

For Immediate Release

Busting silos and inspiring co-operation top priorities at provincial conference

Guelph, ON November 16, 2015. Close to 100 passionate leaders, staff and board members of both co-ops and credit unions took active roles in busting co-operative silos, and were inspired by co-operation among co-ops, at the October 28, 2015 “P6” Conference and Celebration in Milton ON.

The [Ontario Co-operative Association](#) who hosted the event, invited [twenty guest speakers](#) from across the province and from a wide variety of co-operative sectors, to share their own stories and demonstrate how they practice Principle Six: *Co-operation among Co-operatives* within their organizations.

“This biennial conference is truly a unique opportunity for a diversity of co-ops - and co-operators - from all across Ontario to gather under one roof, connect with one another and share their ideas and experiences, no matter what size or business sector they come from,” says Mark Ventry, On Co-op’s executive director. “It also reinforces the reality that we *can* and *need* to become more collaborative with one another, and that there are plenty of opportunities to do so and within our own communities.”

Delegates participated in various plenary and breakout sessions, such as “Co-ops and Credit Unions: Matchmaker Needed?” “Lessons in Co-operation,” and “Marketing our Co-op Difference”. During a roundtable discussion, individuals worked in small groups to identify barriers for co-ops, and then shared their ideas using images. The last plenary session of the day explored the benefits of educating staff and membership about co-operatives, beginning with a “Co-op Quiz Masters” challenge and ending with a surprising “Ah-ha!” moment, which revealed that even seasoned co-operators sometime forget about the power of co-operation!

Four co-operative trailblazers were also recognized for their significant social and economic contributions to the Ontario co-operative movement at the [Spirit Award](#) ceremony: [Gay Lea Foods Co-operative](#) and [TeamWerks Co-operative](#) received the organizational awards for Co-op Education and Engagement, while Peggy Baillie of [Eat Local Sudbury](#) and Ian Shewan of [Lerners LLP](#) received the individual awards for Co-operative Development and Advocacy & Government Relations.

“The provincial conference is designed to provide a space for co-operative learning, encourage networking and celebrating our many successes,” notes Audrey Aczel, communications and event manager at On Co-op. “We are thrilled that attendees walked away feeling invigorated and inspired. The theme of Principle Six: Co-operation among Co-ops” seemed to really resonate with the group.”

The next provincial gathering will take place in 2017, which will also celebrate Canada’s 150th birthday - and On Co-op’s 15th anniversary. Until then, the association’s goal is to facilitate more regional [roundtables and conferences](#) - an initiative that was strongly supported by the Ontario co-operative sector throughout 2014/2015.



SPONSORS

On Co-op would like to thank the thirteen [sponsor organizations](#) who helped make the event possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Audrey Aczel, Communications and Event Manger, On Co-op at [aaczel@ontario.coop](mailto:aaczal@ontario.coop) or 888.745.5521 x. 24

The Ontario Co-operative Association believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade association and capacity-building organization 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. facebook.com/oncoop. twitter.com/ontariocoops.