



Iowa Institute for
Cooperatives

CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

June 2024 Vol. 54, No. 2

New Faces Join the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Team

Meet Matt Eddy and Sofia Ingersoll

TRANSFORMING COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

What makes Matt Eddy a great fit for Iowa Institute for Cooperatives as the Director of Cooperative Education? A passion for education, continued learning, and developing people.

As a former ag educator and, most recently, Iowa's Agriculture Education Consultant and State FFA and PAS Education advisor with the Iowa Department of Education, Matt understands the nuances of agriculture and he loves to teach. His plans for IIC's future direction build on his passion to learn and educate.

While he may still be learning the intricacies of cooperatives, that hasn't delayed Matt from picking up further development of IIC's leadership program. "The IIC Leadership Program is ripe for expansion and tackles the needs co-ops have," Matt shares. "We are creating modules for them to help develop their leaders. But we also custom fit and tailor them to a cooperative's specific needs, as they each operate differently."

Along with the expansion of the leadership program, Matt is preparing for a technology workshop in the late summer. Here members can receive hands-on training with Microsoft's new AI software, Copilot.

"AI can be a little intimidating," Matt admits. "But the benefits of using AI are substantial and offer a lot of efficiencies."

Matt encourages cooperatives to reach out at any time if they have questions or are struggling with development and training. He is committed to ensuring that cooperatives not only thrive but also evolve with the changing times.

BRINGING A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO IIC

We are delighted to welcome Sofia Ingersoll as the new Business Manager for IIC. Sofia is replacing long-time team member Nancy Cyr, who retired in April after 10 years of service. Sofia brings a wealth of experience and a strong educational background to her new role.

Sofia completed her undergraduate degree in Global Resource Systems at Iowa State University, where she interned in Ecuador, learning about co-ops with a focus on sugar cane production. She then earned an MBA from Iowa State University.



Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is pleased to welcome Sofia Ingersoll and Matt Eddy to the team. Sofia is the new Business Manager and Matt's role is Director of Cooperative Education.

In her new role as Business Manager at IIC, Sofia's primary responsibilities will include bookkeeping, managing the institute's daily operations and supporting year-round educational workshops. She is particularly excited to learn more about the co-ops IIC supports and to identify efficiencies that can enhance both internal and external processes, ultimately improving service to Iowa's co-ops.

A native of Grinnell, Iowa, Sofia relocated to Ames about a decade ago. She and her husband, also an Iowa native, have three young daughters. Sofia enjoys spending her free time with her family, participating in her children's activities and getting involved in their school and sports events.

We are excited to have Sofia on board and look forward to the positive impact she will bring to the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives!

Welcome Sofia and Matt!



Strong Legislative Session for Institute Members

With Michael St. Clair, Lobbyist for Iowa Institute for Cooperatives



Michael St. Clair
Lobbyist for IIC

The 2024 Legislative Session, which concluded on April 19, was highly successful for the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and its members, securing multiple victories on both proactive and defensive fronts. The two most challenging issues were increased funding and grant amounts for the Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program, and legislation that would have required the grain indemnity fund to cover credit sale contracts.

DEFENSIVE SUCCESS: GRAIN INDEMNITY FUND

On the defensive front, the grain indemnity fund bill (SF 2401) was introduced relatively early but languished on the Senate Calendar for over 30 days before being taken up and unanimously passed. The Senate had always been more open to the idea of covering credit sale contracts. Representatives Mommsen and Sexton in the House acted as our champions and ultimately the backstop to the bill’s passage. With Farm Bureau’s support of coverage for credit sale contracts, we face significant challenges moving forward. Regular messaging and education are needed to help legislators understand that covering credit sale contracts could result in a large liability for the fund and may incentivize bad behavior.

PROACTIVE SUCCESS: RENEWABLE FUELS INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

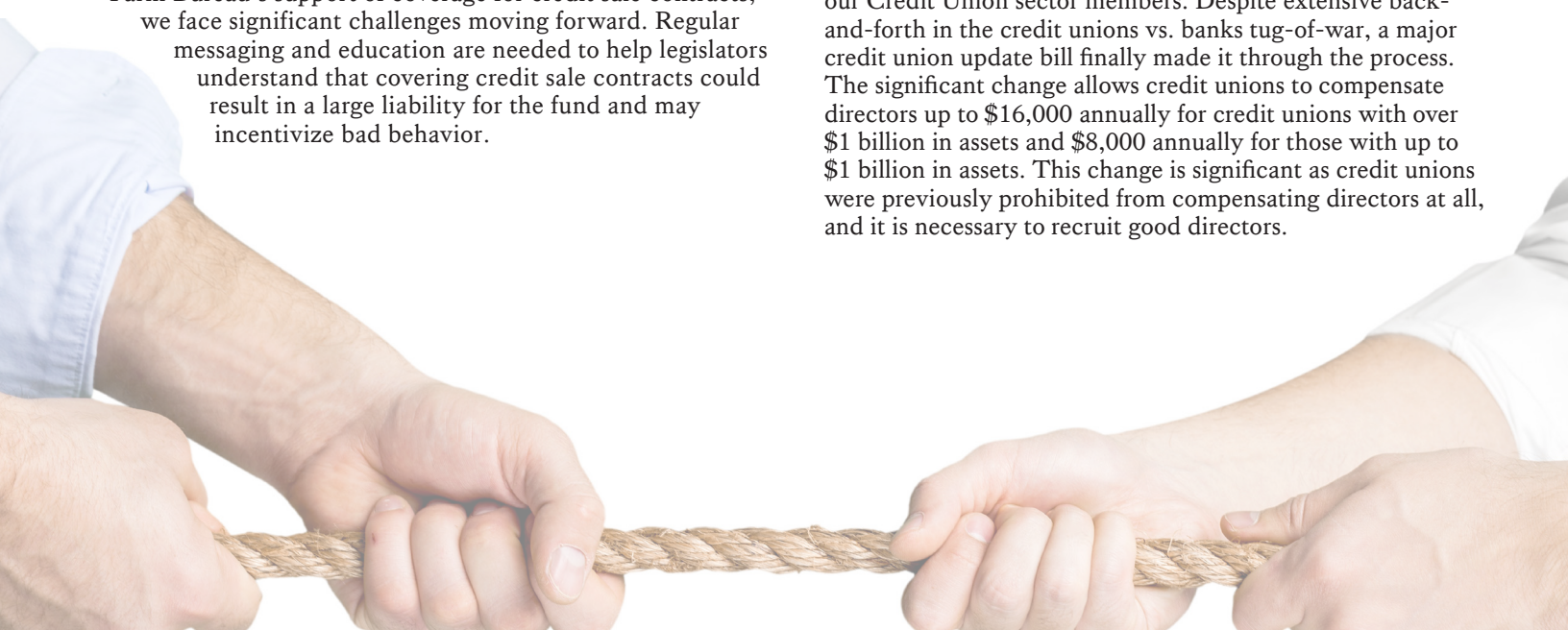
Proactively, we began early groundwork for improvements to the RFIP. Our primary objective was to increase the allowable grant amount from the current \$50,000. We also advocated for more money for grants, understanding that this was a bigger ask. We had success on both fronts. The RFIP is funded in the Infrastructure budget bill, which is typically one of the last items agreed to in the legislative session, and this year was no exception. After much haggling between the chambers over how this would end up, the grant award level was increased from \$50,000 to \$75,000, and the overall appropriation was increased by \$2 million.

CENTRAL FILING: AN ONGOING BATTLE

Our favorite perennial issue of central filing was introduced in both chambers in early February but did not advance in either chamber. In recent years, we have “played to a draw” on this issue, with legislators not wanting to choose between their friends, the bankers, and their friends, the cooperatives. Despite successfully holding this issue off in the past few years, it remains worthy of discussion when speaking with your legislators.

MAJOR WIN FOR CREDIT UNION MEMBERS

Last but certainly not least, we had a significant win for our Credit Union sector members. Despite extensive back-and-forth in the credit unions vs. banks tug-of-war, a major credit union update bill finally made it through the process. The significant change allows credit unions to compensate directors up to \$16,000 annually for credit unions with over \$1 billion in assets and \$8,000 annually for those with up to \$1 billion in assets. This change is significant as credit unions were previously prohibited from compensating directors at all, and it is necessary to recruit good directors.



MAKE TIME FOR THE IIC



SUMMER MANAGEMENT MEETING TUESDAY, JUNE 25

There are many arms of knowledge needed to help our members and lead our cooperatives, from government policy to technological advancements. Join Iowa Institute for Cooperatives on Tuesday, June 25 for the Summer Management Workshop held at the Fareway Conference Center in Boone.

The day will be packed with several topics that impact the day-to-day work of your cooperative as well as future trends, each presented by the following experts in their industries:

If these topics are of interest to your leadership, including your board of directors, please register by emailing info@iowainstitute.coop or calling (515) 292-2667 no later than **Friday, June 21**.



Shawn Packer

Shawn Packer is an attorney with JPH Law, a D.C.-based firm focusing on the needs of employers dealing with federal government programs. Prior to JPH, Shawn worked in the Office of the Solicitor at the Department of Labor as an Attorney-Advisor to the Solicitor, where he worked on a variety of legal issues, but specifically focused on immigration programs. Shawn will be sharing discussions surrounding the H2A program, along with other visa work programs that may be a better fit for your cooperative's needs.



Jim Knuth

Jim Knuth is the Senior Vice President with Farm Credit Services of America. Jim has over 39 years of commercial and agricultural lending experience and leads the organization's Iowa retail financial services division. Jim will share his insights as growers renew their loan agreements, along with his perspective on what FCSA anticipates for the agricultural sector over the next two to three years.



Dr. Connor Sible

Dr. Connor Sible is a post-doctoral research associate at the University of Illinois. His research has focused on plant growth, biologicals and biostimulants. His primary focus is categorizing these products based on their active components and determining which situations these products perform best in and how to bring their greatest value to growers. Dr. Sible will share his thoughts on the impact these new tools may have on ag retail and how they may affect your fertilizer volumes.



Kent Hartwig

Kent Hartwig, Director of State Government Affairs, and Travis Deppe, Senior Manager of Strategic Alliances with Gevo, Inc, will discuss the need for corn and soybean production with a lower carbon intensity (CI) score to maximize their final product value to their customers. As this year's crop is the first that will be eligible to participate in CI scores, this is an opportunity to better grasp the impact this could have on cooperatives and their members.



Dr. Bobby Martens

Dr. Bobby Martens is the IIC Endowed Professor at Iowa State University. Dr. Martens will discuss how today's events, including the lack of a farm bill, a presidential election, disrupted supply chains and inflation are affecting our lives and organizations. He will also provide insights into what might be around the corner for our economy.

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Exploring the Cooperative Business Model

IIC's annual Summer Cooperative Intern Day brought over 100 interns to the Fareway Conference Center in Boone on Wednesday, May 29. The one-day program is designed to help interns gain a deeper understanding of the cooperative business model and acquire essential career skills.

The day began with an interactive session, "Cooperative 101," led by Dr. Bobby Martens, IIC endowed faculty member at Iowa State University. Dr. Martens covered the historical roots of cooperatives and the various industries they operate in.

Mike Gaul, Director of Career Services for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University, also addressed the group, providing insights to give interns the confidence to make informed decisions about their future careers.



Panelists, *Evan Wielenga*, Hull Cooperative, *Charlie White*, Innovative Ag Services and *Erin Campbell*, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, joined the conference to share their career stories. These employees, with varied roles, discussed why they chose to start and continue their careers at cooperatives.



Interns participated in a networking exercise, meeting new colleagues and laying the groundwork for future connections in the cooperative field.



Over 100 student interns participated in Cooperative Intern Day. The conference is designed to give the interns a deeper understanding of the importance of cooperatives and how cooperatives work