

# The co-operative business advantage

Owned and operated by their members, Guelph's 45 local co-operative businesses range from billion-dollar national organizations to small, independent shops.

Guelph is home to The Co-operators, which was created more than 65 years ago with the help of Saskatchewan wheat farmers and several Ontario credit unions, and now has assets under administration of more than \$40 billion.

Guelph is also home to small co-ops like the employee-owned coffee shop, Planet Bean, and Guelph Campus Co-op, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2013, making it the oldest student services co-operative in North America.

"Guelph is a co-op town," says Mayor Karen Farbridge. "During periods of economic uncertainty, co-ops in Guelph, across Ontario and around the world have been resilient and successful."

The Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) is also located in Guelph, and



**2012  
International  
Year of  
Co-operatives**

supports the development and promotion of co-ops throughout the province.

Ontario co-operatives include financial (credit unions and insurance), housing, daycare, agricultural supply and marketing industries as well as communication, renewable energy, utilities, transportation, retail, natural resources, social and funeral services.

In fact, Ontario's 1,300 co-operatives, credit unions and caisses populaires play a vital social and economic role in more

than 400 municipalities (30 per cent rural and 70 per cent urban), serving more than 1.4 million members and holding over \$30 billion in assets.\*

### Co-operatives create jobs

The Ontario co-op sector's paid workforce has over 15,500 full-time employees, supported by approximately 49,000 volunteers. Since 2007, roughly 25 new co-ops are annually incorporated in many business sectors including renewable energy, food, agriculture and social services.

### Co-operatives are resilient

Co-op businesses often remain in communities long after other businesses leave. In the 1990s, Canadian banks closed hundreds of branches throughout rural Canada. In many cases, credit unions filled the void and now there are 900 communities in Canada where

a credit union is the only organization offering access to financial services.

This resiliency is not necessarily limited to credit unions. A 2008 report released by the government of Quebec states that co-op businesses outlive conventional investor-owned businesses by 24 per cent during the first 10 years of operation. This longevity was confirmed by a 2011 report on BC and Alberta co-operatives.

### Co-ops strengthen communities

Co-operative businesses have been part of Ontario's economy for more than 160 years. They often go beyond the traditional finance-based business model and measure their success using a triple bottom line – economic, social and environmental.

Because co-ops are member-owned they encourage democratic member participation, foster locally-based  
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## CO-OPERATIVES STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES

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economic development and focus on customer/members' needs and community improvement.

Many co-operative businesses help new Canadians and other potentially marginalized groups to integrate into their new communities.

### 2012 International Year of Co-operatives

In recognition of the diversity and social and economic contribution of the co-op movement worldwide, the United Nations has declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives.

Co-operatives drive the economy, respond to social change, are resilient to the global economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses creating jobs in all sectors.

"Co-operatives are a reminder to the international community that it is possible to pursue both economic viability and social responsibility," says Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General.

The Ontario Co-operative Association and Guelph's community of co-ops are participating in the campaign to captivate the attention of national governments, the business community and, most importantly, the general public on the advantages provided by the co-operative business model. Learn more about the campaign at [s.coop/ontarioiyc](http://s.coop/ontarioiyc).

Information source:  
Ontario Co-operative Association  
[www.ontario.coop](http://www.ontario.coop)  
\* 2007 Co-op Census

# Scientists Inspiring thousands

Science and technology are everywhere in our daily lives, and never have they been as important for a generation as they are for today's children and youth. A scientifically literate society is critical to Canada's future, both in terms of economic competitiveness and scientific progress. Guelph offers a vibrant science and technology community, a strong manufacturing sector, and a world-class research institution in the University of Guelph. Guelph children and youth now also enjoy science enrichment opportunities, thanks to Scientists in School.

Igniting scientific curiosity in children and youth is at the heart of Scientists in School's mission. Working with elementary teachers, Scientists in School, a leading Canadian science outreach charity, is helping to develop Guelph's future leaders, researchers, innovators, and scientifically literate citizens.

"Teachers sometimes need support to deliver a science unit that students can understand at their level. Scientists in School showed me how to do it. I saw how a master teacher organizes and proceeds through explorations so that all students build their scientific understanding. Thank you Scientists in School for supporting my growth as a science teacher. My students will benefit."

- **Caroline Honsberger, Bayview Heights Public School, Pickering**

Each year over 25,000 Guelph-Wellington children and youth from Kindergarten to Grade 8 participate in Scientists in School workshops, becoming scientists in their schools under the guidance of visiting ecologists, geologists, physicists, engineers, cell biologists and more. Through over 40 science, technology, engineering, and environmental workshop topics, these student scientists discover that science is not a collection of facts, but rather an exciting and fun investigative process, and a career option or passion for many. Scientists in School began delivering classroom workshops in Guelph in 1999.

**Connect with a company built on co-operative values.**

Co-operators staff and agents have been helping to make Canadian communities safer and healthier places to live for over 65 years. We support community partners and volunteerism through Volunteers in Action and our Buckle Up Bears car seat safety clinics. Ask us about Community Guard, our one-of-a-kind set of insurance products for non-profit organizations.

For more information, visit at [www.cooperators.ca](http://www.cooperators.ca).

2012 International Year of Co-operatives

Home Auto Life Investments Group Business Farm Travel

**the co-operators**  
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