

Activity 2 - Cooperative Video

- Time:** 15 – 20 minutes
- Objective:** To give students an overview of cooperative businesses in Wisconsin and Minnesota
- Step 1:** Go to: www.cooperativenetwork.coop (3 minutes)
- Step 2:** In the search box on this site, type in “video”
- Step 3:** Play the video for the class (make sure that the teacher’s computer is hooked up to speakers and that they have a projection device attached.)
- Step 4:** After the video, lead a discussion by asking questions such as:
1. How can cooperatives help small towns get access to goods and services?
 2. What cooperatives do we have in our community?
 - a. A hand-out must be tailor-made to fit your community.
 - b. Sample handout is called “Medford Cooperative Businesses”
- Step 5:** Watch the co-op video tailor-made for Medford (or make your own based on this one.) To find this video go to, <http://taylorelectric.org/>. Click on the menu tab, “incentives & programs” and then click on “Cooperatives in our Schools” and click on the “Medford Cooperative Video.”
- Step 5:** Have each student take out the handout called, “Medford Cooperative Businesses.” Note: A hand-out must be tailor-made to fit your community. Sample handout is called “Medford Cooperative Businesses”
- Step 6:** Have each pair take turns reading each section on each coop in their community and tell them that each pair must select one interesting fact they learned and one word they didn’t understand. Give them these examples before they begin:
- a. Example: We thought that it was interesting that the Medford Cooperative has paid out over \$21 million dollars to its patronages.
 - b. Example: We didn’t understand the word “patronages”
- Step 7:** Have one person from each pair report out their interesting fact. After they report out, have the other person from the group come up to the board and write the word down they didn’t understand.
- Step 8:** After each team has reported out, give teams 5 minutes to brainstorm what they think each of the words on the board mean.
- Step 9:** Lead a discussion on the vocabulary terms.

Activity 2 - Medford Cooperative Businesses

1. People's Choice Credit Union - Matt Selke, President

- Started in 1940 as Hurd Employees Credit Union, with 15 members and assets of \$23.50. As of December 2009 the assets exceeded \$20 million.
- In 1971 it was renamed from Hurd Employees Credit Union to Industrial Credit Union
- In 1996 its membership voted to approve the name change to People's Choice Credit Union. Then in 2001 it expanded its charter and is now open to everyone residing in or employed in Taylor and Clark Counties.

2. Medford Cooperative - Chip Courtney, General Manager

- Started in 1911, making it one of the oldest cooperatives in the State of Wisconsin.
- The Medford Cooperative currently employs more than 200 people in its eight departments and nine physical locations: Bulk Fuels and Propane, Tire and Auto center, Feed and Seed, Do-It-Best Hardware, County Market, Agronomy and the Convenience Store.
- It has annual sales in excess of \$55 million. The Cooperative is governed by a 5 member board of directors.
- The coop has approximately 5,000 members and has paid out a total of over \$21 million in patronage to date.

3. Co-op Transport - Paul Gabriel, General Manager

- Started in 1947
- Owned by nine local cooperatives to provide the trucking needs for their efforts.
- Coop transport does most of its business moving feed, fuel, food and freight for the cooperatives and other customers.
- In essence, the cooperatives are customers of Co-op Transport so the dividend benefits of the operation eventually benefit all of the operations it supports.

4. Taylor Credit Union - Debra Woods, President/CEO

- Their commodity is money.
- The earnings of the credit union are returned to the members through the dividend paid on the savings providing no or low cost services and charging lower interest rates on loans.

5. United FCS – Doug Berends, Regional Vice President

- A farmer owned cooperative whose focus is on the long-term success of our members by ensuring access to sound and constructive credit and financial services for current and future generations of producers. FCS- Farm Credit System is a nationwide network of borrower-owned lending institutions and specialized service organizations.
- Congress established the system in 1916 to provide a reliable source of credit for the nation's farmers and ranchers.

6. Taylor Electric Cooperative - Mike Schaefer. President/CEO

- In 1935 President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Rural Electric Administration (REA) Act
- to bring electricity to rural areas. On December 16 of that year, approximately 200 people gathered to discuss forming a cooperative.
- Today, Taylor Electric Cooperative has 875 miles of distribution lines serving 4,300 customers