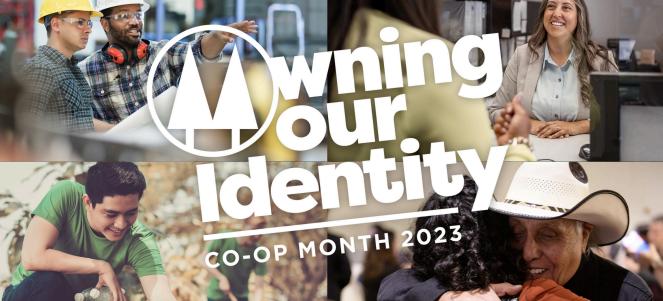
FOSTER COUNTY INDEPENDENT

Celebrated by cooperatives nationwide during the month of October, National Co-op Month is an annual opportunity to raise awareness of a trusted, proven way to do business and build resilient, communities. inclusive Under the theme, "Owning Our Identity," this year's Co-op Month is also a chance to lift up what makes cooperative businesses unique in the marketplace. Guided by a set of shared principles and values-among them democracy, equity and solidarity—co-ops are hardwired for economic and societal transformation. In a moment when corporations are scrambling to find an identity outside of maximizing shareholder value, that's a meaningful difference.

The ABCs of **Cooperative Impact**

We know that the cooperative model enables greater community ownership of businesses and, as a result, an increase in local spending of those profits within local communities. Yet, it is challenging to





group of metrics that apply across cooperatives given their range of activities and local contexts. Despite the challenge, it is important to do so, and we present a streamlined framework with specific examples of metrics across the spectrum of cooperative industries. Our research surfaced seven kev areas of impact where cooperatives can be thoroughly find a compelling, discreet assessed in the extent to and serving markets and

which they promote social and economic opportunity. We first introduce each area of impact briefly, then describe examples of sector-specific metrics and, finally, provide a proposed series of metrics across cooperative sectors.

Access. A cooperative can increase access to affordable quality products. services, suppliers and markets. lowering costs

seen as "higher risk" or underserved.

Business sustainability. A cooperative business structure can increase firm survival and profitability through higher and less volatile revenues, lower costs and a focus on longterm outcomes, including scaling the cooperative to compete with multinational corporations.

Community

communities historically ment. A community-focused cooperative is committed to being a good neighbor through education, financial support, facility use and business practices that reflect the values of the community. gover-Democratic

nance and empowerment. In a well-functioning cooperative, membership actively participates and shapes the mission and commit- decisions of the organiza-

Page 4 MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2023

tion, which translates into broader civic and political involvement.

Equity, diversity and inclusion. To be an effective contributor to its community, cooperative membership reflects the community in racial composition, gender, age and abilities, and historically excluded communities and individuals have a voice and leadership opportunities

Financial security and advancement for work-Cooperatives work ers. best for their members, employees and communities when they provide living-wage jobs with benefits and increased opportunity for wealth building, career advancement. training, and leadership development with lower turnover and higher job satisfaction.

Growth. Cooperatives can be local and regional anchors, promoting economic growth through stable jobs, high industrv standards, consistent services and economic multiplier effects through increased community investment, local jobs and local procurement.

North Dakota News Cooperative to document public opinion

The North Dakota News Cooperative (NDNC) announced recently that it has developed a new public opinion research service that will measure current attitudes and opinions on a variety of public policy and con-sumer issues. The North Dakota Poll (ND Poll) will be the only regular, nonpartisan statewide survey of eligible North Dakota voters and consumers.

"The ND Poll will be the most comprehensive, cost-effective and accurate polling ever conducted in the state of North Dakota," said Steve Andrist, NDNC co-chair. "We developed this new service to guide our own news coverage, but also want to make it available to others."

The ND Poll will serve be provided to them on a ming, fielding and data as an "omnibus" survey providing media organizations, trade associations, businesses, government agencies and other interested groups with an affordable opportunity to survey the citizens of North Dakota on their own issues. By sharing the common costs associated with conducting statewide polls, omnibus surveys provide a cost-effective way to scientifically survey the public.

"We invite anyone interested in knowing more about the attitudes and opinions of North Dakotans on any specific issue to contact us about participating in our regular polls. Any data collected on behalf of others will

strictly confidential basis,' said Jill Denning Gackle, NDNC co-chair.

Participants in the omnibus survey will be provided with the "topline" results for the questions they ask along with the "crosstab" results which break down the data into many different demographic categories including age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, region/media market and political party preference.

The NDNC has partnered with WPA Intelligence, a leading national provider of survey research, predictive analytics and data management technology to assist in survey design, representative sampling, program-

analysis.

For more information about participating in the next ND Poll, please contact Steve Andrist at stevea@crosbynd.com, Jill Denning Gackle at jilldg@ restel.com or Brian Lunde brian.a.lunde@gmail. at com

The North Dakota News Cooperative is a non-profit news organization that provides diverse, reliable and independent reporting on issues and events that impact the lives of North Dakotans. It increases the public's access to quality journalism and advances news literacy across the state.

For more information about NDNC, please visit newscoopnd.org.

CO-OP FUN FACTS

 The co-op business model is at least 525 years old. The Shore Porters Society in Aberdeen, Scotland claims to have established the world's first cooperative in 1498.

• There are over one billion co-op members in the world.

• Cooperatives exist in every sector of the economy. Daycares, breweries, community gardens and renewable energy producers are among the endless examples of cooperatives.

• As community-driven, member-controlled organizations, cooperative business start ups are twice as likely to succeed and still be in business after five years.

• Minnesota was the first state to declare an official Co-op Month proclamation in 1948.

• Co-op Month has been a **nationally recog**nized celebration since 1964, when U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, a former Minnesota governor, proclaimed October Co-op Month.

• The first national theme in 1964 was "Cooperatives: USDA Helps Build a Better America.'

Celebrate with these local cooperatives!

