



Iowa Institute for  
Cooperatives

# CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

October 2019 Vol. 49, No. 3

## Webster Brings Uncommon Experience to Co-op Management

IIC Staff Profile

Her professional bio reads like a keynote speaker at a major tech conference...

"A licensed CPA, Stacey Webster lived and worked in Southeast Asia while working for Bunge North America, managing oilseed accounting for export vessels. Later, back in the U.S., she was responsible for setting up accounting for the renewable fuels division. She then moved to Gavilon, LLC where, for eight years she set up accounting in overseas offices, selected new software platforms and directed integration when the operations and accounting teams were merged. As a controller, Webster managed an \$8 billion domestic grain business, overseeing design, implementation and migration of a new domestic grain accounting system."

As the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives' Director of Cooperative Development, Webster's considerable accounting and systems integration expertise is available to Iowa Institute member cooperatives as they stare down that unending list of systems upgrades and initiatives needed to optimize financial performance through the use of business intelligence.

"I've found that my past experience has been of benefit to general managers and leadership staff of our member cooperatives due to my long history of working with successful system conversions, analysis, mergers and acquisitions," she says.

"I especially like working with leadership teams at board retreats, strategic planning sessions and helping facilitate merger studies," she says. "With my background, I can help members get through some of the unknowns that might otherwise hamper their ability to chart a successful course

for the future of their organization."

Iowa Institute members have access to many development services including director education and training, local co-op member education programs, annual meeting sessions and programs on current topics.

Webster and the IIC team also offer special projects assistance with board retreats, long-range planning, mergers, consolidations, acquisitions or corporate restructuring, as well as development services such as start-up, feasibility studies, project coordination, results analysis and benchmarking.

### CoMetrics Small Groups

If you've seen the movie, "Money Ball," you know that it's all in the numbers. That's what the Iowa Institute's CoMetrics Financial Analysis and Benchmarking Initiative is all about: delving deep to find where member cooperatives are most profitable and replicating that success.

Stacey Webster, IIC's Director of Cooperative Development, has been facilitating small-group manager meetings to that end.

"The small-group meetings consist of a couple of hours going through financial data, talking about trends and how different areas of the business are performing," she says. "The conversations and relationships that grow from these discussions have been very valuable for the participants. I think that's one of the reasons they've been so engaged."

Once they experience the power of financial analysis as a group, managers have asked to go the next level and involve their department heads in leveraging the process at their individual co-ops.

The next round of small group meetings is being planned for early 2020. If you would like to see how the CoMetrics initiative can work for your organization, please contact Webster at (515) 292-2667 or via email, [swebster@iowainstitute.coop](mailto:swebster@iowainstitute.coop).

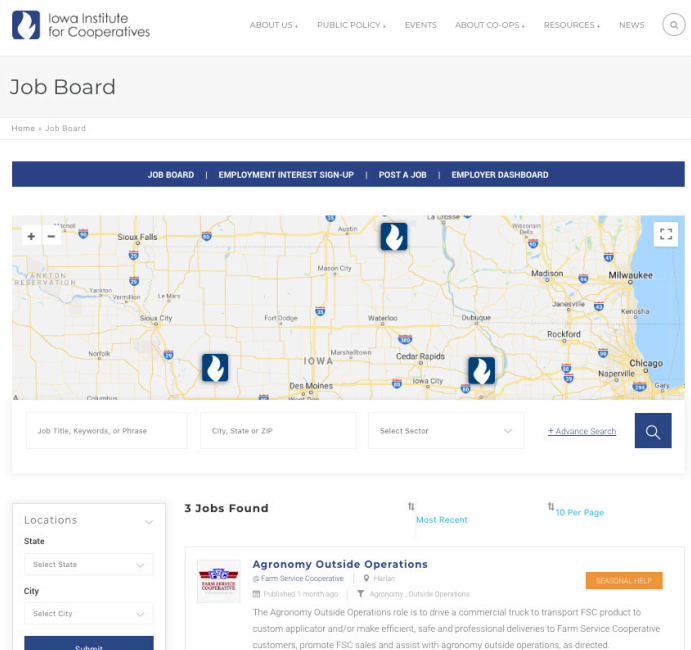


**STACEY WEBSTER**

Director of Cooperative  
Development



*Iowa Institute's Stacey Webster brings uncommon experience to strategic planning sessions for member cooperatives.*



## 'Now Hiring!'

### New IIC Online Job Board Gives Members Access to a Greater Pool of Candidates

In Iowa's tight job market, finding quality employees is tough for employers and poses an even more daunting challenge to cooperatives located in less-populated rural areas of the state.

That's why the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives has developed a new Online Job Board to help human resources staff at member cooperatives pair open positions with potential employees through online job posts and applications.

Featuring an easy-to-use member dashboard interface, the cooperative's human resources departments can post and manage job listings in-house, ensuring that information is up-to-date and interested candidates are contacted for follow-up.

Now in the final testing phases, the IIC Online Job Board will make its debut at the Human Resources Conference being held Dec. 17, where hiring professionals will learn the ins-and-outs of this intuitive, interactive platform.

"We're excited to share the new IIC Online Job Board with our members," says Katie Hall, Director of

Government Affairs, and member of the Job Board creation team. "It promises to be a big step forward in providing our cooperative members with access to a much larger pool of quality candidates and in helping them become even more relevant in a time when job seekers are looking almost exclusively to online listings for career opportunities."

## IIC Awards Annual Scholarships

With some 43 applicants from which to choose, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is pleased to announce the nine recipients of the 2019 Iowa Institute Scholarships. Congratulations to all of them and thank you to our members for their generous support of the IIC scholarship program.

The students will each receive a \$2,000 scholarship award for the 2019-20 school year. The awards were given to full-time students at two- and four-year colleges or universities who had work experience or an internship at an Iowa Institute for Cooperatives member cooperative.

Over the past six years, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives has awarded 51 scholarships totaling \$95,000 in tuition assistance. Scholarship winners have come from 27 different cooperatives across Iowa.

All IIC member cooperatives are strongly encouraged to promote this scholarship program to their student employees.



**Megan Behrends**  
Iowa State University  
Farm Service Cooperative  
Wiaota, IA



**Emily Campbell**  
Iowa State University  
MaxYield Cooperative  
Hamlin, IA



**Taylor Fogarty**  
University of South Dakota  
PRO Cooperative  
West Bend, IA



**Brianna Gorham**  
Iowa State University  
Landus Cooperative  
Illinois City, IL



**Elizabeth Horn**  
NW Missouri State University  
Key Cooperative  
Newton, IA



**Nathan Koehl**  
South Dakota State University  
Ag Processing, Inc  
CHS Eastern Farmers  
Hancock, MN



**Jaci Reeves**  
Iowa State University  
Heartland Cooperative  
New Century FS  
Newton, IA



**Olivia Schlarmann**  
Iowa State University  
Innovative Ag Services  
Worthington, IA



**Sadie Vander Wal**  
South Dakota State University  
Agtegra Cooperative  
Brentford, SD

# Co-ops are The American Way

It's difficult for those of us who have always had cooperatives in our lives to imagine the world without them.

But the fact is, not everyone understands the cooperative value proposition, nor are they able to take advantage of all of the benefits of membership.

That's why National Co-op Month is so important. Each October, all types of cooperative entities – from ag co-ops to housing co-ops to financial co-ops like credit unions – make time to help their communities understand how cooperative membership is really what we have come to know as “The American Way.”

Cooperatives serve members by helping ensure market access to locally produced goods and services, with profits benefiting their local members, not distant shareholders or foreign owners. Cooperatives are controlled by a local board of directors who know the needs of local members and are held accountable by the membership.

For ag cooperatives, October is a good time to reflect

on your role in the global markets for food, fuel and fiber. Market access begins locally. Grain and other products cannot be exported if they cannot be planted, nurtured, harvested and transported to regional market channels in the first place. Ag cooperatives make that possible.

Financial cooperatives may not have flashy national advertising, but they do represent the local community, share local values and care about the financial well-being of their members.

Take time this month to help the communities you serve understand more about how co-ops enrich communities through jobs, market access for goods and local control. You'll find great tools for engagement at [www.coopmonth.coop](http://www.coopmonth.coop).



## Working Toward Success for Co-op and Members

For almost 30 years Kevin Rugaard has experienced firsthand the ins and outs of the cooperative system. Now as the General Manager of Farm Services Cooperative (FSC) based in Harlan, Iowa, he has the knowledge to help the cooperative stay relevant. “I really like the structure and how our customers own and direct the company.” When asked if that makes his job easier or harder, he laughed and said “both”.

Raised in Audubon, Iowa, Kevin earned a degree in Agricultural Business from Northwest Missouri State University and has been a Certified Crop Advisor with the American Agronomy Society since 1994. Prior to FSC, Rugaard served as the Agronomy Department Manager for United Farmers Cooperative in Red Oak, Iowa, and has also worked with Ostrander Farmers Cooperative in Ostrander, Minnesota.

Rugaard says one of the biggest challenges for cooperatives is to maintain an engaged member base. “Our focus as co-ops should be to educate our customers and growers on the cooperative system and how it brings value to them and

their communities.”

Rugaard would like to see cooperatives work on revamping the younger generation's perspective on the cooperative system, starting with what makes cooperatives unique. For him, the most beneficial characteristic of cooperatives is that they are more focused on doing the right thing, rather than money or the bottom line. “They play a role, definitely, but they are second to our values as a cooperative.”

Cooperatives have a unique opportunity to further grow relationships and include members so they can be informed partners. “We need to continue to build the trust with our younger growers, like we already have with the older generation, to ensure the success of not only the cooperative, but our members.”



“Our focus as co-ops should be to educate our customers and growers on the cooperative system and how it brings value to them and their communities.”

- Kevin Rugaard



## Legislative Update

By Katie Hall, Director of Government Affairs

IIC and Agribusiness Association of Iowa have been working on the grain warehouse lien language and are continuing to build support with legislators to get it passed in the 2020 legislative session.

We expect topics like central filing, cooperative tax model challenges, an increased broadband grant program, the future of electric vehicles and infrastructure to make a renewed appearance. We will keep talking with members, legislators and stakeholders to make sure we're well-represented.



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## CFO CONFERENCE OCT. 15-16 IN AMES

The Iowa Institute of Cooperatives CFO Conference will be held Tuesday, Oct. 15, and Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the Radisson Hotel and Conference Center, 2609 University Blvd, Ames.

Registration is required by Oct. 11 and cost for the conference is \$300. To register, please call the IIC office, (515) 292-2667, or email Stacey Webster at [swebster@iowainstitute.coop](mailto:swebster@iowainstitute.coop).

### AGENDA

#### **Tuesday, October 15, 2019**

2:00 p.m. - Welcome & Introductions

2:15 p.m. - Section 199A(g) Update

*Kristine Tidgren, Director, Center for Agricultural Law & Taxation, Iowa State University*

4:00 p.m. - Data Analytics: Getting Your Data to Work for You

*Rob Bellile, Baker Tilly*

6:00 p.m. - Dinner & Keynote Speaker

*Jim Kurtenbach, Director, Department of Administrative Services, State of Iowa*

#### **Wednesday, October 16, 2019**

8:30 a.m. - Lease Accounting

*David Weber & Steve Luneburg, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP*

9:45 a.m. - Benchmarking

*Stacey Webster, Iowa Institute for Cooperatives*

10:45 a.m. - Sales Tax

*Tim Reilly, Iowa Department of Revenue*

11:45 a.m. - Closing Remarks followed by Lunch



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### IIC ANNUAL MEETING

**Tuesday, November 26, 2019**

8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*Scheman Building, Iowa State Center  
1805 Centre Drive, Ames*