



CANADIAN CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION



CO-OPS IN MANITOBA



Manitoba has a strong and proud co-operative movement. It started in the late 1800s with the formation of a Winnipeg consumer co-op and agricultural co-ops that provided farmers with supplies and commodity marketing. Increased settlement of the Prairies after 1880 brought settlers with an awareness of co-operatives from the US, Eastern Canada, and Europe. As early as 1887, the Manitoba government had passed enabling legislation to support the formation of co-operatives.

The seeds of co-operation have spread. Today, there are more than 410 co-ops, credit unions and caisse populaires in Manitoba, comprising more than 800,000 members and almost \$10 billion in assets. Food and retail co-ops are prominent with TruServ, Red River, and Arctic Co-operatives as prime examples. Agricultural co-ops are still very important, marketing grains, oilseeds, honey, and livestock. Granny's Poultry is one of the biggest poultry co-ops in Canada. There is a significant number of water supply co-ops (31), childcare co-ops (47), housing co-ops (46), and recreation co-ops (32). Co-ops are emerging in the areas of ethanol production and the creation of work for urban residents.

Credit unions began appearing in Manitoba in the late 1930s, allowing members to help each other during the Great Depression. Today, there are 55 credit unions in the province, extending services to more than 496,000 Manitobans. Bucking the general trend of the Canadian banking industry, the number of Manitoba credit union branches has continued to rise. There are now 180 branch locations in the province, employing more than 2,700 people with a 2005 payroll of \$84 million. Credit unions have roughly twice as many branches as any other financial institution in the province and in 65 rural communities, a credit union is the only institution providing financial services to residents and businesses.

Manitoba credit unions are committed to the communities in which they exist and to the province as a whole. For example, in the fall of 2003, credit unions and co-ops spearheaded a massive effort that raised over \$90,000 for the province's beleaguered cattle producers.

Co-ops in Manitoba are fortunate to have provincial government involvement in co-op development. The Cooperative Development Services (CDS), located within the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, provides assistance to new and expanding co-ops. It also administers two boards — the Cooperatives Loans and Loan Guarantee Board, which provides loan guarantees to viable co-ops, and the Cooperative Promotion Board, which provides grants for activities that promote the co-op model, such as conferences, research, and communications.

The first permanent housing co-operative for families in Canada was Willow Park Housing Co-operative in Winnipeg. Since then, the province's co-operative housing sector has grown to upwards of 46 housing co-ops.

The five top non-financial co-operatives in Manitoba, as determined by the Federal Government's Co-operatives Secretariat, are Manitoba Pork Marketing Co-op Inc, TruServ Canada Co-operative, Red River Co-operative, Granny's Poultry Co-operative, and Arctic Co-operatives Limited.

PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Manitoba Cooperative Association is one of a number of regional co-operative organizations in Canada serving its member organizations and promoting co-operatives. The Association meets the needs of co-operatives through youth leadership development, forums, development and promotion, and government relations. The Association presents

the *Co-operative Achievement Awards* each year during Co-op Week. In 2004, the recipients of the *Co-operative Achievement Awards* were Assiniboine Credit Union Limited, in Winnipeg, for its Cooperative Business Development Pilot Project, and Birchwood Funeral Chapel, a co-op in Steinbach, for providing a funeral service alternative for southeastern Manitoba.

There is also a variety of sectoral federations that represent and serve groups of co-operatives, including Federated Co-operatives Limited, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada-Manitoba Operation, Manitoba Cooperative Honey Producers Ltd, Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation-Winnipeg Chapter, Arctic Co-operatives Limited, and Credit Union Central of Manitoba. Francophone co-operatives are represented by the Fédération des Caisses Populaires du Manitoba.

The Manitoba Cooperative Association and la Fédération des Caisses Populaires du Manitoba have been mandated to deliver co-operative development services in the province of Manitoba, with funding from the Co-operative Development Initiative, a partnership between the federal government and the co-op sector.

CCA MEMBERS IN MANITOBA

→ **Credit Union Central of Manitoba**, also known as Manitoba Central, is based in Winnipeg and is the provincial trade association and central banking facility for Manitoba's credit unions. Since its incorporation in 1950, it has provided financial, educational and technological leadership and services, as well as representation for the province's credit unions at provincial and national levels. Continuing a long trend of strong growth for Manitoba's credit unions, in 2005 the system's total assets surpassed \$11 billion and members donated more than \$2 million to community groups and organizations.

→ Two national co-operatives provide services to the province's credit unions and their members. **The CUMIS Group**, headquartered in Burlington, Ontario, provides a comprehensive portfolio of insurance, retail, and wealth management products to Manitoba credit unions and their members. Its Strategic Solutions Group researches, develops, and uses cutting-edge tools and best practices to assist credit unions with their business goals and challenges.

Concentra Financial (formerly Co-operative Trust Company of Canada), a co-operative owned by the Canadian co-operative community, also provides corporate trust, personal trust, mortgage and deposit services to credit unions and others

in Manitoba. Co-operative Trust has recently been named as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies.

→ **Federated Co-operatives Limited** (FCL) provides processing, manufacturing, and administrative services to 300 retail co-operatives and associate members across Western Canada and Northwestern Ontario. With revenues of \$4.8 billion for the 2005 fiscal year, FCL is number one on the Federal Government's list of *Top 50 Non-Financial Co-operatives in Canada*. FCL's head office is in Saskatoon but it has a distribution centre in Winnipeg, a feed plant in Brandon, and propane distribution centres in Brandon, Carman, and Winnipeg. Goods and services sold at the local co-ops range from food, petroleum, and general merchandise to crop supplies, feed, and forest products. Some 52 co-ops in Manitoba are members of FCL and employ an estimated 2,600 employees.

→ **Arctic Co-operatives Limited** (ACL) is a service federation that is owned and controlled by 35 community-based co-operative businesses located in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and northern Manitoba. ACL co-ordinates the resources, consolidates the purchasing power, and provides operational and technical support to these local co-operatives. It also markets the arts and crafts produced by its members. The local co-ops provide service to their communities in the areas of general retailing, hotels, petroleum delivery, taxi and cartage services, commercial and residential rental units, airline ticket agencies, and cable television services. Over 700 people are employed in the co-op system, which had combined revenues of over \$112 million in 2001. More than half of the first Nunavut Legislature had significant leadership training and experience within their local co-op.

→ **Granny's Poultry Cooperative** is both the largest and most technologically advanced chicken and turkey processor in the region. With one of the most widely recognized brand names in Manitoba and Canadian retail markets, Granny's products continue to impress consumers across provincial and international borders. In 2005, Granny's Poultry was ranked by *Manitoba Business Magazine* as one of the Top 50 Fastest Growing Companies for the 8th time in the past 14 years. Granny's has been ranked among the Top 100 Manitoba Companies for 22 of 23 years.

→ **The Co-operators Group** is the largest, wholly Canadian-owned multi-product insurance company, with assets exceeding \$6.5 billion. It is a group of Canadian companies that provides a variety of insurance services, financial security products, investment



counseling, and property management and development services. The Co-operators Group Limited is owned by 37 Canadian co-operatives and like-minded organizations. In 2007, it was named one of the 50 best employers to work for in Canada by *The Globe and Mail Report on Business*. The Co-operators has 16 offices in Manitoba and is a key supporter of both community and co-operative economic development initiatives that build local economies and contribute to the quality of life in local communities.

→ **The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada** is the national voice of Canada's co-operative housing movement. CHF Canada, with headquarters in Ottawa, is owned, controlled, and financed by its members. Founded in 1968 to represent housing co-operatives, the organization helps members to create and maintain successful co-operative communities. CHF Canada strives to build a strong, democratic co-operative housing movement in Canada, and advocates for better housing conditions in Canada and around the world. There is a local CHF Canada office in Winnipeg.

→ The **Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation (CWCF)** is the national voice of worker co-operatives in Canada. It is committed to the development and expansion of worker-owned or multi-stakeholder co-operatives, and the promotion of democracy in the work place. CWCF owns and manages Tenacity Works, a worker co-op development fund designed to finance worker co-operatives and provide leverage to obtain conventional financing. It works in conjunction with a Worker Co-op Developers Network, which helps develop new co-operatives. Seven small worker co-ops (with a total of 55 worker-owners) belong to the Winnipeg Chapter, formed in 2003. In addition, there are two older and larger worker co-ops in Winnipeg — Standard Machine Works and United Messenger Cooperative.

LOCAL CO-OPS OF INTEREST

→ **Westman Communications Group** is the operating name for Westman Media Cooperative Limited, which first introduced cable television into Western Manitoba in 1977. It is a customer-owned co-operative providing communication and information technology services in cable TV, fibre optics, computer networks, data transport, Internet, advertising, and broadcasting. It operates radio stations 880 CKLQ and 94.7 Star FM, and serves 35 communities. Its annual gross income approaches \$20 million and it employs more than 125 people with a payroll of nearly \$3 million.

→ **Neechi Foods Co-op Limited** is a worker co-operative that operates a small supermarket in Winnipeg's north-end, under the name Neechi Foods Community Store. "Neechi" means "friend" in Ojibwai and Cree. All four full-time employees and most of the part-time employees are Aboriginal. The co-op has generated further employment in the neighbourhood by marketing moccasins and other home-made crafts made by Aboriginal women. Another achievement is the positive influence the store has on the health of neighbourhood children. This is most visibly reflected in a now-popular "kids only" basket of fresh fruit, sold at cost, at the front counter. At the recent annual meeting of the Canadian Diabetes Association, Neechi received an award for the neighbourhood diabetes awareness and prevention program that the co-op runs.

→ With a regional economic development mandate, the **Parkland Agricultural Resource Cooperative (PARC)** is a different kind of co-operative. Incorporated in 1999, Parkland's members are the 11 municipalities and experienced producers from Roblin, Grandview, Gilbert Plains, Ethelbert, and Dauphin. Its mission is to encourage new agricultural value-added business development in co-operation with the provincial government. It has supported work on the following three projects.

Parkland Ethanol Co-operative Limited is a new generation co-operative formed to produce ethanol from winter wheat. With 5,200 members, including a First Nations band, it is in the final stages of planning a plant in partnership with an experienced private partner.

Parkland Industrial Hemp Growers Co-operative Limited is working towards the building of a hemp fibre processing facility in Dauphin. The plant will process fibre for bulk sales as well as non-woven matting. A plant breeding project is already underway to support the growth and development of the new industrial hemp industry. The co-op has registered the first Manitoba variety of hemp named Alyssa.

→ **Assiniboine Credit Union**, in Winnipeg, has been named one of the top 100 employers in Canada in 2006 by *Maclean's Magazine*. This credit union, with 100,000 members and 25 branches, is driven by a responsibility to make a profit and a commitment to make a difference. It balances mainstream banking services and commercial lending with affordable housing partnerships, financial services for



low-income neighbourhoods, micro lending, and support for co-operatives, non-profit organizations, and specialized community loan funds. Its Co-operative Business Development Pilot project facilitates the development of business co-operatives through self-assessments, technical assistance, and mentorships, and has supported five inner-city co-operatives with 90 workers.

→ **Manitoba Pork Marketing Co-op** is a member-owned co-operative, governed by an elected board of directors consisting of hog producers. The co-op continues to be the marketer of choice for the majority of Manitoba's independent hog producers. Manitoba Pork Marketing is the province's premier marketing agency. Working on behalf of approximately 900 members that produce 1.5 million hogs annually, it represents the single largest volume of hogs in the province.

→ **Manitoba Cooperative Honey Producers Limited**, based in Winnipeg, processes and packages honey and honey-related products for its beekeeper members in Manitoba, Eastern Saskatchewan, and Northwestern Ontario. In operation since 1938, it also provides beekeeping supplies, wax products, and a gift line. Together with the Alberta Co-operative Honey Producers, it owns Bee Maid Honey Ltd, which markets the honey from the Western Prairies under a single brand name, while allowing each co-op to preserve its identity. Bee Maid Honey is North America's largest single source marketer of consumer-packaged honey and has distribution centers around the world.

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