



Iowa Institute for
Cooperatives

CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

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Update From the Hill

Rebecca Boyer, Director of Government Affairs



The 2023 General Assembly went into one week of overtime and adjourned sine die, or without a scheduled meeting, on Thursday, May 4. This session was a learning experience for the freshman legislators who can now add “made it through a legislative session” to their resume. While not all IIC’s priorities made it to the governor’s desk for approval, this session was not a bad one for Iowa’s cooperatives.

GOP PRIORITIES PASS

Very early in the session, the legislature passed education savings accounts. Towards the end of session, they passed property tax reform to bookend priorities of the Republican leadership.

GRAIN INDEMNITY FUND

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) omnibus bill had several changes that IIC was involved in. The bill moves the start date of the grain indemnity fund assessment to September 1 to give retailers and producers time to figure out how the mechanics of an assessment that hasn’t been collected since the 1980s will function in 2023. This bill also removed the requirement that grain held in open storage in a state licensed warehouse for more than a year be issued a non-negotiable warehouse receipt. This aligns state licensed facilities with the same regulations federally licensed warehouses follow. IIC requested an amendment to the original bill to extend the duration a credit sale contract can be written from 12 months to 15 months. We want to thank the House and Senate Agriculture committees for accepting that amendment and putting it the final bill that passed both chambers unanimously.

About halfway through session, a bill was filed that attempted to move corn checkoff dollars into the grain indemnity fund.

IIC lobbied against this bill with a majority of other ag organizations and it never came up for a floor vote.

In Iowa, grain handlers pay a small excise tax on the grain they handle every year. HF 683 would have removed this tax going forward and move the just over \$1 million that was collected in the first part of the year to the grain indemnity fund to increase the fund with the already collected excise tax money. This version of the bill passed the House but did not come up for any votes in the Senate.

TORT REFORM

Commercial motor vehicle tort reform was also passed during session. SF 228 caps non-economic recoveries in civil suits involving commercial motor vehicles at \$5 million. Capping non-economic damages should bring some stability to insurance costs.

OTHER BILLS

HF 131 would have made changes to credit union regulations including allowing them to compensate board directors. This bill passed the House 86-3 but failed to come up in the Senate.

HF 206 sought to exempt above ground storage tanks from property taxes. This was in response to a court case decided in 2020 that was causing confusion and inconsistencies with county assessors. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass after some concerns were raised on the final day of session.

FUTURE SESSION

IIC will continue to explore options for the bills that did not make it through the legislative process for next session and will continue to work on behalf of our members to fight for the best possible outcomes for Iowa cooperatives.

Shaping Successful Board Leaders

Providing a well-rounded onboarding process

Recruiting enthusiastic and qualified individuals to become cooperative board members is an important process, and the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is dedicated to helping make board member selection, onboarding and retention a seamless experience for you. Here are some guidelines to onboarding new board members to ensure their time is rewarding and beneficial to the cooperative.

Over the first six months of board members' service, review the following items that play into the cooperative's structure, function and success:

1 ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Along with how the following documents impact the cooperative, discuss how each of these are reviewed and updated. This would also be the time to review and sign any Code of Conduct or Confidentiality agreements.

- Articles of Incorporation
- Bylaws
- Board Policies
- Personnel Policies

2 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

This should include individual names and contact information and is also a time to inform members regarding the CEO's review process, as well as any contractual agreements with the CEO.

3 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

A board representative along with management should review the following:

- Previous year's audit
- Current year financial statements

4 REVIEW PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Look back at the previous six months' meeting minutes to familiarize new members with the format and structure of board meetings, including time and place, length of meeting, who normally attends the meeting and any per diem provided and how to submit per diem requests.

5 STRATEGIC PLAN

Review the rationale behind the strategy as well as any current strategy implementation progress.

6 SCHEDULE A TOUR

Include all locations, and explain their strategic value as well as any future plans to improve each location.

7 PROVIDE EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities could include regional cooperative meetings, trade association meetings and industry meetings.

8 CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

A short bio and contact information of all current board members would be beneficial to share with the new board member.

As with all onboarding, too much at one time can be overwhelming. Information should be spread out over the first few months of service. Appointing a mentor to the new board member can also be very beneficial, as this allows them to ask questions outside of the board meeting setting and become better acclimated. Providing new board members proper initial support will create a member that is well informed and prepared, benefiting the cooperative and all its members.

Co-op Intern Day

A closer look at cooperatives

On May 25th, over 90 cooperative interns came together at the FFA Enrichment Center to learn more in-depth about the cooperative business model.

The conference began with Dr. Bobby Martens, IIC Endowed Faculty Member at Iowa State University. Dr. Martens covered the historical roots of cooperatives, their various industries and what makes them unique.

Ryan Brooks with Capital Financial followed with helpful information for the students as they pursue their careers after school.

The day rounded with an open panel discussion with HR Directors from members of the Iowa Institute of Cooperatives.



Above: IIC's Rick Kievits leads a panel discussion with HR Directors (left to right) Sandi Miller from Butler County REC, Lisa Mericle with Gold-Eagle Cooperative and Craig Mommer from Heartland Cooperative.

Below: Along with learning how cooperatives work and benefit communities and members, student interns were able to network and engage in improv activities.



cooperative internships

providing opportunities for the future of co-ops



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Internships - a win-win opportunity for employers and students. Students receive experience only found in the workforce, while discovering more about what they want as a career path. Employers have the

opportunity to work with a potential new team member without the commitment of a full hire – plus, employers gain a fresh outside perspective on their business.

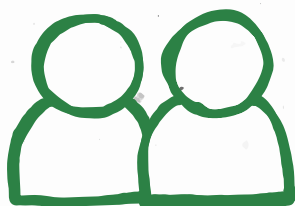
The Iowa Institute for Cooperatives embraces work opportunities offered to students that enhance the workforce and encourage young adults to build their future in Iowa. The culture and vision within a cooperative is a great place to keep talent in our great state. Just ask Emily Campbell, NEW Cooperative Education and Outreach Coordinator.

“It goes without saying, the focus on the needs of the members we serve is admirable and makes the cooperative business model a gem in today’s business environment,” Emily shares as to the reason for pursuing a career within a co-op.

Raised on a fifth generation family farm in Audubon County, Emily learned the benefits a cooperative provides a community at a young age. When it came time to find an internship as an agricultural studies and public relations student at Iowa State University, Emily admits, “I never had an appetite to intern at a large corporation in college; it was the close-knit feel and tight connection a

cooperative has with the communities they serve that appealed to me.”

Emily spent that summer as a client relations and communications intern at MaxYield Cooperative. Here, she gained a deeper appreciation and knowledge about the agriculture industry and multifaceted grain industry.



MENTORSHIP

“It goes without saying, the focus on the needs of the members we serve is admirable and makes the cooperative business model a gem in today’s business environment.”

Emily’s role became a full-time opportunity with MaxYield as a talent recruitment and communications specialist when she graduated from ISU in 2020. Emily stayed with the co-op as they transitioned to NEW Cooperative in 2021.

Today, Emily is still flourishing in her position at the cooperative. “Something I have always appreciated about the agricultural cooperative industry, but am especially thankful for in my career, is the depth of knowledge and wide

variety of backgrounds that make up the employee base at a cooperative like NEW Cooperative,” Emily shares. “We have

some who have spent their entire career in the ag cooperative system, possibly even at the same location, so they have a wealth of knowledge to pass on. We also have a variety of team members who are new to the business, and they can learn from our more experienced employees while also bringing a fresh, new perspective to the business.”

Emily especially enjoys working with the teams at NEW Co-op’s feed mills and the

Port of Blencoe to schedule tours for high school and college groups. Emily shares, “Working with those individuals has given me an opportunity to learn about things in the agriculture industry I am less familiar with and provide me with great people who can answer my questions. This knowledge not only helps me in my role but also gives me a deeper understanding of the industry.”

EMILY CAMPBELL, - NEW Cooperative Education & Outreach Coordinator



IIC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERNS

Emily was also able to benefit from her co-op internship as a recipient of \$2,000 in 2019, from the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives’ annual scholarship program. This scholarship is available to students who have had an internship or participated in a work experience program at a cooperative that is a member of the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives.

This year, \$2,000 will be awarded to at least eight students who are enrolled full-time for the fall 2023 semester.

The scholarship is available for both four-year university students and community college students and is open to all member cooperatives, regardless of industry sector or location. The educational institution can be in Iowa or out-of-state, and there are no requirements on field of study. Scholarships will be announced before September 25, 2023.

Scholarship applications can be found by scanning the QR code to the right or online at www.iowainstitute.coop.

Applications are due **Friday, August 11, 2023**. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives at 515-292-2667.

Scan this code for scholarship application.



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JUNE

Take advantage of two workshops to add a wealth of information to you and your teams' knowledge base. See you there!

CO-OP ACCOUNTING WORKSHOP

June 13 - 14

Gateway Hotel & Conference Center | Ames, IA

Join the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives for a two-day Accounting Workshop. The conference will run from noon-to-noon to allow time for networking with your accounting colleagues. We have assembled an agenda that has a variety of topics that will be of interest to your accounting team.

Topics include:

- Captive Insurance - *Dr. Bujakowski, Assistant Professor, Drake University*
- ESG - *Marcus Wilhelm, Regional President, CoBank*
- Iowa Sales Tax - *Tim Reilly, Iowa Department of Revenue*
- Extracting Value from Your Data - *Nancy Bielke, CLA*
- Small Group Discussions

SUMMER WORKSHOP

June 21

Fareway Conference Center | Boone, IA

At the Summer Workshop, we host a variety of speakers who address issues of current importance and trends that aide in the decision making at the local cooperative level. This program is intended for the cooperative board members and management staff.

Topics Include:

- Population Migration - *Dr. David Peters, ISU Extension Rural Sociologist*
- Wage Inflation - *Mike Gaul, Director of Career Services, CALS at ISU*
- A Look at Current Economic Forces - *Dr. Bobby Martens, IIC Endowed Professor, ISU*
- The Success of Frontier Co-op - *Tony Bedard, CEO, Frontier Co-op*
- Iowa Grain Indemnity Fund - *Jim Kennedy, Bureau Chief, Iowa Grain Warehouse Bureau*
- All-Systems Overweight Truck Bill - *Stu Anderson, Iowa DOT*

Looking to attend either of these events? Scan the QR code with your phone's camera or head on over to our website and register for these events under the "Events" tab. For more information, please contact our main office at 515-292-2667.



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