



NEWS AND VIEWS

MARCH, 2008

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ACCA *News and Views* will be published at the beginning of each month. Please submit news items or information you would like to share to acca@acca.coop.

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ACCA Member Profile: Wild Rose Agricultural Producers



[Wild Rose Agricultural Producers](#) is Alberta's largest producer-funded general farm organization representing numerous commodity groups, agricultural groups and individual farm operations. It is an organization comprised of farmers and ranchers who wish to have a voice in shaping the future of their farming operation. Unlike many other farm organizations, there are no check-offs or major corporate sponsors. Nearly 85% of the money raised each year comes from voluntary memberships and membership services. Wild Rose Agricultural Producers was founded in 1996, an offspring of the old Unifarm organization.

In the years since its inception, Wild Rose has represented the majority of producers on a wide array of farm-related issues ranging from tire recycling to the World Trade Organization. Producers represent producers on our Board and you have the opportunity, if you so wish, to become actively involved in the day-to-day management of the organization or the general policy directions.

Our Mission Statement

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers provides an effective voice for Alberta's farmers and develops policy that benefits agriculture.

Our Goals

- Strive towards sustainable farm income levels.
- Work toward the establishment of fair trade practices.
- Strive to maintain and improve the rural community and quality of life.
- Lead the way in the creation and promotion of value-added industry in rural Alberta.
- Strive to provide accurate, up-to-date information to agricultural producers so they can make qualified, informed decisions relating to the day-to-day workings of their operations.

Our Aim

Wild Rose Agricultural Producers aim to ensure that there is producer input at all levels whenever decisions are made that affect the agricultural industry.

Our Policy

As a general farm organization, WRAP is not confined to looking at specific commodity issues, but is able to look at the broader picture. Remember, that just as your farm is more diverse than the commodities you grow, so too are the issues that affect your farm.

ACCA Annual General Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The Annual General Meeting of the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association and the ACCA Leadership Foundation will be held in Calgary, Alberta on Wednesday, April 30, 2008. Registration forms are available on the ACCA website.

2008 Alberta Co-operative Merit Award Nominations

ACCA is pleased to announce that we will be accepting nominations for the 2008 Co-operative Merit Awards until March 15, 2008. The Alberta Community and Co-operative Association and the provincial government's Service Alberta department recognizes individuals and/or groups who have made outstanding and continuous contributions to co-operation and co-operative development at the provincial and community levels in Alberta.

The Alberta Co-operative Merit Award is an honorary award for outstanding co-operative achievement of a local, provincial and national nature. It will be presented to a maximum of three deserving individuals and/or groups chosen by the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association. Deadline for nominations is March 15.

ACCA Summer Co-operative Youth Program

Registrations for the 2008 ACCA Summer Co-operative Youth Program are now being accepted. We have four phases to our program: the NEW Pre-Teen Program for ages 11-12, the Teen Program for ages 13-14, the Youth Program for ages 15-16 and the Grad Program for ages 17-18. Registration forms can be found on our website at <http://www.acca.coop/SummerBrochure08.pdf> or you can contact our office at (780)963-3766.

A Merit Award nomination kit is available for download from the ACCA website:

- as an [Adobe Acrobat file](#), or
- as a [Microsoft Word file](#).

Alberta Farm & Ranch Directory – 36th Edition

ACCA has received comments that the Alberta Farm and Ranch Directory is a “must have” when looking for agriculture information!

It is our goal to make this directory the one of choice when referring to the agricultural and agri-business sector.

To review our statistics with you, over 15,000 copies of the directory are distributed throughout Alberta as follows:

- Bulk mail drop of 12,000 to various farming communities in rural Alberta
- Agricultural and Educational Organizations
- Fairs, Exhibits and Agricultural Conferences.
- Government Offices including such people as MLA’s and MP’s.
- Alberta Farm & Ranch Directory Advertisers and Listers
- ACCA Member Organizations

Our readership is estimated at approximately 30,000 as a single copy of the directory is accessed all year long by several individuals within one organization or household. As well, the directory is available on-line at www.acca.coop.

There is a wonderful opportunity for you to list and/or advertise your organization in the 2008/09 directory. If you are interested and would like more information on advertising and listing options please contact Dianne at 780-963-3766 or e-mail at dschoepp@acca.coop.

Summer Volunteer Staff

We are currently accepting Volunteer Staff Applications for individuals who are interested in making a difference in the lives of young people. Our program staff make a real difference in the lives of our participants every year. Young people can see changes within themselves and in other participants by the end of the week. Youth leave this program with changes to their self-esteem and a greater knowledge of co-ops, credits unions and the impact that their leadership can have on their community. Please look at our website for a Staff Registration Package at <http://www.acca.coop/StaffPackage08.pdf>

Alberta's Mega Credit Union Could Be Reality Before Year's End

Three Alberta credit unions — [Servus Credit Union](#) and [Common Wealth Credit Union](#) of Edmonton, and [Community Savings](#) in Red Deer — are proposing to merge and a report in the *Edmonton Journal* (February 9, 2008) says they could call votes by their total 357,000 member-owners on the proposal as early as March.

With assets of \$8.5 billion and 1,825 employees in 95 branches, the new credit union would rival Canada's biggest credit union, Vancouver City Savings.

Potential competition by [Vancity](#) and other British Columbia credit unions under a provincial free trade agreement with Alberta is contributing to the merger plan, Servus president Steve Blakely and Community Savings President Murray Haubrich said in interviews with the *Edmonton Journal*.

The resulting Alberta-wide credit union would serve an increasingly mobile, diverse membership that wants to access credit union service as they travel throughout the province. The three credit unions have proven to be highly successful operating as independent entities. At the same time, they feel this position of strength gives them an opportunity to join forces on their own terms and to maintain the co-operative values upon which they were formed.

If the merger is approved by members next month, a new CEO could be announced in May with the new credit union launching in November.

Mountain Equipment Co-op Chosen Overall Winner of the 2008 National Awards in Governance



Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) is the overall winner of The Conference Board of Canada/Spencer Stuart 2008 National Awards in Governance, for its implementation of a sustainability strategy to ensure its short and long term success.

In addition to the overall winner, awards recognizing governance achievements in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors were presented at the February 11 gala dinner and ceremony in Toronto. MEC was also the winner of not-for-profit sector category.

The CEO announced this as follows: “Last night in Toronto, the MEC Board was presented with a Conference Board of Canada/Spencer Stuart National Award in Governance. This award recognizes governance innovation and excellence in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. MEC won the award in the not-for-profit category. And, I have just learned that we also won the overall award for excellence in governance innovation in Canada. This is a major accomplishment for the Co-op, and it is something we can all be very proud of because it demonstrates that the Canadian business community recognizes the importance of embedding sustainable practices into every element of our operations.”

Ag-CDI program

Ag-CDI is now accepting applications from producer groups involved in developing biofuel and other value-added agricultural co-operatives. See [program overview, application guidelines and application form](#).

The Ag-CDI program is scheduled to operate from November 2007 to March 31, 2009 and will accept applications on the following deadlines:

- April 2, 2008
- September 8, 2008

ACCA can provide assistance with the preparation of your application. Please contact Carol Murray at accainfo@telus.net or 780-963-3766.

National co-op association responds to new lobbying regulations

For more information, contact CCA's Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy [John Anderson](#).

Earlier this year the [federal government published new lobbying rules](#). The [Canadian Co-operative Association](#) (CCA), along with many other organizations, feels that some of the changes will result in an additional burden for non-profit organizations particularly with regard to the registration and reporting requirements for members of the Board of Directors. CCA also feels that requiring government to also publicly detail its meetings with lobbyists would improve the proposed lobbying regulations by bringing greater transparency and accountability. CCA is also a member of the Government Relations Institute of Canada (GRIC), a professional association representing consultant, organizational and corporate lobbyists, which provided a detailed brief to the government on the new regulations.

CCA's response can be found at www.coopscanada.coop/aboutcca/gapp/govsubmissions. GRIC's submission is available at www.gric-irgc.ca/english/lobby.

Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations

For more information go to:

www.rcvo.org

Phone: 497-4780

Email: voluntarysectorevents@macewan.ca

Registration form is available here:

http://www.rcvo.org/events_files/events.html#Fund

Fund Raising Success: Where to Start and How to Build It!

Guest Speaker: Anne Kirkpatrick / Saturday, March 8, 2008

This workshop will cover the basics of fundraising, including the steps to building a fund development program that will allow your organization to successfully address its mission. The workshop will begin at 8:30 AM with a check-in and continental breakfast and will end at 4:00 p.m.

Grant MacEwan College, Room 6-313 H

City Centre Campus, 10700 - 104 Avenue

Registration Fee: \$30.00 + GST \$31.50 (includes continental breakfast and lunch).

Pre-registration and payment required.



In the latest issue of the CWCF's e-newsletter:

1. AGM/Conference 2007
2. Dates for next year's Conference: November 13-15, 2008, Winnipeg
3. WORKER CO-OP SURVEY!
4. Annual Report now available on-line
5. Report on Mondragon Study Tour
6. Effective Practices in Co-op Development: Video & book
7. Statement of recommended practice for co-op accounting & reporting
8. News from the Prairie Labour-Worker Coop Council
9. International news: from the US FWC, & from CICOPA

Read it at www.coopzone.coop/en/node/2142

Co-Operators General Insurance Company Reports Fourth Quarter Profit of \$60.8 Million

Co-operators General Insurance Company announced its consolidated financial results for the three months and year ended December 31, 2007. For the fourth quarter, CGIC reported consolidated net income of \$60.8 million, compared with \$18.5 million for the same quarter in 2006. The improvement was due to favourable automobile claims development, higher investment returns and tax recoveries.

Net income for the year amounted to \$148.2 million, compared with \$118.1 million for the same period last year.

No Movement on Key Co-Op Issues in Federal Budget

As promised by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, the third Conservative government budget was a low-key affair. The seven major co-operative organizations — [Canadian Co-operative Association](#), [Conseil Canadien de la Coopération](#), [Credit Union Central of Canada](#), [Desjardins Group](#), [The Co-operators Group](#), [Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada](#), and the [Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation](#) — had asked the government to move on three priority issues:

1. [A renewed and expanded Co-operative Development Initiative](#) (CDI)
2. A federal Co-operative Investment Plan (CIP)
3. Increased spending on International Development Aid

None of these was forthcoming in the February 26 budget.

While the Federal government has promised to continue the CDI program for one year, until the whole of the Agricultural Policy Framework is renewed in April 2009, there is neither a commitment to an expanded five-year CDI nor details on the one-year renewal in the budget. This means CCA and Conseil Canadien de la Coopération (CCC) will have to continue their campaign for a renewed and expanded CDI that can meet the demand for help in setting up new co-operatives. The old CDI helped established almost 150 new co-ops and provided aid to some 1,000 new and emerging co-ops. The proposal is being backed by all major co-operative financial and non-financial organizations.

CCA, CCC and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture jointly lobbied for a federal Co-operative Investment Plan that could leverage new investment from members of agricultural and worker co-ops in return for tax credits. But the CIP, which would have cost about \$20 million per year, was not established and so only Quebec continues to have such a program.

As for International Development Aid, while the government is committed to double international assistance by 2010-11 and did announce \$100 million in new aid for Afghanistan, overall government spending on aid will be lower next year — 0.3 per cent of Gross National Income compared with the current level of 0.33 per cent this year. This is still very far from Stephen Harper's election promise to reach the OECD spending average of 0.44 per cent.

Two New Books Offered as Incentives to Participate in Website Survey

The [Canadian Co-operative Association](#) has posted a survey on its website asking visitors to provide input into the current site and offer suggestions for the improvements. Participants have the opportunity to win one of two books — *Made in Canada Leadership*, by François Morissette or *Co-operatives and the Pursuit of Peace*, edited by Joy Emmanuel and Ian MacPherson.

AB CEDNet Co-op CED Symposium



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The AB CEDNet Co-op Board has decided to hold a CED symposium this year, likely in October or November. This symposium would be seen as an opportunity to bring together CED practitioners and community volunteers to address a number of hot topics of interest in CED work in Alberta. The outcomes of this symposium would then provide the starting point for organizing a full-fledged conference in 2009.

As we want to ensure that such a symposium focuses on areas of most importance to Albertans interested in CED, we ask each of you to let us know what topics you would like to see addressed. We would appreciate your ideas by Monday, March 17.

Watch for further news of the symposium in the near future!