



Co-op Kudos

Congratulations to Keith Heikes on being [named Cooperative Resources International](#) CEO.

Happy Anniversary to **Adell Cooperative**, which is [celebrating](#) 100 years of service.

Cooperative Network Calendar

July 27: Wisconsin Agricultural Credit Issues Conference, Stevens Point, Wis. [Learn More...](#)

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

Save the Date!
Aug. 8: Electric Sector meeting, St. Cloud, Minn.



Cooperative Network News



The Role of Cooperatives - Better Together

Check out [this article](#) by Dr. William Rolleston, acting president of the World Farmers' Organisation, who explains why farming cooperatives have become even more important for us all.

Wisconsin

MPP 2018 sign-up delay

In the June 19 edition of *Cooperative Network News*, dairy producers were advised they could go to their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) and sign up for the 2018 Margin Protection Program (MPP) starting on July 3, 2017. Since then, the USDA has announced that the 2018 annual coverage election period scheduled to start on July 3, 2017, has been delayed to begin on Sept. 1, 2017. The postcard mailing announcing the 2018 annual coverage election period will also be delayed until the 2018 signup begins in September. Click [here](#) to see the USDA announcement.

Walker offers transportation deal

On July 5 in a letter to legislative leaders, Governor Scott Walker attempted to break the stalemate on transportation funding which has kept the 2017-19 state budget from passing. Walker proposed reducing transportation fund supported bonding by \$200 million in this budget by using an improved transportation fund balance, project cost savings and other administrative actions. Walker believes this can be accomplished while continuing to keep projects on schedule.

**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.**

Walker planned to keep the Southeast Freeway Megaproject on schedule. The Interstate 94 North/South, the Zoo Interchange and Interstate 94 East/West are high-profile projects in southeastern Wisconsin. Walker wants to use contingency bonding that would be linked to additional federal funding for mega projects. Wisconsin is well positioned to qualify for additional federal funding to help support mega projects. Finally, Walker suggested to pass a strong and responsible transportation budget without a gas tax or vehicle fee increase. The letter can be viewed [here](#). Legislative leaders said on Thursday that they are reviewing Walker proposal.

RCDG funding in House FY 18 Ag Appropriations Bill

According to the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) CLUSA International, the House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee marked up a \$144.9 billion fiscal year (FY) 2018 Ag Appropriations Bill last week that rejects the proposed elimination of many programs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed by President Trump. Included in the proposed cuts was funding for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program.

The committee bill will allocate \$20 billion in discretionary funding – \$876 million lower than the FY 2017 enacted level, but \$4.64 billion above President Trump's budget request. The RCDG Program is funded at \$21 million for FY 2018, a \$300,000 reduction from FY 2017, but far from Trump's drastic call to completely eliminate Rural Business and Cooperative Service, the agency that administers the RCDG program.

Judy Zeiwacz, President and CEO of NCBA CLUSA, called the program a "lifeline" for rural America and urged lawmakers to provide the necessary federal investment needed to "help create, sustain and inspire vibrant rural communities." NCBA's announcement can be found [here](#).

Cooperative Network opposes heavy truck tax

This past week, Cooperative Network joined a coalition of organizations opposing a proposed heavy truck tax on freight traffic. The new tax proposed by Amy Loudenbeck (R – Clinton), is one of the latest potential remedies to an impasse in the state transportation budget. If implemented, the heavy truck tax is estimated to generate \$250 million. Organizations opposing the proposal, including Cooperative Network, argue that companies operating heavy trucks in Wisconsin already account for nearly 40 percent of all taxes and fees paid to the state annually. Furthermore, raising taxes on heavy trucks would ultimately lead to increased costs of all products produced or grown in the state of Wisconsin.



Cooperative Network President & CEO Tom Liebe addresses the Change Leadership Symposium hosted by CUNA Mutual Group in Madison recently. He is joined by John McKechnie of Totally Spectrum Consulting in Washington, D.C. and Chris Roe SVP of Corporate and Legislative Affairs at CUNA Mutual Group.

Minnesota

Secretary of State opts not to turn over records to Presidential Advisory Committee on Election Integrity

Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon recently refused a request by the Presidential Election Advisory Committee on Election Integrity to turn over certain publicly available data points on voter records. Chaired by Vice President Mike Pence, the Commission was appointed by President Donald Trump to study the registration and voting processes used in federal elections. Requests were made of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Simon stated that he had doubts about the Commission's credibility and trustworthiness and that he feared the Commission risks becoming a partisan tool to shut out millions of eligible American votes. He also stated Minnesota has rigorous safety measures in place to ensure fair and secure elections. Other states have indicated they too will not fully comply with the request citing a mix of reasons ranging from statutory privacy concerns to only partial lists of data that could be shared with the Commission. Vice-Chairman Kris Kobach, Kansas Secretary of State, indicated that the Commission intends to use the data to fully analyze vulnerabilities and issues related to voter registration and voting. The Commission is scheduled to hold its first meeting on July 19 in Washington, D.C.

Office of Broadband Development to hold information webinars this week

The Minnesota Office of Broadband Development will host two informational webinars this week to discuss the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant program. The webinars will also review the application process and answer any questions from participants. The first webinar will be held today from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the second will be held on Wednesday, July 12 at the same time. To register for one of the webinars, please visit the following [link](#) at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's website. The website also includes instructions for those wishing to submit an application for a grant. The application filing period recently opened on July 3 and is set to close on Monday, Sept. 11 at 4 p.m. Before submitting a broadband grant application, wireline broadband providers in a proposed project area must be contacted by July 31 to comply with the pre-application notification portion of the application process. During the 2017 legislative session, \$20 million was included for border-to-border broadband grants in the Jobs, Economic Growth, Commerce, Energy and Housing omnibus budget bill. Cooperative Network was pleased to support this initiative on behalf of our members.

Reminder to RSVP for Cooperative Network's Electric Sector meeting

Cooperative Network is hosting its Electric Sector meeting on Tuesday, August 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 is scheduled to provide his perspective 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.

New laws supported by Cooperative Network take effect

Starting on July 1, a host of new laws passed by lawmakers during the 2017 legislative session went into effect. Among them were several supported by Cooperative Network including \$20 million for the border-to-border broadband

fund, compromise language on the buffer law to provide an eight-month delay to the 2017 deadline, allowing credit unions flexibility in how they notify members and allow them to use e-communication, and the inclusion of electric cooperatives as eligible entities to be paid the nonfederal share for publicly owned capital improvement projects from the state disaster assistance contingency account. A select list of laws passed during the 2017 regular and special sessions are available from the House Public Information Services Office at the following [link](#).

Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee to meet on Sept. 6

Cooperative Network's Farm Supply, Grain and Fuel Committee will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 6 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Madden's Resort in Brainerd. This meeting is being held in conjunction with Minnesota Statewide Managers' Meeting. More details on the agenda will become available as we get closer to the date. Please RSVP [here](#) or by phone at (651) 280-4901.

Minnesota Credit Manager Network set to meet on July 24

Cooperative Network's Minnesota Credit Manager Network meeting is scheduled for July 24 at Crystal Valley in Lake Crystal, Minn., from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Credit Manager Network is a group comprised of credit managers from co-ops around Minnesota that are members of Cooperative Network. At meetings, Cooperative Network facilitates a forum for discussion that is designed to help make the duties of a credit manager easier by discussing updates on credit issues and day-to-day problems faced by credit managers. A stronger, more effective credit program will result in a more successful cooperative that will meet members' needs in a very competitive market. This meeting will include a legislative update, roundtable discussion, guest speaker and planning for the 2017 Credit Issues Conference scheduled for Sept. 21 at the Best Western Plus Kelly Inn in St. Cloud, Minn. Please RSVP [here](#) or by phone at (608) 258-4405.

Featured Event



[Register today!](#)

Wisconsin Agricultural Credit Issues Conference - July 27

New policies, trends and developments in ag credit

Hear the latest on credit and economic related issues and how they affect your cooperative and members. CEOs, general managers, finance and credit professionals from credit union, Farm Credit, farm supply, livestock, genetics and fuel cooperatives are encouraged to attend.

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