



## **For Immediate Release**

### **Ontario Co-operative Association launches first ever impact study on Guelph co-operatives**

**GUELPH, October 15, 2014.** Over a six-month period spanning from August 2014 to February 2015, the Ontario Co-operative Association will be conducting extensive research on the social, economic and environmental impact of co-operatives and credit unions within the city of Guelph.

“A community report of this magnitude has never before been produced, and will be beneficial to us when speaking with government officials on the significant impact that co-operative businesses have in the region. We will also be able to establish a template for other regions to adopt when compiling their own localized statistics,” notes Peter Cameron, On Co-op’s Development Manager, who is co-ordinating the study.

As part of its Co-op Week celebrations, On Co-op is set to release some preliminary data related to the report entitled “Why Co-ops Work: A Socio-Economic Impact Study of the Guelph Co-op Sector.” For example, there currently exists approximately 33 co-ops and credit unions in Guelph. When including organizational members of co-operatives and Co-operators insurance agency offices, the number of enterprises directly linked to the co-op sector in Guelph increases to 58 entities in all. These organizations employ over 1, 500 full-time workers and have close to 7,500 members.

Moreover, financial co-ops (which include credit unions and insurance co-ops) represent approximately 65% of all jobs related to the co-op sector locally. Members that make up the Guelph Technology & Design Cluster Co-operative represent approximately 20% of Guelph’s information technology jobs and 8% of total locally-based I.T. companies. Lastly, over 1,100 residents live in co-operative housing, including more than 550 adult members, 400 children and 165 students.

The study also reveals that a diverse range of business sectors are represented by Guelph’s co-operatives. In addition to finance, housing and information technology, there are agriculture,

childcare, renewable energy, retail, transportation, co-op development services and student enterprises.

Apart from shedding light on new numbers through in depth interviews, the impact study will bring into greater focus how co-ops make a positive difference in the community of Guelph and beyond. “Even at this preliminary stage of the project, these quantitative and qualitative narratives are already presenting a compelling case for why co-ops deserve increased support on a provincial and federal level,” adds Cameron.

The study has been made possible, in part, by an Ontario Trillium Grant that On Co-op received earlier this year.

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**For more information please contact:**

Troy Dixon, Co-op Development & Membership Intern  
Ontario Co-operative Association  
Tel: 519.763.8271 x 34  
Email: [tdixon@ontario.coop](mailto:tdixon@ontario.coop)

**ABOUT ON CO-OP (The Ontario Co-operative Association)**

The Ontario Co-operative Association believes that co-operatives build a better world. We are the trade and capacity-building association 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*.