



Energizing Communities

Mobile Learning Sessions

Tours or Mobile Learning Sessions have been an important part of the co-op educator conference dating back to at least 1956 at the University of Saskatchewan when the co-op education institute was held in Canada for the first time.

Mobile Learning Sessions, a name that was later given to tours to acknowledge their roles as off-site classrooms, allow conference participants and local co-operators to exchange ideas and best practices. They also enhance participants' understanding of the environment in which area co-operatives operate.

In 2016, Alberta's co-operators have been gracious in opening their doors. We have two MLS tours; both will cover ventures that are fledgling and established—one has marked a century. They will certainly show you Western hospitality and can-do spirit.

For both tours, meet at Hotel Alma at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, June 2.

Buses depart at 9:30 a.m. from Hotel Alma and return there at 4:30 p.m.

Tour 1

- **UFA Co-operative Limited, 200-937 Highland Park Blvd NE, Airdrie**

Founded in 1909, UFA has grown from a small-scale local co-operative into an extensive retail operation with 120,000 active owners. UFA offers support to food producers and rural communities at its 35 agricultural operations. Its cardlock network is Alberta's most extensive, serving more than 110 rural communities across Alberta, and areas of neighbouring provinces British Columbia and Saskatchewan. In 2007, the co-op acquired Spruceland Lumber in Fort MacMurray, and in 2008, Wholesale Sports, Western Canada's leading outdoor outfitter with locations from Manitoba to British Columbia. The co-op has a new president and CEO in Carol Kitchen. She is a presenter on the Engage and Inclusiveness Panel on June 1.

In Airdrie, the CASC-ACE tour will meet Wes Nail, site operations manager of the flagship store that officially opened in November.

- **Calgary Co-op, 39 Crowfoot Way NW, Calgary**

The Crowfoot location of Calgary Co-op shows the depth of the co-operative's business, featuring a liquor store with a wine tasting room, a gas station, large grocery store and a deli serving ready-to-eat/heat-at-home meals and trademark Local Roast coffee. The co-op also offers a Natural Choice category providing natural alternatives for health and wellness as well as a traditional pharmacy and travel service.

Calgary Co-op has returned more than \$35 million to members this past year, has almost a half million members, and more than 4,000 employees. In 2015, through the Co-op Community Foundation and community initiatives, Calgary Co-op invested more than \$3.9 million into local food poverty reduction programs, youth, education, the environment, and preventative health and wellness. Additionally, Calgary Co-op owns approximately 11 per cent of the equity in Federation Co-operatives Limited.

Meeting us is Vice President, Wine Spirits Beer, Home Health Care, Travel & Business Development, Jeff Ambrose.

Lunch will be served from the Calgary Co-op's signature Fresh-to-Go counter where meals are created by a Red Seal Chef.

- **Family Multi Purpose Co-operative**

While we are at Calgary Co-op, we'll also hear from a Filipino-Canadian lending circle. Created in 2009, the co-op's mission is to assist those who struggle with credit card and other high-interest debts while establishing a new life in Canada and working several jobs. Based on a successful model in the Philippines, the co-op operates as a co-operative rather than a credit union. Each member commits to save a little every month toward finding financial independence. The family aspect of the co-op is important and children are welcome as members and learners.

Speaking to us will be Joel Orellano who is the founder and chair of board of the co-op.

- **Sarcee Meadows Housing Co-operative Ltd.,
B50, 4221 Sarcee Rd. SW**

Sarcee Meadows is the second largest housing co-op in Canada — built on 35 acres with 380 units and about 1000 residents. The community was conceived in the sixties and became a reality close to 50 years ago. Now many longterm residents are at a different

stage of their lives than when they first joined the co-op. The co-operative is working to accommodate seniors' needs as well as keeping its many youth members engaged.

Explaining the co-op's growth, successes and challenges will be General Manager Roberta Miller.

Tour 2

- **Connect First Training Centre, second floor,
1212 31 Ave. NE, Calgary**

Connect First Credit Union is Canada's ninth largest credit union, with over \$5 billion in assets under administration. It serves 100,000 members through 27 branches in 13 communities across southern Alberta under the Chinook Financial and First Calgary Financial banners.

Meeting the CASC-ACE MLS group will be Community Brand Manager Teri Buckley. In 2015, she was recognized by the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association with the "Co-operative Visionary Leadership Award" for her work in launching the Cash Crunch Loan, Alberta's first mainstream alternative to pay-day lending. Teri will discuss the credit union group's community approach, approach to financial inclusion and lending alternatives to meet members' needs.

- **Prairie Sky Co-housing, 403 31 Ave. NE.**

The co-op started 22 years ago as a conversation among friends. Today it remains the only co-housing in Alberta. Modelled on co-housing in Scandinavia, the co-op has 18 households and 40 residents. Common spaces are owned by the co-operative and each household has a share. Residents own their units which can be sold at market value.

The CASC-ACE group will have an opportunity to tour a unit and learn about the value and governance of co-housing from residents, including Hazel Corcoran, executive director of Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation.

Also presentations by:

- ◆ **The Grain Exchange Worker-Owned Co-operative**

The first worker-owned co-op bakery and pizzeria in Alberta will serve up a delicious San Francisco-inspired lunch. The co-op aims to replicate the famous Arizmendi/Cheese Board bakery collectives of California here in Calgary. Its objectives are to create living wage jobs, worker ownership, pool resources for local worker co-op proliferation and serve artisanal baked goods from the Prairies' outstanding organic grain. Last year the co-op successfully ran a crowd funding campaign to equip a retail bakery/pizzeria.

Our speaker is baker and co-founder, Peter Driftmier.

- ◆ **Calgary Aging in Place Co-operative**

The mission of this co-op is to allow seniors to stay at home and be supported as they age. The first leg of this project is to find services that support members by providing house cleaning, handiwork, snow removal, and lawn care. The co-op is also looking at other opportunities to support live-at-home options for seniors, such as a creating secondary suites in their existing homes. Suites could be managed by the co-op in consultation with home owners. Calgary Aging in Place Co-op now has several members and service providers.

Speaking about this innovative co-op will be Greg O'Neill who is a co-op director as well as a developer of co-operative solutions.

- ◆ **New Scoop YYC**

New Scoop YYC is a media platform owned by Calgaryans using a co-operative structure. It is committed to sourcing and telling stories that will make Calgary ever more inclusive, thriving and sustainable. The co-op worked with the CASC-ACE Conference to publicize events in Calgary.

Speaking about the co-op and challenges to create a news service that is financially independent is Sarah Arthurs, founding member.

- **Cooperative Théâtre à Pic – Walking tour of historic Calgary, presented by the theatre co-op.**

University of Calgary graduate student Inouk Touzin founded this hybrid co-op (members can be workers, audience members and investors) in 2009 to provide the Francophone community in Calgary and southern Alberta with quality theatre programming, jobs for artists and to enhance French-language culture in Alberta. "Cooperative Théâtre à Pic" (Summit Theatre Co-op) has several members. It will take CASC-ACE Conference participants on a walking tour of the Mission area of Calgary, settled by Francophones, Métis and First Nations, that has a "complex, rich history," describes Inouk. Discover Rouleauville at the turn of the 20th century, and its many contributions to early Calgary society.