

IYC on Camera

Great stories in Co+op, Stronger Together video series

BY KELLY SMITH

Happy International Year of Cooperatives!
We've been thinking about International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) for long enough that making the mental shift from 2011 to 2012 was a snap. In fact, the official launch of IYC 2012 was held Oct. 31, 2011, at the UN General Assembly Hall in New York. Perhaps the UN chose this date to avoid food co-ops' busiest season.

In any case, we're proud to say that Robynn Shrader, CEO of the National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA) was among the co-op executives attending that event.

Themed "Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World," the objective of International Year of Cooperatives is to highlight the contribution of cooperatives around the globe. It presents a tremendous opportunity and rallying call to come together to promote co-ops, demonstrate the strength of the cooperative business model, and show everyone how co-ops build a better world.

International Year of Cooperatives is a great platform to raise the awareness of food co-ops and our Co+op, Stronger Together brand; show why consumer trust in food co-ops is well-placed when it comes to the values we adhere to and the social-mission-based aspects of doing business; reinforce the connections that food co-ops make among people, their food, and their local and global communities; and tell the great stories of our members.

We spent much of last year capturing some



One video was shot at Seward Co-op in Minneapolis.

VIDEO STILL COURTESY OF NCGA

of those stories for a video series we're premiering Jan. 21. Kevin Gillespie, whom some of you may know as a finalist on season six of Bravo TV's "Top Chef," hosts the series for us.

Last summer, Gillespie and a film crew visited several of our members in Minnesota, Washington, California, New Mexico, and Vermont. We filmed in stores as well as at co-op

events and featured local producers to showcase Principle 7: Concern for community. We also included a storyline on how food co-ops are working with each other and other co-ops such as Equal Exchange, Pachamama, and the National Cooperative Bank to demonstrate Principle 6: Cooperation among co-ops.

After a number of months combing through

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footage and reviewing and editing rough cuts, we're excited to have 13 episodes that will take viewers around the country to discover what's great about food co-ops, how they differ from conventional grocers, and the many ways they enrich and support their communities—from creating community gardens to supporting local farmers and preserving farmland to finding creative ways to help underserved areas. The short videos are entertaining, inspiring, and just scratch the surface of the many great things food co-ops are doing nationwide to build a better world!

The series is launching via a virtual premiere party on Saturday, Jan. 21 at 8:00 p.m. EST. and we hope you'll join us online at www.strongertogether.coop/premiere. We'll be launching with the first three videos and releasing the remaining videos on a biweekly basis through early summer. (If you miss the launch, the videos will be accessible on www.strongertogether.coop following the premiere).

Lights, Cameras, Co-ops! World Premiere

Saturday, Jan. 21, 2012
8:00 p.m. EST

www.strongertogether.coop/premiere

NCGA affiliates will receive video DVDs to use the second half of 2012 at their own member meetings, as part of film festivals, or at other events to inspire, share, and celebrate the many great achievements and contributions of food co-ops. We'll also be making our videos available via www.stories.coop, a website hosted by International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Their goal is to share one co-op story per day in 2012, and we're excited to have the stories of our members available via this global vehicle.

NCGA has a wealth of other resources to make it easy for members to promote IYC on the local level. We cannot overemphasize the importance of the International Year of Cooperatives to showcase co-ops and the solutions we have to offer. We all have a critical role in making sure that message is heard in 2012 and beyond. We are stronger together! ■

CCMA 2012 – Philadelphia

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For hotel reservations and conference information, please check the CCMA website: www.ccma.coop

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- Establishing cash management best practices
- Collaborating for co-op development
- Spreading the message of International Year of Cooperatives



Call for Proposals

Blooming Prairie Foundation is now accepting proposals for its 2012 funding cycle.

The Foundation's mission is to promote innovative ideas, practices and procedures in the area of organic and natural foods in order to further the health of the people, the health of the environment and cooperative ideals.

The Blooming Prairie Foundation makes grants to nonprofit, charitable organizations that conduct any of the following activities:

- Developmental, research and educational efforts in the organic industry and the cooperative community
- The development of organic and natural products.
- Cooperative development in the natural products industry.

Grants are not made to individuals. To be considered for a grant, your organization can follow the guidelines on the "Grants" page of the Blooming Prairie website at: www.bloomingprairie.org. Deadline for proposals is 5:00 p.m., Feb. 1, 2012.

For more information:

Please call Lynn Olson, Grant Administrator at (609) 556-3055 or e-mail at bpinfo@yahoo.com

