



Co-op Developments

A short monthly update about co-op development in the Pacific Northwest provided to you on or about the 20th of each month. **Please share with your network!**

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ROC Northwest Receive Award



Sam Green, on behalf of [ROC Northwest](#), received the Friends of Housing Award from the Washington Housing Conference. Friend of Housing recipients are nominated annually by their peers and colleagues working in the public, private, and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry. Honorees are selected for their leadership and exceptional contribution to provide safe, decent and affordable housing.

The Flaming Eggplant Starts a New Chapter with NWCDC

[The Flaming Eggplant](#) operates as a student-run collectively-managed cafe on the Olympia campus of The Evergreen State College. This year the Cafe starts a new chapter and includes NWCDC as part of its model. The Cafe will also include education about cooperatives and cooperative management. Students who are collective members will participate in an educational program on the social economy overseen by Professor **Prita Lal**, while also participating in weekly workshops on co-op management delivered by NWCDC staffers **John McNamara** and **Fred Medicott**. The workshop constitutes 2 credits of the 8 credit program. The overall concept will be to utilize the cafe as a learning laboratory for the students allowing them to practice co-op values and principles in the workplace. The new program has already created a lot of excitement about other areas where this model could be utilized.

Olympia Adds Another Worker Co-op

Long-time Olympia nightclub, [Le Voyeur Cafe and](#)

Lounge, joins the ever growing ranks of Olympia burgeoning worker co-op community. Le Voyeur has been a fixture of the downtown since 1997 featuring numerous bands, comedy acts, and serving as a core meeting spot. "Le Voy" is the 10th worker-owned and operated business and 12th worker-controlled business in Olympia. The cafe is on 4th Avenue across from our offices. The held a grand opening on October 4th designed to honor celebrate the next chapter of this storied lounge as well as National Co-op Month.



CROCC 2019



NWCDC's Daniel Luis Arrañaga provides interpretation for a session at CROCC.

Directors from Resident Owned Communities (ROCs) from across Washington and Oregon met in Olympia on September 21st for the 2019 edition of the Cascade ROC Conference (CROCC). This event, sponsored by NWCDC and CASA of Oregon, provides extended training to directors of these housing co-ops.

This year's agenda included: Rules Enforcement and Evictions, Board Roles and Responsibilities, Facilitation, Finance 101, and a discussion about Engaging owners in their co-op.

The bilingual conference occurs annually.

NWCDC Staff and the Co-ops That Inspire Them

NWCDC staff members have extensive experience in the cooperative world as members, employees, and developers. For National Co-op Month, they share some of the co-ops that have inspired them in fulfilling the centers mission to foster community development primarily through the cooperative model.



Washington Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Diane Gasaway: I was first inspired by and learned about the cooperative business model through the [Washington State Rural Electric Association](#) and its members. After experiencing the

horrors of centralized, detached corporations, it was so refreshing to learn that there is was a business model governed by the people it served. It truly was a transformative moment for me and I've never looked back!

Miles Nowlin: Elmwood Homeowners Cooperative is a 37 home manufactured housing co-op in Puyallup, WA. This group inspires me every time I meet with them. This co-op has faced many challenges since becoming a co-op in 2015 including addressing a failing septic system, bad third party property management and internal conflict. Despite setbacks, the co-op now manages the community independently on a volunteer basis. Their dual-language board takes tasks head on with tremendous resiliency and leadership. They also choose to contract Business Services Cooperative as their financial manager, another amazing co-op. Thanks for the hard work and inspiration Elmwood!!





John A. McNamara: [Union Cab of Madison Cooperative](#) may not be a PNW co-op, but as my home for 26 years, it has been the major influence in my life as both a person and a co-op developer. UCC celebrates its 40th anniversary this October 29th. The founders scabbled together cash, sold preferred shares for \$25, and eventually started a cab co-op that remains unique today in that all workers at the co-op are members. My experiences there taught me about the importance of human dignity in the workplace and the power of cooperation to develop people in addition to providing living wages and meaningful work. Today, I do my best to share the many lessons learned from UCC with all of the co-ops with whom I work.

Sam Green: The most inspiring co-op for my work as a technical assistance provider is [Hidden Village](#). Their co-op was the first manufactured home co-op in Washington that we work for and, after 11 years, they have finished all their capital improvements and, last year, refinanced their original loan. With a strong board and committed members, they are proof that housing co-ops work in Washington. Hidden Village hasn't increased their own rent in a decade and are set to keep providing affordable homeownership into the future. Now they are participating in the greater cooperative economy by hiring a bookkeeping co-op as their financial managers. It's been great to see them take such stewardship of their community and such leadership in the cooperative movement.



Deborah Craig: [Circle of Life Cooperative](#) (COL), located in beautiful Bellingham, WA, has provided homecare services to hundreds of families in the 10 years since opening. COL caregivers assist their clients with the daily activities of life, allowing elders and people with disabilities stay in their own homes and age in place. The commitment COL caregivers have to the safety and happiness of their clients has been the source of their success.

COL caregivers are also deeply committed to practicing democracy in the workplace. Caregiver help craft policy, give input to how the co-op is managed and contribute ideas for improving and expanding services. An employee elected Board of Directors provides governance to the co-

op and oversight of the co-op manager. Democracy is woven through the structure of the co-op ensuring caregivers a chance to participate in running their business.

As the first homecare cooperative in the state, COL has inspired the development of three other employee-owned homecare co-ops: *Peninsula Homecare Co-op* in Port Townsend; *Capital Homecare Co-op* in Olympia and (soon to open) *Ridgeline Homecare Cooperative* in Port Angeles. ***In an industry infamous for low wages and poor working conditions, Washington state homecare co-ops are changing the game!***

Fred Medicott: My first encounter with worker cooperation was at the [Arizmendi Bakery](#) in the Inner Sunset neighborhood of San Francisco. At the time I was working as a cook myself and as soon as I entered the bakery I could tell things were different from the top-down hierarchical kitchens I was used to. It was obvious that the bakers enjoyed their work and took pride in owning the business together, plus the pizzas and baked goods were all top notch. Now that I'm a cooperative developer I am also inspired by Arizmendi's model where each new successful bakery start-up pays a small portion of its surplus into a fund that is subsequently used to develop the next worker co-op. Next time you are in the Bay Area go out of your way to get something delicious at one of their bakeries!



Daniel Luis Arrañaga: I continue to be inspired by the courage it took for residents of the **Hillside Homeowners Cooperative** to take the leap and purchase the land they have been living on for so many years. Between the purchasing price and all the work needed to make it happen, most people I know would never think of taking this on, but the community was strong, determined and knew how much they had to gain.



Cristina Klatovsky: The members of **Upper Lakeshore Cooperative** inspire me in my role as technical assistance provider. This coop has a particular challenge around language and culture. It's always easier to say... "you speak English, and I don't speak Spanish, so let's not talk to each other," yet, since forming the co-op and purchasing the property the members have learned to communicate (through signs, phone translation, and simple gestures), recognizing that they have much in common and are in this together.



THE LEGACY PROJECT

Missed the YouTube premieres or just don't like scrolling through YouTube? Watch the full 7 part series on converting an existing business to an employee-owned cooperative on our web site at [The Legacy Video Series](#).

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Help us provide technical assistance to co-ops!

You don't have to wait for the end of the year to support our programs! You can provide a **tax deductible** one-time donation or monthly sustaining gift to help fund the work of co-op development!

You may earmark specific projects.

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