

TRACK 5: GROWING OUR CO-OP

501 We Have the Money — We Just Have to Ask for It, Funding Cooperative Development and Community Donation

June 12, 10:15 – 11:45 am

Delamar Room

David J. Thompson, President, Twin Pines Cooperative Foundation

The workshop will highlight a path to fill the serious capital gap that all food co-ops face — start-ups, expansions, or additional stores. Hear about the efforts underway to build a dynamic, ongoing capital infrastructure for food cooperative development. The panelists will share how cooperatives can use a focused program to pursue their members for the funds needed for food cooperative development and explain how this can be done in combination with contributing funds to local nonprofits. Unity, reciprocity, and solidarity among cooperatives lead can transform our individual members' money into collective capital for cooperative development.

502 Real Estate Issues: Removing a Big Barrier to Rapid Growth

June 12, 1:30 – 3 pm

Liberty Room

Walden Swanson, Director of New Initiatives, CoMetrics

Food co-ops are expanding rapidly but not as rapidly as competition. Case studies indicate that managers prefer and are better at managing stores than dealing with real estate matters; real estate transactions suck up a lot of a manager's time; co-ops have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars due to poor real estate acumen; real estate cycle time is long; and real estate involves big dollar amounts. During this session, we will explore the key issues in real estate (purchase or lease) and how co-ops can best navigate these complicated issues (Hint: not alone). Our hypothesis is that cooperatives could expand more rapidly, with less loss, and with less debt if complex real estate issues were managed by a cooperative real estate professional partnering with local real estate agents.

503 More Stores = More Impact

June 12, 3:30 - 5 pm

Northstar Room

Moderator: Jeanie Wells, CDS Consulting Co-op

Potential Panelists: Mississippi Market, People's La Crosse, Outpost, Seward, LaMontanita, Wheatsville

Food co-ops make a difference in their communities. We can have a greater impact with more growth and more stores. This all-star panel will explore a variety of ways to grow including adoption, merger, acquisition, and adding more stores.

504 Preparing to Grow

June 13, 10:30 am - Noon

Liberty Room

The Boise Co-op Management Team: Ben Kuzma, General Manager; Craig Lochner, Chief Financial Officer; Saul H. Seyler, Store Manager; Matt Fuxan, Assistant Store Manager/Village Project Manager; Debbi Woods, Human Resource Manager; and Shannon McGuire, Marketing and Outreach Manager

The Boise Co-op managers will present their road to growth and expansion. This panel will discuss how the co-op approached assessing internal readiness, building alignment among the Board of Directors and staff, researching feasibility and gathering data, preparing to staff multiple stores, marketing strategies, overall project management, and lessons learned upon the way.

505 Financing Your Project: Two Co-ops “Bare All” with Their Lender

June 13, 2 – 3:30 pm

Liberty Room

Brenda Pfahnl, Senior Loan Officer and Director of Sustainable Food Systems Financing, Northcountry Cooperative Development Fund

Explore the financing process through a case study that presents the points of view of both the lender and the cooperative. This session will cover lessons learned, how to structure and raise capital, how to close the project as smoothly as possible, and how to communicate effectively with your lender.