

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Recognizing Montana's Cooperatives in National Co-op Month

Montana, October 3, 2023 — Montana's cooperative sector is not just an economic force; it's a driving factor behind community development and growth across the state. According to a recent report from the Bureau of Business and Economic Research, Montana Cooperatives contribute a substantial \$7 billion to the state's economy, providing over 24,000 jobs and infusing \$1.6 Billion into family incomes. Cooperatives in Montana span various sectors, including electricity, telecommunications, credit unions, retail, shared services, agriculture supply and processing, and housing.

The cooperative business model, founded on democratic control, member benefits, and equitable profit distribution, continues to fuel sustainable economic development and job creation while enhancing overall state prosperity. Montana cooperatives ensure access to essential services, including grocery stores, telecommunications, and electricity, especially in rural areas.

Tracy McIntyre, Director of the Montana Cooperative Development Center, says more Montanans than ever are exploring cooperatives as possible solutions for some of the more intractable issues in our state's economy. "Communities across the state are reaching out to our office to discuss how the cooperative business model can address needs such as childcare, conversions of existing businesses to employee ownership, housing, and more — our work as the statewide center for cooperative development has increased over 40% since 2019." McIntyre says her staff is dedicated to helping Montana communities work on their own solutions. "There is no cookie cutter approach," she notes, "but MDCDC has been working diligently to design cooperative toolkits in housing, childcare and succession/worker conversions to better respond to today's growing rural concerns."

The Montana Cooperative Community encompasses a diverse range of cooperative enterprises that serve the people of Montana. Cooperatives are a driving force in Montana's economy, offering essential services and contributing significantly to local communities.

"Cooperatives are so much more than a business" said Heidi Borlaug, President of the Montana Council of Cooperatives. "Cooperatives are owned and operated by the members they serve. Our Montana Cooperatives are strong and growing. We hope that people across the state will visit their local cooperatives in honor of National Co-op Month this October".

For more information about Montana cooperatives and their economic impact, contact The Montana Council of Cooperatives (www.montanacouncil.coop) and the Montana Cooperative Development Center (www.mcdc.coop).

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