



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Monthly Newsletter ❖ September 2020 ❖ Issue 4

Hello! We hope that everyone has kept healthy and as busy as possible in recent months. Summer seems to have really flown by, even with most of us spending so much more time at home than usual.

Your Village Co-op Market continues to look for ways to reach new people to grow our membership, while trying to conserve most of our fund balance for actually funding the store build-out. It definitely has been tough in the current environment with so many community events cancelled. We can't stress enough how important it is for our member-owners to spread the word about our organization among friends and neighbors. Our Facebook and Instagram campaigns have made great strides reaching new people, but nothing beats a personal conversation (and a little arm-twisting).

DID YOU KNOW?

If all of our member-owners recruited one new friend or neighbor, we would have 864 member-owners and could actively lock in a store site and start arranging the financing.

Co-op member-owners share in a local, more democratic process for running their store and can:

- run for their Board of Directors
- gain a share of store profits
- take advantage of customer discounts year round
- feel a greater sense of community, without fear of distant or disengaged owners

Co-ops try to buy local. For every dollar spent on food at a co-op store, up to 75% of it goes towards processing and moving that food from farm to plate. The average food co-op purchases from 51 local farms and 106 local product producers.

The top 5 grocery chains in the US receive 67% of our grocery dollars.

Supermarket chains may refer to produce as being "local" even if it is grown hundreds of miles away.

The supply chain of the typical large food retailer contains distribution bottlenecks that may not be very flexible when, say, there is a crisis such as a global health pandemic.

Large retailers may charge substantial 'slotting fees' before even small producers may gain access to their shelves.

Sources: *National Cooperative Grocers Association; grocerystory.coop*

CO-OP

NEWS AND UPDATES

- While our membership base grows, the Village Co-op board continues to explore possible sites for the store in Williamsville. Although details remain confidential, there is potential to lease store space in an existing business along the Main Street corridor. This would obviously save in new construction costs and help ensure foot traffic in the vicinity of the market from the adjoining business(es). Further discussions with developers will intensify as the Co-op approaches 600+ member-owners.
- Activity at the Village Co-op tent at the Williamsville Farmers Market has been steady, with a few new member-owners signing up each week. There has been a fair amount of interest, with people asking a lot of questions and taking literature. Many people who have joined at the Farmers Market have seen us there in weeks past, maybe had discussions and reviewed the brochure, and then later walked right up and joined!
- If you haven't done so yet, please join the Facebook group for Village Co-op member-owners only. It's a great way to get up-to-the-minute updates and news, interact, learn, share and connect with your fellow owners! Search for the "VCMW Member-Owner Community" or connect using the link that was emailed to you recently.
- The next virtual member-owner orientation will be on Monday, September 21 at 6:30pm. Look for an email with the Zoom information and further information.



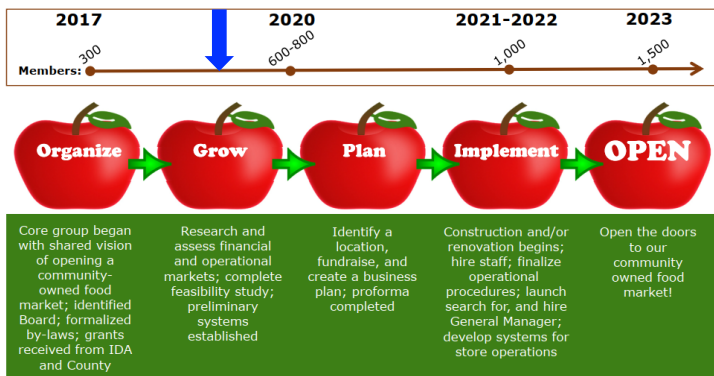
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BACK TO SCHOOL

The Co-op Board is headed to school! They are enrolled in a virtual peer-group training program conducted by Food Cooperative Initiative (FCI). The Board will participate in monthly meetings with other startup co-ops around the country to learn, share and collaborate! This program is offered free of charge by FCI, and will allow your Board to learn about the best practices to emulate, mistakes to avoid, and successes to strive for from our fellow co-ops. Information that the Board gains will be shared at upcoming Board meetings, in our newsletter, and on social media.

ROAD TO SUCCESS



Current Membership:

< 432 >

Next Village Co-op Board Meeting

Wed., Sept 23 | 6:30pm | Zoom virtual mtg.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82859395684?pwd=dmDenlwUXB5OFhJZEhaVWNQL09rdz09>

Dial: 1-646-558-8656
Meeting ID: 828 5939 5684
Passcode: 004470

OPPORTUNITY!

Want to get involved and help create the future of your Co-op???

It's Board election time!

This year's election will be held in November 2020 and will be modified to elect individuals to the Board, rather than positions. We will elect 2 individuals to the Board and determine Board positions (officer or member) at the first board meeting held January 2021.

As a Board Member you will have the opportunity to...

- Oversee the fiscal health of the Co-op while maintaining wise stewardship of member-owners' investment and making strategic decisions on its financial future;
- Understand the cooperative movement and philosophy;
- Gain experience in community development and outreach;
- Gain financial and budgetary skills such as approving capital and operating budgets;
- Prepare for and attend monthly and special board meetings;
- Attend and actively participate in training sessions and retreats; and
- Volunteer for Co-op events

If you are interested in joining the Board of Directors, you can also download the application and job description at <https://www.villagecoopmarket.com/elections-2020>. For more information: info@villagecoopmarket.com.

QUICK CLIPS

Check out these short videos to learn more...

TEDx: Growing community through a food co-op?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IgGkigiukw8>

A Food Co-op In Your Community
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Jh5XFWE4uY>

Introduction to co-ops by another startup
Food Shed Co-op, Woodstock IL (near Chicago)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvPE8n0DHhw>

Invest in your co-op. Invest in your community.
Free Range Food Co-op, Grand Rapids MN
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQFQCpi9jrw>