

# Planning for the International Year of Cooperatives

Cooperators in the U.S. and around the world continue to prepare broad, multi-faceted campaigns for 2012, declared by the United Nations General Assembly to be the International Year of Cooperatives. The official launch date for the UN is October 23, 2011, with an overarching theme of “Cooperative enterprises build a better world.”

In an economic environment that is making increasingly clear the failures of the present system, dominated by privately held corporations, cooperatives offer a proven alternative. The global campaign for the International Year of Cooperatives aims to leverage this recognition through educating government officials and the public about the benefits and potential of cooperatives.

The National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) is helping lead the effort in the U.S. through a variety of social media, events, and websites, including [www.usa2012.coop](http://www.usa2012.coop). Highlights include:

- Raise the profile of cooperatives so that more Americans understand the value of joining cooperatives and doing business with them.

- Improve access to cooperative businesses by making it easier to find co-ops of all types.
- Educate and engage senior government leaders to improve legislative and policy conditions for cooperative businesses; an action template including the text of public proclamations or resolutions is available, and a co-op public policy committee is active and planning an advocacy toolkit.
- Support studies, including those with a local/regional focus, that demonstrate the economic value of cooperative enterprise.
- Reach out to youth with events and social media, cultivating new cooperative leaders.

Traveling co-op tours will carry the message. On the East Coast, Cabot Creamery and others cooperatives are sponsoring a multi-city 2012 Community Tour. From the West, a bicycle tour—Co-Cycle—will ride cross-country to reach the public in many cities and towns.



A video contest, “My Co-op Rocks!,” piloted in prior years by the National Cooperative Grocers Association, will be expanded to cover all sectors and types of co-ops.

A new website, [www.stories.coop](http://www.stories.coop), will be showcasing a different co-op success story during each of 366

days in 2012. These stories will also be accessible from the international go-to site: [www.2012.coop](http://www.2012.coop), which will also feature a Global News Hub focused on cooperatives.

Social media will also be emphasized. Twitter feeds at #coops2012 will enhance ongoing conversations about cooperatives and their potential for addressing social needs of all types. And an IYC USA Facebook page will help spread the conversations about co-ops.

The program manager at NCBA for plans around the International Year of Cooperatives is Eric Deluca; he can be reached at [edeluca@ncba.coop](mailto:edeluca@ncba.coop). ■

—Dave Gutknecht

## Meet one of our favorite cooperative developments.



Thousands of programmers all over the world (including us) are working cooperatively on an open source solution for building websites. It's called Drupal. Find out why an increasing number of organizations, businesses and government agencies ([whitehouse.gov](http://whitehouse.gov)) are adopting it as their website platform. We've found that its community-building features work especially well for cooperatives.

**We know Drupal and we know cooperatives.**

Let's build your co-op a great website. Call Dan Nordley, 612/436-9177 [dan@triangleparkcreative.com](mailto:dan@triangleparkcreative.com)

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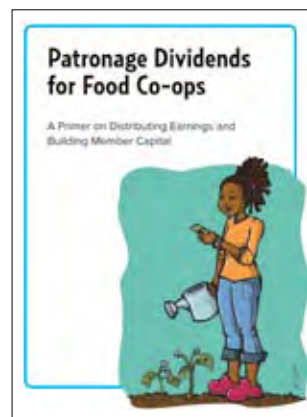
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