

Honor a Cooperative Builder!

Co-op Kudos

Congratulations to **Great River Energy** on their [partnership to launch](#) Minnesota's first electric school bus program.

Member Spotlight



Check out the [Project Money](#) program put on by Summit Credit Union. Follow the participants' journey or play at home!

Cooperative Network Calendar

July 24: MN Credit Manager Network meeting, Lake Crystal, Minn.

July 27: Wisconsin Agricultural Credit Issues Conference,



Cooperative Network News



Applications due Sept. 1 for Cooperative Network's highest honor

Nominations are due Sept. 1 for Cooperative Network's [Cooperative Builder Award](#), our region's highest honor for individuals who have made outstanding contributions at the local, state, or national level to advance the cooperative philosophy and ideals. Honorees will be celebrated at our annual general meeting banquet, Nov. 14, at the InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront, St. Paul, Minn.

Nominees may be co-op members, employees, or supporters. [Previous winners](#) and current [Cooperative Network board members](#) are ineligible. Applications are kept in the selection pool for three years and may be updated with additional information.

Submit your nomination no later than Sept. 1, 2017. Please [contact us](#) with any questions.

Regional & Federal

USDA conducts 2017 Census of Agriculture

Stevens Point, Wis.
[Learn More...](#)

Aug. 8: Electric Sector meeting, St. Cloud, Minn.

Sept. 6: Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee meeting, Brainerd, Minn.

Sept. 20: Employment Law Update, Eau Claire, Wis.
[Learn More...](#)

Sept. 21: Minnesota Agricultural Credit Issues Conference, St. Cloud, Minn.

Nov. 14-15: Cooperative Network Annual General Meeting, St. Paul, Minn.

April 30 - May 1, 2018: SCH Conference, Minneapolis, Minn.

Link of the Week



Did you know that Cooperative Network members have access to our [stock photography collection](#)? There are nearly 2,000 high-

The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of America's farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Taken every five years, the Census provides valuable information used at the local, state and national level to plan for the future. The Census is the only source of uniform, comprehensive agricultural data for every state, county, or county equivalent in the nation. By participating in the Census, farmers help show the value and importance of U.S. agriculture. For more information, click [here](#).

Minnesota

MDA hosts Cooperative Network and others on proposed draft Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule

Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) recently hosted Cooperative Network and several other agriculture groups to discuss the proposed draft [Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule](#). MDA explained that the purpose of the Rule is to minimize potential sources of nitrate pollution in the state's groundwater and to protect Minnesota's drinking water. Local involvement by the agriculture community was mentioned as a key to the Rule's success, which would allow for science-based and economically viable practices to be implemented. It was also noted that the Rule was based on nitrogen fertilizer [Best Management Practices](#) (BMPs) developed at the University of Minnesota, which were designed to minimize the loss of nitrogen in the environment.

The Rule contains two parts with separate criteria and requirements. Depending on where a farm is located determines if the land is subject to one part of the Rule, both parts, or not at all. The first part of the Rule restricts nitrogen fertilizer in the fall and on frozen soils in vulnerable groundwater areas. The second part states BMPs must be followed in areas with high nitrogen concentration in the groundwater. A local advisory team consisting primarily of producers and agriculture professionals will advise MDA on appropriate response activities to a certain area. The Rule is also designed to involve local farmers and agronomists in adopting and promoting the BMPs and any other practices that can reduce nitrates in groundwater.

All comments on the proposed Rule must be submitted in writing by Friday, Aug. 11. MDA is expected to publish the final draft of the rule in the fall of 2017, with adoption scheduled to take place in the fall of 2018. Cooperative Network plans to submit comments and did so during the Rule's [first comment period](#) in the winter of 2016. If you have any thoughts or suggestions on comments, please [let us know](#) by Monday, Aug. 7 so that they can be considered by the Friday, Aug. 11 deadline.

Credit Unions have edge with millennials

A recent [survey](#) conducted by our allies at the Minnesota Credit Union Network (MnCUN) show millennials prefer credit unions when it comes to financial preferences. The survey is conducted every-other year and measures financial feelings throughout Minnesota and measures attitudes about credit unions and banks. Approximately one of every four millennials in Minnesota has indicated that they use a credit union as their primary financial institution. Of those not currently a member of a credit union, 44 percent report that they are likely to join a credit union.

"The survey illustrates that millennials see credit unions as a very attractive option for their primary financial institution," MnCUN CEO Mark Cummins says. "Our credit unions have been focused on ensuring they

resolution, professional photos are available for member cooperatives to use for free in their marketing, communications and advertising.

have the online and mobile services that millennials expect and are continuing to grow in their technology offerings. What's more, the survey indicated millennials desire a voice in their institution – which fits perfectly with the cooperative credit union model."

The survey also illustrated the growing trend of millennials who use online and mobile banking as their primary method of interacting with their primary financial institutions. Following the survey, the Minnesota Credit Union Network launched an unprecedented public awareness media campaign called "It's Your Choice." to educate Millennials throughout Minnesota about the benefits of credit union membership. Focused on a theme of "Your Choice", the highly-targeted digital campaign capitalizes on the lifestyle choices of Millennials, and is built to educate consumers about credit unions by directing them to a [microsite](#).

Rep. Newberger and Sen. Mathews to address Cooperative Network's Electric co-op members on Aug. 8

Cooperative Network is hosting its Electric Sector meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 8 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. in St. Cloud, Minn. Representative Jim Newberger (R – Becker), Vice-Chair of the Job Growth and Energy Affordability Policy and Finance Committee, and Senator Andrew Mathews (R – Milaca), Vice-Chair of the Energy and Utilities Finance and Policy Committee, are both scheduled to provide their perspectives on the 2017 legislative session. As usual, there will be no cost for Cooperative Network members. The cost for non-member cooperatives is \$50 per person. Checks should be made payable to "Cooperative Network" and mailed to 145 University Avenue West, Suite 450, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044. Please RSVP here or by phone at (651) 280-4901.

Options available to help with buffer law

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recently announced two additional resources for landowners working to come into compliance with the state's buffer law. The first resource allocates almost \$5 million dollars to support landowners in meeting the requirements of the law. The funds will be distributed to soil and water conservation districts and are to be used for cost-sharing contracts with landowners or their authorized agents to implement buffers or alternative practices on public waters and public drainage ditches. The second resource is a new [website](#) launched by BWSR with information on the law, where buffers apply, alternative practices, and information on how to obtain financial and technical assistance.

Compromise buffer legislation was agreed to by Gov. Mark Dayton and the GOP-led legislature during the 2017 session. The bill did not include a delay for implementing the buffer law, but a provision that provides an eight-month delay to the 2017 deadline. The language indicated that landowners who file a compliance plan with their soil and water conservation districts by November 1 of this year would be granted a conditional compliance waiver until July 1, 2018. Cooperative Network testified at a committee hearing last session with concerns regarding the buffer law. Our support for cost-sharing resources and alternative practices, as well as for maintaining and improving the quality of the state's waters, was duly noted.



Fair season is underway - best of luck to all exhibitors!

Wisconsin

Wisconsin State Budget stalemate

Although the State of Wisconsin fiscal year ended on June 30, the legislature still hasn't acted on Governor Walker's budget. Cooperative Network has learned through discussions with legislators that the big disagreement between the Republican-controlled State Senate and the Republican-controlled State Assembly is the Transportation Budget. The Assembly wants to reduce the level of bonding (borrowing to pay for road projects) unless a new funding source is dedicated to pay for the bonds. The Senate believes the proposed level of bonding is reasonable. Any budget proposal would have to go through the Joint Committee on Finance which is not scheduled to meet this week.

Sen. Roth looks at options for West Shore Pipeline

Senator Roger Roth (R – Appleton) is exploring options with stakeholders to attempt to rebuild or repair the West Shore Pipeline. The pipeline originates in Chicago and extends north to Green Bay. The West Shore Pipeline transports refined petroleum products to markets in northern Illinois and Wisconsin from the greater Chicago area. The pipeline was shut down in 2016 for safety reasons. Senator Roth thinks the pipeline will help bring long-term economic development to the area.

Cooperative Network is meeting with Senator Roth's office on behalf of its members who feel the pipeline could significantly reduce the amount of refined petroleum products that are currently transported by truck. In addition, a pipeline could help with fuel supply stability for the region.

Wisconsin DNR soliciting comments on runoff management and CAFO rule revisions

Late last week, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources began soliciting comments on an economic impact analysis for proposed rules relating to runoff management and non-point source performance standards, and affecting small business. Specifically, the rule package proposes agricultural performance standards that will apply in Silurian bedrock areas. This includes areas of Brown, Calumet, Dodge, Door, Fond du Lac, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha counties. Click [here](#) for the full notice soliciting public comment and analysis prepared by the DNR.

Wisconsin NRCS update

Angela Biggs, new Wisconsin State Conservationist, provided insights recently on happenings of NRCS on the state level. She stated that NRCS will have a renewed emphasis on conservation planning. Furthermore, the agency continues to identify resource concerns, applies for nationally

competitive grants and looks to leverage partnerships for funding. In her first few months on the job, Biggs has found Wisconsin farmers to be proactive in their approach to conservation through efforts such as the farmer-led watershed groups throughout the state that have promoted and implemented conservation practices in volatile areas. One example of the proactive conservation work being done by farmers is the Door-Kewaunee Demonstration Farm Network. Click [here](#) for more information on this innovative partnership.

Freight rail survey launched

Cooperative Network has been in communication with Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce on a survey project that will produce data beneficial to the initiation of intermodal freight service through the Port of Milwaukee. Freight railroads serving Wisconsin are considering expanding in the Milwaukee area to provide businesses with more shipping options at lower costs. However, they need to know if there is enough demand to support the expansion. Please complete the attached [survey](#) to give the railroads a complete picture of your needs.

This survey was compiled to gauge the current volume of containers - import, export and domestic - that would utilize an intermodal terminal in the Southeast Wisconsin/Milwaukee region, assuming it was price and transit time competitive. We are seeking your participation to provide answers to the [survey questions](#) to provide to the railroads that are actively seeking this information. Ever since Milwaukee's intermodal ramp closed in 2012, Wisconsin businesses have requested the restoration of that service. The intermodal ramp reduces the drayage cost and inefficiencies of having to truck intermodal containers out of state.

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