



Cooperative Network News | January 15, 2019

MINNESOTA

Minnesota Co-op Day at the Capitol set for March 19

The 11th Annual [Co-op Day at the Capitol](#) is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2019. This event continues to prove instrumental in helping advocate and advance cooperative-related initiatives. Cooperative leaders from across Minnesota will come together for this grassroots lobbying event to meet with legislators and administration officials in St. Paul. We will discuss the important role our cooperative members play in Minnesota's economy and how current issues affect their businesses. This event is a very effective way of gathering together to ensure that the voices of cooperatives are heard throughout all parts of the state. For more information, please contact [Patrick Murray](#) at or (651) 280-4901.

DFL majority in House of Representatives introduces "Minnesota Values Agenda"

Last week, the new House DFL majority introduced the "[Minnesota Values Agenda](#)", which is contained in the first ten House bills that were introduced during the 2019 legislative session. Among some of the top caucus priorities are an expansion of the MinnesotaCare buy-in program, K-12 student support legislation, prevention of prescription drug price gauging, paid family and medical leave legislation, and several bills geared to prevent gun violence. In addition, a bill was introduced by Rep. Rob Ecklund (DFL – International Falls) to expand high-speed broadband internet access with a \$70 million investment into the Border-to-Border Broadband Program. This competitive program provides matching grants for internet providers to expand access across the state. The Minnesota Broadband Taskforce has recommended an ongoing biennial appropriation of \$70 million to meet the state's speed goals. In 2017, under Republican control, the Legislature appropriated \$20 million toward the grant program and no funding was infused into the program last year due to the veto of the supplement appropriations bill. Cooperative Network will continue to support additional funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Program with lawmakers during the 2019 legislative session.

Republican Senate majority introduces several top priorities for 2019 legislative session

The Republican Senate majority introduced several of its [top priorities](#) last week in St. Paul, which were included in the first five Senate bills of the 2019 legislative session. Among them are mental health assistance for Minnesota's schools and agricultural communities, assistance for families as it relates to childcare costs, lower health insurance premiums through

Kudos

Congratulations to River Country Cooperative board member Randy Sorg. The Sorg family dairy farm was chosen by Gov. Tim Walz's administration as the site to announce the commissioners responsible for caring for Minnesota's natural resources. [Click here](#) to read more.

Calendar of Events

January 29-31, 2019:

[Leadership Institute](#)

Madison College, Madison, Wis.

February 12, 2019:

[WI Co-op Day at the Capitol](#)

Madison, Wis.

February 18, 2019

[Minnesota Energy Sector Meeting](#)

St. Paul, Minn.

February 22, 2019

[WI Farm Supply Committee Meeting](#)

AgCountry, Stevens Point, Wis.

February 21-22, 2019:

[Co-op Communicators Conference](#)

Eau Claire, Wis.

March 4-5, 2019:

[Co-ops Yes! Youth Leadership Conference](#)

Eau Claire, Wis.

March 19, 2019:

[MN Co-op Day at the Capitol](#)

St. Paul, Minn.

transparent health care billing and guaranteed coverage for preexisting conditions, more government accountability and federal tax conformity. Last year, the Republican legislature passed a bill to former Governor Mark Dayton that contained several tax conformity measures, including Section 179 for farm machinery equipment depreciation. Cooperative Network will continue to support the inclusion of this tax conformity legislation with lawmakers during the 2019 legislative session.

Transportation Committee Chairs hold press conference in support of hands-free legislation

Senate Transportation Committee Chair Scott Newman (R – Hutchinson) and House Transportation Committee Chair Frank Hornstein (DFL – Minneapolis) held a press conference at the Capitol yesterday to introduce their “hands free” device legislation. These bills would prohibit the use of cellular phones and devices, with the exception of hand free mobile. This topic was discussed by the Cooperative Network Resolutions Committee during its recent Annual Meeting and a resolution in support of this initiative was adopted by Cooperative Network’s full membership. This legislation will be a top priority for Cooperative Network and our membership during the 2019 legislative session.

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Co-op Day at the Capitol set for February 12

The [2nd Annual Co-op Day at the Capitol](#) is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019. Join cooperative leaders from across Wisconsin as we come together for this grassroots lobbying event. You will hear from administration officials and legislative leaders on issues that directly affect your cooperative, and in small cross-sector teams, you'll have the opportunity to deliver the cooperative business perspective face-to-face with policymakers. For more information, please contact [Patrick Murray](#) or call (651) 280-4901 or [David Ward](#) or call (608) 258-4414.

March 20, 2019

[MN Farm Supply Committee Meeting](#)

St. Paul, Minn.

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