

Co-op Week Toolkit

A Practical Guide to Planning
Your Co-op Week Celebrations!



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Saskatchewan Co-operative Association is pleased to present this toolkit to help Saskatchewan co-operators create memorable and successful Co-op Week Celebration events. We hope you find this toolkit useful in your planning.

We'd also like to hear from you, and find out what you are doing to celebrate Co-op Week in your community. Let us know about your successes and your challenges. Help us keep our toolkit up to date with the latest in Co-op Week Celebration ideas.

Good luck and have fun!

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What is Co-op Week?

Co-op Week is a time to reflect on the contributions the co-operative sector has made to the lives of Canadians and celebrate the impact that co-operatives have in our communities.

Co-op Week is a time when people can acknowledge the continuing contributions that the co-operative system makes at home and abroad.

Co-op Week celebrations began in Canada in 1981 in the Maritimes and Saskatchewan. In 1982, the celebration went national with the encouragement of the Co-operative Union of Canada, a predecessor of Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada.

Co-op Week appears to be a uniquely Canadian phenomenon. In the US, October is Co-op Month, and the International Co-operative Alliance and United Nations have an International Day of Co-operatives on the first Saturday in July.

When is Co-op Week?

Members of co-operatives and credit unions across Canada celebrate Co-op Week each year during the third week of October. International Credit Union Day, which takes place on the Thursday of Co-op Week, has been celebrated worldwide on the third Thursday of October since 1948.

The Government of Saskatchewan proclaims Co-op Week each year with the assistance of Saskatchewan Co-operative Association.

Why Promote Co-op Week?

Co-op Week has the potential to be the biggest publicity event of the co-operator's year. It is an annual opportunity to make co-operation better known and understood in your community. For most co-operatives and credit unions, there is no better opportunity than Co-op Week for developing good public relations.

It is a time to celebrate with co-op members, community members and other co-operatives and organizations.

Co-op Week is the ideal time to:

- ✓ Encourage member participation
- ✓ Demonstrate appreciation to members for their support and loyalty
- ✓ Promote and educate on the co-op movement
- ✓ Inspire pride in co-op members, volunteers and staff for their role within the movement
- ✓ Encourage recognition for the role that co-ops play in the community and the support that they provide (highlight your community programs)
- ✓ Reinforce co-op values to current members and promote them to non-members
- ✓ Grab attention by keying in on benefits of being a co-op member (example: dividends/cash repayment)
- ✓ Donate to worthwhile community groups or charities
- ✓ Promote shopping locally
- ✓ Increase traffic to your co-operative
- ✓ Recruit new members
- ✓ Reach out to youth
- ✓ Work together with other co-operatives in the community
- ✓ Gain media attention
- ✓ Have lots of FUN!

Where to Start?

Successful promotional events do not just happen spontaneously. They take careful planning and advance preparation.

Start early to build interest through newsletters, special mailings, posters, reminders, early bird draws and references in meetings. Don't be shy about it! This is something special, and enthusiasm is contagious.

As soon as possible, touch base with other organizations in your area to identify possibilities for joint efforts. At the same time, set the stage for some practical, in-house co-operation. Appoint a committee to organize, promote, and publicize your own program of events.

This committee needs to be oriented for ACTION! Look for people with special skills and contacts to take the key roles; a cheerful leader who is good at delegating and follow-up to take the chair, and a top communicator to handle publicity and media relations.

It is important that the committee starts planning early – the more time to prepare the better.

Note: each year, along with the experienced core members of the committee be sure to add a few newcomers to the group. Co-op Week activities are a good way to encourage participation and team spirit, and help develop the skills of less experienced committee members. New faces also bring new ideas to an event.

What to Do?

Past experience has shown that the range of Co-op Week activities is limited only by the imagination of the planners. Brainstorm with the committee to get some fresh ideas flowing.

Think about the important goals and priorities of your organization. The program that your committee arranges should be influenced by the public relations needs of your particular organization.

Following are some activity ideas that have been successful for many co-operatives. Ideas are organized according to the principal benefit which is likely to be realized from each.

A) Co-ops & Community Service

- Hold a fundraising event for a local charity or community project. For example, you might host a barbecue, hotdog sale or pancake breakfast. Accept donations for the charity or community project in lieu of charging for the meal.

You can include in this event:

- A game night (Spin the Wheel to win prizes such as pens, Frisbees, co-op products, gift certificates, etc.)
 - Entertainment (local choir or band, youth theatre troupe, etc.)
 - Have the Board of Directors serve food to members
 - Have a silver collection plate at the door for extra donations
 - Pre-sell tickets to increase awareness of the event and who it will benefit
 - Match the money raised by the event and then donate to a local charity or a worthy community project
- Sponsor a useful consumer information course such as:
 - Household security
 - RRSP planning
 - Home maintenance or decorating
 - Home budgeting
 - Buying a home
 - Energy conservation tips
 - Car maintenance made easy
 - Nutrition and health
 - Parenting

Offering special prices or discounts to the people that take part in your information courses will likely increase attendance.

- Have staff and members work on a community project (painting, building, repairing, etc.) so that each year during Co-op Week your co-op achieves something visible in the community.

B) Building Membership

- Conduct a membership drive
- Present a membership information session; invite members and guests to attend.
 - Offer a 1-month interest-free loan or 3 months of no service charges for new members
 - Offer a discount to new members
- Hold an open house to demonstrate the value of membership
 - Customer Appreciation: offer free coffee, juice, donuts, etc.
 - Have door prizes or small giveaways for everyone that comes to the co-operative (pens, Frisbees, etc.)
 - Have a coloring contest for kids from Kindergarten to grade four, supply table with pictures and crayons so kids can colour while parents enjoy the open house.
 - Hand out helium balloons
 - Decorate the co-operative with balloons, streamers, flowers, etc.
 - Have a meet and greet with Board of Directors and staff
 - Have staff visit with the members and non-members that come in. Continue offering regular services, but have staff spend time with the members celebrating with them all day
- Make a presentation at the school and educate students on co-operatives and the value of membership

C) Co-ops and Education

- Offer schools resource speakers on:
 - agriculture
 - wholesale/retail marketing
 - personal finances
 - health care
 - insurance
 - housing
 - starting a co-op
 - co-operative and leadership opportunities
 - co-operation
 - the co-operative movement
 - the Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program
- Ask a local school to have one grade provide artwork (with a co-op theme) to put on display in your co-operative. Then provide the grade a tour of the building, offer a snack and reward each student with a promotional item for their artwork efforts
- Sponsor a school essay or poster contest on a co-op theme
- Hold a student speech contest
- Announce a Scholarship or Bursary
- Invite classes from the school to tour the co-operative and learn about your operations

D) Building Traffic

- Sponsor in-facility promotions or demonstrations featuring your products and services
 - Offer Co-op Week specials, a door prize or draw
 - Offer food sampling stations and discount sample items
 - Offer a special 1-day sale in all departments
 - Have daily in-store draws (win your grocery purchase back or free gas)
 - Print off in-store coupons and hand out the booklets to members throughout the week
- Hold a kids' day, a seniors' day or a teen day with contests, draws, door prizes, etc.
 - Host a Teen Fear Factor, Survivor competition, or pool party
 - Offer to have staff or Board of Directors pick-up seniors who cannot easily get out and bring them to the co-operative for coffee and snacks and to visit with staff
 - Host a BBQ or Hot Dog Sale in partnership with a local school and donate proceeds to the school

E) Members and General Public

- Have a previous SCYP participant speak at an event about their Youth Program experience
- Send a letter to local leaders promoting co-operatives and their benefits to the community
- Invite members, elected officials, Chamber of Commerce, community or government officials to attend your co-op week events
- Have the Mayor declare Co-op Week during a flag-raising ceremony (see page 13)
- Place information displays in shopping malls or community centres with elected reps to answer questions
- Provide interviews and features on radio and TV
- Advertise in a local newspaper (see page 10)
- Write a newspaper article about co-ops, or ask SCA to provide an article to you for your local newsletter or newspaper
- Hold a dinner, dance, games night, Fall Fair, flea market, community garage sale, or other social event
- Hold a Pumpkin Growing Contest or Halloween Haunted House – this will allow you to advertise long before Co-op Week!
- Celebrate jointly with other co-ops by having or hosting a pancake breakfast, lunch or barbecue. Have local entertainment perform at the event and donate all proceeds to a local charity or community event/organization
- Hold a bowling, curling or indoor baseball tournament jointly with other community co-operatives

- Hold a noon luncheon and invite a speaker to speak on an issue related to co-ops
- Host a Trade Fair for co-operatives in your community to show the community members the role co-operatives play and the good things they offer your community
- Order promotional materials for Co-op Week. Distribute the promotional items as well as brochures about your co-op to the community
- Organize co-op tours for the community
- Hold a co-operative awards night to honor dedicated co-op members
- Organize an arts and crafts show or fashion show.
- Sell hoodies or t-shirts with a co-operative slogan
- Sponsor a free brunch in conjunction with a local event
- Promote the Co-operative Principles and how they make co-operatives different from other types of business
- Hold special sales or a service promotion
- Encourage donations to a community-based charity, Saskatchewan Co-operative Youth Program (SCYP), or the Co-operative Development Foundation (CDF)
- Raffle a grocery hamper sponsored by all co-ops in the area, tickets to a Roughriders football game or a free membership
- Have general managers and elected officials serve celebratory Co-op Week cake or perform carry-out services for members

F) Co-op and Credit Union Staff

- Hold a cafeteria program (guest speakers, slides, videos, free lunch)
- Have a casino night for staff, board and committee members (use play money)
- Have a staff draw for prize tickets to a social or recreational event
- Have a co-op quiz contest for employees
- Organize an Awards night or luncheon to honor dedicated staff

Hopefully these suggestions will stimulate ideas from within your Co-op Week committee. The main thing is to keep things moving all week long in order to hold community interest at its peak.

Advertising and Media Coverage

Placing advertisements in local newspapers, or other media is a great way to get the word out that your co-operative is celebrating Co-op Week and to invite members and other community members to join in the celebration. Getting co-operative focused news articles featured during Co-op Week is great too. SCA can provide stories for publication in your local media.

Since 2012, SCA has produced a Co-op Week insert in partnership with Planet S and prairie dog magazines. You can view past issues of the insert at http://sask.coop/facts_and_figures.html. If you would like to participate in the feature as an advertiser, or if you have an idea for a feature story, please contact us at sca@sask.coop.

Following are some examples of Co-op Week features and stories that were published in 2014.

Saskatchewan Co-operative Association
presents

THINK CO-OPERATIVE

Saskatchewan Co-operatives in 2014
A SPECIAL FEATURE

Co-operatives Make Impressive Showing on Top 100 Businesses List

Each November, *Entrepreneur* magazine publishes a list of the Top 100 Businesses in Saskatchewan. This year the list features an impressive number of Saskatchewan co-operatives, indicating the strength and adaptability of the co-operative business model.

Top 100 Saskatchewan Co-operatives in 2014:

1. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
2. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
3. Co-operative Life Insurance Company
4. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
5. Pioneer Co-operative Association Limited
6. Co-operative Credit Union
7. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
8. Co-operative Financial
9. Prairie Alliance Co-operative Association Limited
10. Midland Credit Union
11. Saskatchewan and District Co-operative Association Limited
12. Saskatoon Co-operative Association Limited
13. Saskatoon Credit Union
14. Regina Co-operative Association Limited
15. Saskatchewan and District Co-operative Association Limited
16. Westman Co-operative Association Limited
17. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
18. Co-operative Financial
19. Prairie North Co-operative Association Limited
20. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
21. Saskatchewan and District Co-operative Association Limited
22. Saskatoon Co-operative Association Limited
23. Saskatchewan Co-operative Association Limited
24. Westman Co-operative Association Limited

CO-OP FEATURE

Conexus Matching Funds Project for Children's Hospital on Home Stretch

Back in November of 2012, Conexus announced its exciting match program in support of the Children's Hospital of Saskatchewan (CHS), where ever year, the program has raised \$100,000 for the cause and now the team is on track to reach the \$2,000,000 goal for the year.

The CHS team is excited about the CHSFC's match program and the support of the community. The CHSFC's match program is a great way to support the CHSFC's mission and the support of the community.

By its goal for the program, research and operations, match funding through CHSFC's match program. The team is excited to see the program's success and the support of the community. The CHSFC's match program is a great way to support the CHSFC's mission and the support of the community.

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www.sask.coop

Planet S/prairie dog insert cover and inside page, 2014

How to Proclaim Co-op Week

Key Elements

1. It has been the practice of the federal government to declare Co-op Week annually. Provincial declarations are also made. Supplemented by a declaration of Co-op Week by your local council, or mayor, these will provide the framework for your Co-op Week program.
2. The signing or presenting of the local declaration can be used in conjunction with a “Treasure Chest” presentation where a chest containing documents and articles representing the value of the co-op in the local economy are presented to the council or mayor.

Benefits

1. Opportunity for local publicity.
2. Creates awareness by local council and helps to build awareness in local public about co-ops.

What you will need to do

1. Contact the appropriate council member or mayor requesting that a local declaration be made or asking permission to make a submission in that regard.
2. Seek the co-operation of the council in publicizing the local declaration and arrange for the media to be present for the signing of the declaration if possible. Arrange for photographs for use by you for social media and other promotions.

Sample Proclamation
(For civic officials)

Civic Seal

Picture of Mayor

WHEREAS co-ops are community builders that allow people to work together for a common goal or purpose;

WHEREAS this community benefits from dollars earned by co-operatives because they remain in this community and create jobs in this community;

WHEREAS co-operatives and credit unions work to provide members with goods and services, thus building a better community in which to live.

THEREFORE, I, by virtue of the powers vested in me,

DO HEREBY PROCLAIM civic support for CO-OP WEEK in (community), being observed (Dates of Co-op Week) and call on all citizens to lend their interest, support, and co-operation in making this observance successful in every way.

Date: _____

Signed: (title) _____

Weyburn Co-op: A Co-operative Celebration Story

The Weyburn Co-op puts on a variety of events each year during Co-op Week. Following is the list of events done in a previous year.

Weyburn Co-op held a joint pancake breakfast with Weyburn Credit Union and Access Communications Co-operative. The breakfast was advertised locally on the radio, and in the local paper. Volunteers from the Board and management team of each organization worked at the breakfast and the costs of the event were shared equally between each of the sponsoring co-operatives. The joint breakfast brought attention to all of the co-operatives in the community and showcased how important they are for the community.

The Weyburn Co-op also worked in partnership with their local Knights of Columbus to raise money for the United Way. The Weyburn Co-op donated cabbage rolls, perogies, sausage and buns to the Knights of Columbus who hosted a food booth at the United Way Communithon. The Communithon is always held during the same week as Co-op Week in Weyburn. The Communithon is aired on local cable TV and the event and event sponsors receive extensive coverage from the local radio station and local newspapers. All proceeds from the Knights of Columbus food booth are donated to the United Way.

The Weyburn Co-op decided that they would have a major prize draw for 10 winners. The prizes ranged from a toaster oven, to a BBQ, to a flat screen TV and entertainment centre valued at \$7,500. The prizes were put on display in the store. In June, the Co-op began collecting entries from members. Members' names were entered into the draw every time they made a purchase of \$10 or more. The Weyburn Co-op placed an antique telephone booth in the store next to the prize display to hold the entries. 5 weeks before the final draw was made, the Co-op began drawing finalists from the members' entries. Each week, for 5 weeks, 2 names were drawn from the phone booth. Over the course of 5 weeks, 10 finalists were drawn. Each finalist had their photo taken with the in-store display and they were announced in the Co-ops weekly advertisement as finalist members now eligible for the Co-op Week major draw event. On the Thursday of Co-op Week all 10 finalists joined the Co-op Staff and Directors in front of the display of the grand prizes and the draws were made with a large crowd of people present to watch. They began by drawing for the smallest prize and worked their way up to the grand prize. The event created a great deal of excitement in the crowd and the event brought a lot of attention to the celebration of Co-op Week.