

Libro Credit Union recognized by peers as a provincial leader in sustainable practices

GUELPH ON, Sept. 25, 2017 — Libro Credit Union will be honoured as this year's winner of the Ontario Co-operative Spirit Award recognizing organizations that practice triple bottom line economics, paying attention to the environment and people as well as financial soundness.

It will be recognized at the 2017 Provincial Co-op Conference on Sept. 28 at the Courtyard by Marriott at 475 Yonge St., Toronto, attended by dozens of co-operative leaders.

Libro developed and shared "a social purpose self-assessment tool based on best practices in social purpose banking and finance," says nominator Michael Clarke of the credit union's Strathroy Branch Council.

"It sparked impactful conversation at the board and leadership team level as to how social purpose can be a source of profitability, a means to drive growth, and a reason for impact investors to invest in the credit union," he adds.

In addition to helping Libro sharpen its focus on sustainability practices, the tool has been formally used by two other credit unions for strategic planning, notes Clarke.

As far as its own progress since 2014, Libro Credit Union has become a living wage employer, increased diversity training, created a strategic community investment program, and provided financial literacy coaching to thousands of people across southwestern Ontario. It is also working toward reducing its environmental impact, and building purpose into its purchasing.

Others recognized this year for Spirit Awards are Simone Swail of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada Ontario Region who has helped raise the profile of the Co-operative Movement among Ontario policy makers, and Michelle Christmann of Quinte First Credit Union whose efforts in Quinte and District communities has elevated financial literacy and co-op awareness.

"The "People, Planet and Prosperity: Co-operatives and Sustainable Development" conference, will focus on the UN's [Sustainable Development Goals](#), and how Ontario co-operatives can and should work towards becoming more sustainable - both within their own organizations and together, as a movement," says On Co-op Acting Executive Director Peter Cameron.

"We are Not in Kansas Anymore," is the title of the keynote to be delivered by Gay Lea Foods Co-operative Limited President and CEO Michael Barrett. "In the whirlwind of geopolitics, it is more critical than ever to have a strong foundation based upon co-operative principles," says Barrett; "sustainability will be discussed as a principle." Meeting participants will also reflect on food security, governance, climate change, renewable energy, and gender equality. The conference will end with a fundraiser for the Co-operative Development Foundation of Canada.

ABOUT THE ONTARIO CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

The Ontario Co-operative Association (On Co-op) exists to strengthen and unite the co-operative movement in Ontario. We believe that co-operatives are the solution to creating stronger communities, which help to build a better world. Our members are organizations that believe in the co-operative principles and are invested in the future of the movement. With their commitment, we are able to deliver co-operative research, education, advocacy, networks, tools and resources, that support the success and sustainability of all co-operatives and the movement as a whole. On Co-op is an information and resources network with a mission to lead, cultivate and connect co-operatives.

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