

FIRST COOPERATIVE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

The summit entitled "The cooperative model: answers to the global crisis" will be held at Guadalajara, Mexico, from 21 to 25 September, 2009.

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COOPERATIVES IN THE US: A \$654 BILLION BUSINESS

For the first time in history, the cooperative movement has a comprehensive study that assesses the economic impact of cooperatives in the United States.

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CCA: CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF CO-OPERATION

The Canadian Co-operative Association is celebrating 100 years of providing advocacy, training, and networking opportunities for the co-operatives.

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"OUR VISION IS THAT THE WHOLE WORLD BECOMES A COOPERATIVE"

*Interview with Paul Hazen, President and CEO
of US National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA)*
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COOPERATIVE BUSINESS MORE RESILIENT TO MARKET SHOCKS

Building a sustainable world economy through cooperatives



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IVANO BARBERINI, ICA PRESIDENT, PASSED AWAY

At the close of our first issue of ICA-Americas Newsletter we received, with great sadness, the news of the death of Ivano Barberini, president of the International Cooperative Alliance. Mr. Barberini, an example to follow, with a permanent smile, cordial, humble and worldwide recognized by his natural gift of leadership, was the pillar of the global co-operative movement. Our President was a friend whose style deserves to be emulated, fundamentally due to his commitment, honesty, spirit of integration and for being so caring. The co-operative movement loses a great leader and a friend that cannot be compared to anyone else.





Manuel Mariño
ICA-Americas
Regional Director

ICA-Americas is currently facing a new challenge to bring its members closer and favor a deeper sense of communication among them. From this issue on, a monthly digital newsletter will be available in English.

The newsletter is intended to be a practical tool, not only in terms of information but also as a means of enhancing cohesion and integration for the cooperatives based on English speaking countries in the Americas. We are looking for new communication approaches, new ways of building and fostering relationships, as well as a fluid interchange of information and ideas.

The economic crisis continues to be the major concern for all. Thus, we focus this issue on an article on how to build a sustainable world economy through co-operatives and the urgent need for cooperatives to promote their business model worldwide.

In our section named In-depth Interviews we had the pleasure to interview Paul Hazen, CEO of NCBA, who reflected upon this and other themes regarding the US co-operative movement.

In this issue you will also find the results of the recent study: "Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives in the US" and we also inform you on all the events that will take place throughout 2009 in relation to the 100th Anniversary of the Canadian Co-operative Association.

Welcome to the first edition of ICA-Americas newsletter!

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COOPERATIVES, 4 JULY 2009 "DRIVING GLOBAL RECOVERY THROUGH COOPERATIVES"

The International Cooperative Day has been celebrated by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) since 1923. UN International Day of Cooperatives was first celebrated in 1995 on the same day. The International Day aims to raise awareness on cooperatives, underscore the contribution of the movement to the resolution of the major problems addressed by the United Nations and strengthen and extend partnerships between the international cooperative movement and other actors, including governments, at local, national and international levels.

The UN International Day of Cooperatives on 4 July 2009 will focus on recovery rather than crisis. It aims to highlight the role that cooperatives have in not only promoting economic growth, but also in promoting ethical values - values which have been severely challenged during the financial and food crisis. It underlines that cooperatives can effectively contribute to global economic recovery and that they will do so in respect of the Cooperative Values and Principles which guide their operations.

The theme also allows stakeholders to address the response of the cooperative movement to the financial, food and values crisis. Cooperatives have to serve their members' economic, social and cultural needs in both good and bad times. While



profit margins might slump, co-operatives have the ability to retain their workforce, or continue to provide an essential service at affordable prices -ways that they can help communities withstand the worse aspects of the global downturn.

The cooperative model is not a tool to address crisis, but a sustainable form of enterprise that outlives crisis and drives recovery.

“The cooperative model: answers to the global crisis”

FIRST COOPERATIVE SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

ICA-Americas as the major organization in cooperative integration for the Americas, with the support of the ICA organization members in Mexico, have the pleasure to invite the cooperative movement and other social economy organizations, to participate in the First Cooperative Summit of the Americas entitled: “The cooperative model: answers to the global crisis”, to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 21 to 25 September, 2009.

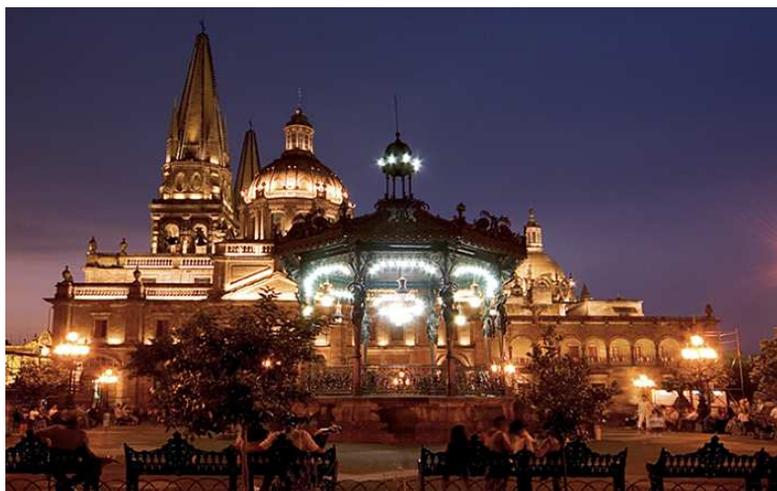
In the current international scene cooperative organizations are called to join forces to continue being important change agents and to decidedly confront the challenges ahead. From this need, an initiative has emerged to form a united front this year 2009.

The main objective of the First Cooperative Summit is to go more deeply into the analysis of the crisis through more direct and active participation. This summit will be more than a meeting point for cooperative members. In this opportunity the major topics that affect and benefit our organizations will be previously analyzed in the different countries and cooperative sectors. A consensual statement will be drawn up including agreements and resolutions that will serve as a reference framework for the implementation of actions directed towards strengthening the cooperative sector in the American Continent. Our model and the guidelines in the before mentioned statement, will help face the present challenges in the context of global crisis.

ICA-Americas celebrated in 2008 the Sixteenth Regional Conference and every year this event attracted a large attendance and offered a high academic level. ICA-Americas believes this is the moment for a conceptual and methodological change towards a more engaging and integrating approach, to continue fulfilling our function as a regional body.

Cooperatives are very significant in the redefinition of a new global economic paradigm. The movement has been strengthened for its ethics, its defense of collective interest and democratization of management systems, all of these derived of its intrinsic nature as social enterprises serving members and the whole community.

ICA-Americas with the support of the Caja Popular Mexicana, Federación de Cajas Populares ALIANZA, Confederación Nacional Cooperativa de Actividades Diversas de La República Mexicana, Federación Nacional de Cooperativas Financieras UNISAP invite you all to be part of the answer.



The historical city of Guadalajara will host the first Cooperative Summit of the Americas



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The Hotel and Registration Forms will be available soon at Summit website:
<http://www.cumbreaci.coop>

For more information about the Summit please contact Marianella Ramírez at:
cumbre@aciamericas.coop

"OUR VISION IS THAT THE WHOLE WORLD BECOMES A COOPERATIVE"

Paul Hazen, President and CEO of National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) is a creative man who showed during this interview a passion for the economic and social benefits of the co-operative business model and the possibilities it implies. From Washington DC, Paul spoke about the co-operative movement in North America, its weaknesses and strengths.

Paul is from the State of Wisconsin, where there are more cooperatives than in any other state, thus he was involved in cooperation from a very tender age, even without being absolutely conscious about it. "I didn't really understand the significance of cooperatives when I was growing up. It was a part of the daily life and it's just something you took for granted."

Later at University, while following an Economics degree from the University of Wisconsin, he understood the true meaning of cooperation and soon became a complete cooperative's advocator. "I realized that cooperatives not only benefited the community from an economic stand point but from a social stand point. These businesses were there to do more than just benefit their members financially, they were trying to improve the community and help everyone improve their lives. That inspired me and was one of the reasons why I wanted to have a career in cooperatives".

A lot has been said about the role the cooperative sector is called to play and the importance of joint actions across the movement, but less is known about how to do it. With regard to the Americas, identifying the opportunities for business development for US coops in Latin America as well as opportunities for cooperative development where US organizations could work with local coops in Latin America seems to be a good starting point. "We would access

US government money to do this or World Bank money or Inter-American Development Bank money but in order to do that we need to have partners in Latin America, cooperatives in Latin America", Hazen said.

NCBA is currently investigating a cooperative development project in Colombia and there is another project with Nicaragua and El Salvador. "An effort is being made in order to put together our contacts in Colombia with our folks here and work for opportunities for development. We are also trying to do a link trade between cooperatives in Nicaragua and El Salvador and food cooperatives in the United States", he stated. Even when there is not so much interaction today, the good thing is that there is a potential to grow globally and to generate business relationships that will benefit cooperatives

"I tell people I am one of the luckiest people in the world for this opportunity that was presented to me (to work in cooperatives at national and international level) "

both in North and Latin America.

During the conversation, he came up with an idea to link coops in Latin America with coops in the US thus, transforming a weakness of the movement into an opportunity. "We are not attracting people who have just arrived to the US to cooperatives and since a lot of our immigrants come from south of our border, maybe there is an opportunity for cooperatives in Latin America when their members come north to get them involved with coops in the US."

Amidst the capitalist economic crisis



we are facing, the cooperative movement enters a more pro-active phase with its message that affirms cooperatives are an alternative to other modes of business and a better business model. After a long wait, cooperatives in the US count with the data to prove it, thanks to the "Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives" (see article on page 8). Highlighting the importance of this research Hazen declared "We've never had a comprehensive study that assessed the economic impact of cooperatives in the United States before. This is the first time, which is significant. It will help us make the case for cooperatives before the Congress and the Obama administration and the media. This is very powerful and the next step will be using this data to do research and analysis in cooperatives and its significance form an economic and social basis in the US economy. We are hoping that countries around the world would do similar things."

Paul explain that despite the fact that there are lots of cooperatives in the United States -some of them very large- they are pretty much ignored because they are relatively a small part in economy and so policy makers and the media do not necessarily recognize cooperatives as having any impact on the national economy. "Hence, the

data obtained is fundamental to make the eye that cooperatives are significant.

Co-ops main difference and advantage in coping with the crisis is fundamentally a matter of values and principles. "We are making the same argument, that cooperatives didn't participate in risk taking and speculations that a lot of other businesses did. Thus, we will be affected by the downturn in the economy but we are not having the same type of financial crisis. We have a couple of our large Credit Unions affected and have been taken over by the government in order to protect their assets. Eventually they will be returned to private cooperative organizations. We are not immune to this at all, but we have a better way to cope with this situation."

Definitely this is a good time to combat individualism and reassert the message that people working together is the best business model. However, the main weakness of coops in the US is the lack of visibility and understanding of cooperatives. NCBA surveys have revealed that only 40% of the US adult population understands what cooperatives stand for. "But if you explain to

them about cooperatives, 66% would rather do business with a cooperative so we have a big gap between those

"... we try to share cooperatives with people around the world so that everybody has the opportunity to be a member of a cooperative. Our vision is that the whole world becomes a cooperative."

who know about us and those who, if they knew about us, would do business with us, and that's a weakness but it's also a great opportunity in the market."

Adopting the .Coop domain is a way to improve the collective visibility of cooperatives because the more coops use it, the more visible the sector will be. It is a great opportunity for cooperatives to promote their co-operative difference, to differentiate their member owned businesses from a sea of .coms and .orgs. ".Coop is one of the most cost effective ways to market yourself

as a cooperative. Right now if you take a look at cooperative addresses at any particular country you'll find there's no connection between them. We know that if one person is a member of one type of cooperative they are likely to buy or become a member of another cooperative, but if they don't know that the other business is a cooperative we are missing an opportunity. This is also a way to promote the global cooperative identity", Hazen concludes.

Hazen, such a prominent figure in the US cooperative movement, never thought he would have the opportunity to work in cooperatives at a national and international level. "I tell people I am one of the luckiest people in the world for this opportunity that was presented to me". Aware of the privilege of having been born in a very rich country like the US with plenty of opportunities, he emphasizes people should not take that for granted. "That is one of the reasons why in NCBA we try to have a global view; we try to share cooperatives with people around the world so that everybody has the opportunity to be a member of a cooperative. Our vision is that the whole world becomes a cooperative."

THE dotCOOP GLOBAL AWARDS FOR COOPERATIVE EXCELLENCE

DotCooperation LLC, sponsor of the .coop domain, has launched www.globalawards.coop where co-ops from around the world can submit entries for the dotCoop Global Awards for Cooperative Excellence.

The award criteria seeks to encourage cooperatives from all sectors to examine their processes in order to compete for the award and will provide other cooperatives the opportunity to understand how cooperatives can best use their differences to positively impact their business and their communities.

Entrants are asked to identify and document how their cooperatives understand and include cooperative values and principles in their business activities. They will also be assessed on how they use the .coop domain and other internet and media tools to enhance performance and to promote cooperative identity among members and the general public.

Cooperatives can compete in one of three categories based on the revenue or assets of the cooperative. DotCoop wants to be able to recognize both large and small cooperatives that are able to build on their cooperative values and principles to become successful.

Winners will be selected by an international panel and receive funding towards expenses to send a representative to participate in the International Co-operative Alliance General Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2009 where they will accept the award in front of the ICA General Assembly.

The deadline for entries for the inaugural awards is June 15, 2009.

Full details of the Award and application information can be found at the website (Site in English, Spanish and French).

Building a sustainable world economy through cooperatives



There is no escaping the despair caused by the economic and social decline. The deepest recession since the 1930s has bitten deep into every community across the globe with millions of workers suffering because they cannot keep their jobs. The crisis was generated by the system itself and its intrinsic deficiency. This is a turning point for cooperatives to promote their business model and raise awareness on the need of a recovery plan based on cooperative principles.

A lot has been recently written about the similarities and differences between the global financial crisis of 1929 -with the Great Depression it brought about- and the current global meltdown. Such comparisons have sometimes been casual but other times well-grounded. But one thing is for sure, the 1929 crisis will always be there to teach us one crucial thing: recovery is possible. It goes without saying it only comes with hard work and through innovation and creativity.

The cooperative businesses seems to be surviving the crisis better than other models, and it is because cooperatives operate in the interests of their members, who are at the same time users, and they are not managed in the interests of outside investors. The cooperative values can play an important role in the recovery path to a sustainable world economy leaving behind predatory practices and greed.

In a recent interview with Hagen Henry, chief of the ILO's Cooperatives Branch, he put it simply: "Available information suggests that, with few exceptions, cooperative enterprises across all sectors and regions are relatively more resilient to the current market shocks than their capital-centered counterparts". Henry explained that the situation of cooperatives with regard to the crisis varies with the degree of dependency on demand and external financing, the degree of their diversification and also with the sector. The ILO representative informed they had just commissioned a study, which will provide cooperatives and the general public with further, more in-depth information.

Regarding to the crisis effects on cooperative banks, Henry highlighted that so far cooperative banks have not announced any significant losses due to this crisis.

"At the peak of the crisis cooperative banks were faced with an increase in membership and savings deposits and found it difficult to respond to this sudden growth in demand. Nevertheless, losses incurred by the German central bank of cooperatives (DZ), itself a stock company, show how cooperative banks could put themselves at a financial risk".

He emphasized that in those reported cases, cooperative specific control mechanisms were either not in place or failed. "However, most cooperative banks have lessened their vulnerability and increased transparency mainly by investing in their proximity and in the real economy" he explained.

"No cooperative bank seems to have applied for state aid so far. As the German example shows, this may not be interpreted as them not having been impacted negatively by the crisis. But self-help mechanisms, like member liability to further call, inter-cooperative bank guarantees, or reserve liabilities are being used before applying for external support" he said.

The Chief of the ILO's Cooperatives Branch highlighted the significance of such mechanisms. "Both in the US American credit union system and in the German cooperative banking system these mechanisms have prevented member customers from losing any money ever since the Great Depression was over. What's more, bankruptcies of cooperatives due to the crisis have not been reported, nor have employee layoffs" he added.

The International Cooperative Alliance has been advocating these values throughout its history and in these hard times has called the most powerful governments in the world to seriously consider the advantages of the cooperative business model. In the letter sent to the G-20 prior to its meeting on 2 April, 2009, all the members of the ICA Board agreed that with over 150 years of commercial success in all eco-

nomics fields, cooperative enterprise, with its unique set of values and principles, can provide possible solutions particularly in promoting stability in the global economy.

“It is no coincidence, that those co-operative businesses that have stayed faithful to cooperative values and principles, are the same businesses that in recent weeks have benefited from the flight of deposits and bank accounts from the failing and collapsing investment houses and banks – an acknowledgement of the continuing trust with which they are endowed by the general public. People know that a co-operative is a different kind of business - values led and with a different ethos”, ICA said.

Iain Macdonald, ICA Director General, pointed out that trying to persuade governments to recognize the benefits of Cooperation is no easy task. “Even those who appear closer to our philosophy seem to think there are only two ways of running businesses - state control, or investor-owned enterprise. There is never any mention of the co-operative option, which, as the Global 300 project has shown, is already a massive part of the world economy”, he said.

Macdonald emphasized the need of more education on cooperative business. “We insist on discussing our business scheme at an academic level, so as to let students have another option. There are many people in the world who do not know about the size of the movement, the important contribution we make to the global economy, or that the



ICA is the largest Non-governmental Organization in the World with 800 million members. We have never been good at promoting our own case, but it is imperative to sort that out now”, he concluded.

By definition, crises are crucial situations in which a decisive change is impending. In this crisis in particular there is a pressing need to establish a new economic order that is economically efficient, environmentally sustainable and socially just. We heard it once, we heard it twice, we heard it a hundred times. **“How many times can a man turn his head, pretending he just doesn't see? How many years can a mountain exist before it's washed to the sea? The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind”** (Bob Dylan).

FRAMEWORK LAW FOR THE COOPERATIVES IN LATIN AMERICA

ICA-Americas has released a digital version of the “Framework Law for the Cooperatives in Latin America”. It was elaborated by a commission integrated by experts from Central America and the Caribbean, the Andean Area and the Southern Cone, in close collaboration with Hagen Henry, Chief of the ILO Cooperative Branch. ICA-Americas Regional Board approved it in July, 2008, after a long and fruitful period of discussion and consultation with different organizations and agencies for cooperative development.

The purpose of this Framework Law is to provide orientation on key guiding principles and institutions for cooperative law as they derive from jurisprudence, academic studies, and the recognized practice of comparative law.

This easy-to-read Framework Law has minimized the use of technical language and refers to all types of cooperatives.

Although there are certain provisions that are specific to a particular type of cooperative, its objective is to provide regulations for all cooperatives, regardless of their specific social purpose.

The law consists of 102 articles and it is organized into twelve chapters, each of which deals with a certain aspect, following a logical order. It begins with general provisions, and then covers a wide range of aspects such as: the constitution, the members, the capital structure, the corporate bodies as well as cooperative integration, dissolution and liquidation processes. The final chapters deal with the government institutions and public agencies responsible for the oversight and the promotion of cooperatives.

This project is based on a previous document prepared in 1988 by the Organización de las Cooperativas de América (OCA), which inspired several national

cooperative legislation reforms. ICA-Americas decided to update such a valuable document, drawing up a version which considered the profound economic and social changes that have taken place in the region in the last 20 years. The new version also embodied the provisions of important documents: the Statement on the Co-operative Identity adopted by ICA in 2005 and the resolutions on cooperatives promotion approved by the United Nations (UN Resolution A/RES/56/114, 2001) and the International Labour Organization (ILO Recommendation 193, 2002).

With this work, ICA Americas seeks to contribute with a practical tool to help cooperatives realize their full potential in every country in the region, through a favorable and updated legal framework.

This Law is currently being translated into English and Portuguese, with the ILO support.

COOPERATIVES IN THE US GENERATE REVENUES EXCEEDING \$654 BILLION

For the first time in history, the cooperative movement has a comprehensive study that assesses the economic impact of cooperatives in the United States. The report shows that more than 29,000 American cooperatives generate revenues exceeding \$654 billion and employ 2 million-plus workers. Furthermore, it emphasizes that the cooperative movement generates \$133 billion as income and \$75 billion in wages.

The study, "Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives," is the result of the hard work done by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which received a \$1.5 million from the Congress to develop the project in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) and other private-sector associations.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack highlighted the importance of the present research since it shows how significant the co-op movement impact is nationwide. "Because of the hard work that USDA and its partners did, the nation now has a more definitive view of the role and economic strength of cooperatives in our economy", Vilsack said.

The National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) emphasized the outstanding contribution of this report that generates statistics to make the case for cooperatives to the public. At the same time, NCBA affirms this is a defining moment for both the history of cooperatives and American businesses since the research provides accurate data so all consumers understand why this model en-

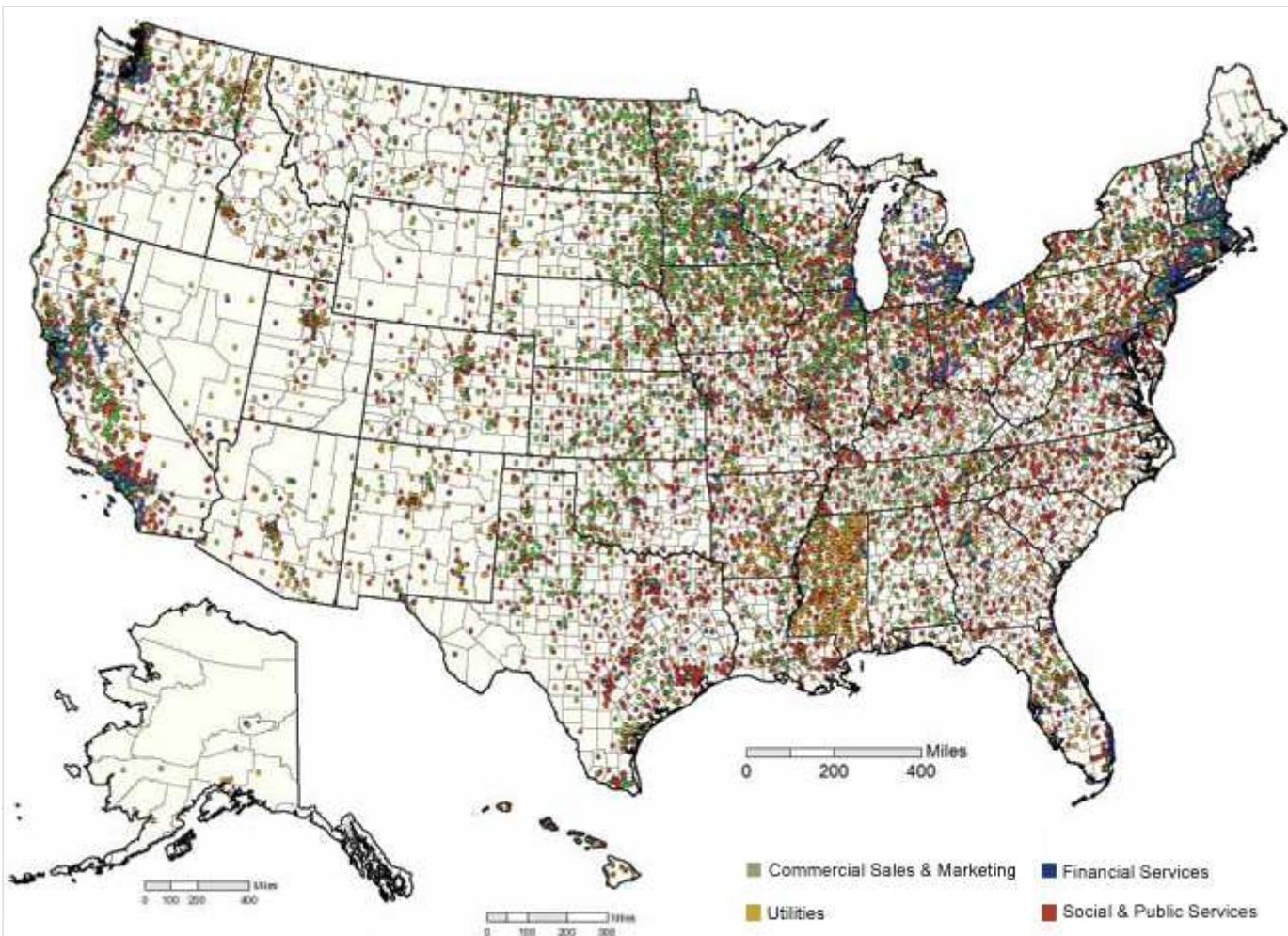
dures, even during tough economic times like the ones we are all facing today. (Download a summary of the research at <http://www.ncba.coop/pdf/ReportSUMMARY.pdf>).

NCBA's new challenge is to make the most of the information gathered during the investigation and convey it both to the cooperative movement and the society as a whole. Although cooperatives have constituted a useful tool in the innovation and correction of imperfection of the markets, little is known about how much they contribute to the nation's economy and the deep effects they produce for the economy and its citizens.

These issues will be analyzed at a special break out session at NCBA's 2009 Annual Meeting and Cooperative Conference in Washington, DC from May 5-7. Brent Hueth, director of the University of Wisconsin Center for Cooperatives (UWCC) will present an in-depth review of the results and how cooperatives can use the research to support their marketing, public relations and legislative impact strategies.

FACTS & FIGURES

- Number of Cooperatives 29,284
- Total revenue: More than \$654 billion
- Income: \$133 billion
- Wages: \$75 billion
- Number of Employees: More than \$2 million
- Source: National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA)



DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. COOPERATIVES BY SECTOR

THERE ARE STILL REASONS TO CELEBRATE

2009 is an important year for co-operation in Canada. The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) is celebrating 100 years of providing advocacy, training, and networking opportunities for the co-operative sector.

In many ways, the context in which co-operatives operate has changed dramatically since the founding of the Co-operative Union of Canada in 1909 (which became the Canadian Cooperative Association CCA, in 1987). Their role has also shifted, from emphasizing single bottom lines to multiple ones, and single stakeholder groups to the needs of workers, consumers, and the wider community. Yet at their core, co-operatives have changed very little - their purpose has remained essentially to improve the lives of the members in a manner that is equitable and democratic.

The Canadian co-operative movement with 100 years of continuous, sustainable, ethical co-operative enterprise is a testament to the dedication and commitment of millions of members, volunteers and staff who believed in the co-op model as a way of controlling their economic destiny and improving their livelihoods.

Nowadays, the sector offers 'cradle to grave' services so that a Canadian citizen can be born in a cooperative health facility, eat co-operative grown food, shop at co-operatives, bank with a credit union and select a co-operative funeral home.

To celebrate the contribution of co-operatives and credit unions to the lives of Canadians and to mark a century of service, CCA has organized a series of events throughout 2009. Activities relating to the 100th anniversary will include:

- The creation of a virtual Canadian Co-operative Hall of Fame and the selection of the Greatest Canadian Co-operator.
- The publication of *A Century of Co-operation*, a commemorative book on the history of the CUC/CCA and the Canadian co-operative movement by Ian MacPherson, Canada's pre-eminent co-op historian.
- The 2009 CCA Congress, which will include a gala reception and display of photos and co-op memorabilia at Library and Archives Canada. The Congress will take place at The Westin in Ottawa from June 16 to 19, 2009.
- A Youth Action Strategy for young Canadian co-operators, to engage Canadian youth in employment, leadership and education in the co-operative sector.

"Co-ops are one of Canada's greatest success stories," said CCA Executive Director Carol Hunter. *"They have played an enormous role in building the country we have today and are an important part of the economies of both rural and urban communities. They make a significant contribution to the social needs of Canadians in such areas as child care and affordable housing, as well as to more traditional areas of the economy, such as banking, insurance and retail."*

Ms. Hunter said co-operatives are part of the solution to revitalizing Canada's economy. *"The history of co-ops shows us that they were often formed during hard economic times, so they are as relevant today as they have ever been,"* she said. *"Since most co-ops are locally-based, they not only provide jobs, but also generate wealth which remains in the community."*

More information at: <http://www.coopscanada.coop/100th/>

100 YEARS AFTER

There are some **8,800** co-operatives and credit unions across Canada. Collectively, they have more than **17 million** members, over **\$275 billion** in assets and employ more than **150,000** people.



- 1 Cooperatives are receiving increased attention and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) is responding demonstrating their impact on global economy. The response to the **Global 300** project (www.global300.coop) has been significant and is the basis for a **new comprehensive data base** ICA is developing to show the strength of the cooperative sector.
- 2 The **ICA General Assembly** will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on November 16-20. The theme for this conference is "Global Crisis - Co-operative Opportunity".
- 3 The **ICA Research Committee** led by Lou Hammond Ketilson of the Center for Cooperatives at the University of Saskatchewan, will be hosting a Research Symposium at the ICA General Assembly in Geneva, as a platform for launching the process of developing an **International Research Agenda on Co-operatives**. The members of the ICA sector committees will be surveyed to determine high level research priorities. At the same time, a survey of the members of the research committee will be conducted to create an inventory of completed and ongoing research on co-operatives. The goal would be to gather this information into a document to present at the Symposium, and to use it as a foundation for Research Committee planning and priority setting in collaboration with sector committees.
- 4 The **Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)** has organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Cooperatives on April 2009 at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting responds to resolution 62/128 which seeks to promote the contribution of cooperatives to the UN development Agenda within the context of the Copenhagen Social Summit on the role of cooperatives in reducing poverty, creating employment and promoting social inclusion. Among other things, the resolution urges the strengthening of cooperatives and to raise public awareness of the over-all socio-economic impact of cooperatives. In addition, the resolution also requested to consult with Member States and cooperative stakeholders on the desirability and feasibility of proclaiming an **International Year of Cooperatives**.
- 5 The ICA Board is considering holding the second annual **Coop Expo in 2010**; the first Expo held in Lisbon, Portugal in 2008 was a success. It brought together cooperatives from around the world to explore joint business. The ICA-Americas is very interested in a larger representation from the US and Latin America and will be happy to receive your suggestions or ideas of how to make the Coop Expo a success. Please send your comments to Olivia Ferris at olivia@aciamericas.coop
- 6 The **Co-operative Unit (EMP/COOP) and the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Organization (ILO)** have partnered with the ICA to raise awareness on the current and potential contribution of cooperatives in eliminating child labour, as well as to strengthen the capacity of co-operatives around the world to tackle the issue of child labour. A report on co-operatives and child labour, "**Cooperating out of Child Labour**", has been published highlighting good practice and suggesting ways forward.

All of your suggestions and proposals regarding the newsletter's contents are very important for us, since our primary goal is to provide a publication enriched by your opinions. Please send your comments to: communications@aciamericas.coop