

Friday, January 15, 2016

Greetings Co-operators,

We're looking forward to welcoming you to **CCMA 2016: Disrupting the Future – Cooperative Food in the Next Generation**. This national food co-op conference will be hosted by the Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA), with Franklin Community Co-op and River Valley Co-op as primary local hosts, and will take place June 9-11, 2016, at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA in the heart of "Co-op Valley!"

The NFCA was founded by a visionary group of co-op leaders to create opportunities for regional collaboration in marketing, sourcing, education, and shared business success as a compliment to local and national efforts. The NFCA now includes over 30 food co-ops and start-up initiatives in Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island (click here for a [map of member food co-op locations](#)), with a combined membership of more than 90,000 people across New England. Together, we are working toward a shared vision of a thriving co-operative economy, rooted in a healthy, just and sustainable regional food system.

The town of Amherst, our conference site for 2016, is nestled in the heart of what many refer to as "Co-op Valley," in Western Massachusetts. The region is home to our local host food co-ops, NFCA members Franklin Community Co-op and River Valley Co-op, as well as a diverse community of co-operatives and credit unions that reaches across sectors, many of which are working together to grow the co-operative economy. The University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is also home to a system of student-run co-operative businesses and the Department of Economics offers an undergraduate Certificate in Applied Research in Co-operative Enterprises, in collaboration with local co-op associations. The Campus Center is named for Murray Lincoln, UMASS alum, founder of Nationwide Insurance (a mutual enterprise), and member of the Co-operative Hall of Fame; and the campus library is named for W.E.B. DuBois, African American Scholar, co-founder of the NAACP and promoter of co-operative enterprise as a tool for economic empowerment.

In the context of a rapidly changing marketplace, the theme for CCMA 2016, "Disrupting the Future – Cooperative Food in the Next Generation," is an invitation for our food co-ops to engage with what our movement can become. The International Co-operative Alliance's Blueprint for a Co-operative Decade has provided a powerful vision in which co-ops become the acknowledged leader in economic, social and environmental sustainability, the model preferred by people around the world, and the fastest growing form of enterprise by 2020. The opportunity for food co-ops to contribute to this vision and to thrive in the future will require a focus on business success as well as a fundamental shift in how we can engage and empower people from a diversity of backgrounds and generations.

The Local Host Committee is already in high gear putting together some fun tours and an exciting closing celebration at the [UMASS Amherst Fine Arts Center](#). With its rural charm and big city appeal, Amherst has lots of great [attractions](#) to meet your needs.

Please mark your calendars and register for CCMA 2016: <https://umass.irisregistration.com/Site/CCMA>

We look forward to seeing you in New England this June!

In Co-operation,



Bonnie Hudspeth, Membership & Outreach, NFCA
Chair, Local Host Committee



Erbin Crowell, Executive Director, NFCA

CCMA 2016 Local Host Committee:

Suzette Snow Cobb, Franklin Community Co-op
Sarah Kanabay, Franklin Community Co-op
Natasha Latour, River Valley Co-op

Emma Sabella, New England Farmers Union
Andrea Stanley, River Valley Co-op
Adam Trott, Valley Alliance of Worker Co-ops



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