.coop

October 22: FourthFridayFOODFILMS.com in Portland will have a special double feature of films about how cooperatives can help rebuild our local food system:

- **Reviving Renville: Vertically Integrated Co-ops** - Renville, Minnesota was a rural town in decline until it began adopting cooperatives as a model to revive it's agriculturally-based economy.
- **Food For Change:** www.foodforchangemovie.com - a work-in-progress documentary film about the history of the cooperative movement in the United States and the present role that food co-ops play in the creation of regional food systems. The film is a call to action to expand the cooperative economic model and a response to large agri-businesses and giant retail chains considerable efforts to gain control of the world's food supply from the gene to the grocery shelf.

For more information, contact Ed Democracy, contact@fourthfridayfoodfilms.com.

Throughout October: Op-eds about [Co-op Month](#) will be published in various newspapers and publications throughout Maine. See below to obtain a copy of the piece.

For more info about [Co-op Month](#) :

Maine & beyond, Davis Taylor info@cooperativemaine.org or 207-801-5711;

New England & Northeast Region, Noemi Giszpenc at Cooperative Development Institute, ngiszpenc@cdi.coop or 1-877-NECOOPS ;

National, Carissa Heckathorn, checkathorn@ncba.coop, www.coopmonth.coop .

[The Seven Principles of Cooperatives:](#)

- (1) Membership that is voluntary and open to anyone.
- (2) Democratic control by members for all decisions, including one person, one vote.
- (3) Member economic participation, including pay based upon your work for the co-op.
- (4) Autonomy and independence: thru member control, not outside control.
- (5) Education, training, and information provided to members, employees, & the public.
- (6) Cooperation among cooperatives: they work together rather than competing. And
- (7) Concern for community by encouraging local, sustainable development.

(SOURCE: [International Cooperative Alliance](#))