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Expansion Update

By Matt Stanley/ General Manager



Momentum in our co-op is strong! The result of nearly five years of planning and preparation means we are poised to present our building design plans to city officials, get commitments for commercial loans, and see construction start this summer if everything stays on schedule. Most notably, we continue to be awed and empowered with a new responsibility by a successful owner capital campaign in the fall of 2017 during which we raised over \$1.6 million in co-op owner investments in the expansion project.

Indeed, I think the most asked question since we reached and surpassed our \$1.5 million preferred shares goal is “when do we break ground?” The securing of owner investments was a pivotal step in moving our expansion forward. It demonstrated to our landlord, city staff and officials, the Mill Pond community, and the co-op staff and board of directors, that there was no doubt about the

Co-op’s capacity to successfully take what for us is a big step forward – in terms of both size and complexity of operation at the new location.

As I write, the Co-op project has received a City of Astoria Planning Commission and City Council approval and as I write we are also working on a design review application for the Astoria Design Review Commission. Final adjustments to the interior store layout are being made so that we can begin work on mechanical and architectural engineering. Trust that we are working diligently to keep our project on schedule. If we do so we may see the new store open for business by summer of 2019.

Perhaps the most compelling motivator for the Co-op is the daily reminder – both from customer and staff perspectives - that we are running out of space! We so much want to offer more selection and services but the current facility limits our capacity to do so. As we start to watch our new store rise up before our eyes over the next 18 months we’ll be depending on the strong continued support from our co-op shoppers. We look forward to keeping you updated on our progress!

"As we start to watch our new store rise up before our eyes over the next 18 months we'll be depending on the strong continued support from our co-op shoppers."

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The Co-op is a community-owned grocery store. All shoppers welcome. No membership required.

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Cover: Farmer Bruce Craven of Backwater Farm, Puget Island, WA.
Photo by Trav Williams, Broken Banjo Photography.



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Fresh New Look

By Zetty Nemlowill/ Marketing Director



We’re going to be sprucing up our look in preparation for opening a new store and welcoming in more shoppers. We want everyone in our community to understand what makes Astoria Co-op different and why they might want to shop here. A logo and tag line can help represent this visually.

Our current logo has served us well, but now is the time to make any improvements to our look before we invest in a new store and new signage. We will be using what we’ve learned from owner surveys, written comments, and years of being your co-op to choose a logo that represents our commitment to local sourcing and cooperative ownership.

We’re already working together with other co-ops across the country to bring you lower prices with Co+op Deals and Co+op Basics so our brand needs to look great with those programs. We reach thousands of people in our region with these

We’re going to be sprucing up our look in preparation for opening a new store and welcoming in more shoppers. We want everyone in our community to understand what

marketing materials, which is great, but there’s one problem. Our logo, typeface and colors—elements necessary to create a cohesive visual identity—is not in line. That’s why we’ve chosen to incorporate the familiar “co+op” graphic into our co-op’s name. We love the way this highlights that we are a co-op and makes the most of our work with other co-ops.

Cooperative principal number six “cooperation among cooperatives” means co-ops serve most effectively by working together. We’ve certainly learned that our co-op is more successful when we cooperate with others who know how to cooperate. So as we face expansion and more competition than ever, we know our ability to thrive depends on it. Cooperating with other co-ops on marketing and branding can save us valuable staff time which is always important for a small business!

We’re still the same co-op you know and love, and we’re getting better at sharing our story with everyone and showing off what makes us special. Look for our fresh new look being introduced in the store later this year. I will keep you up-to-date as we progress.





Fresh Eggs from Backwater Farm

Written by Emily Vollmer | Photos by Trav Williams, Broken Banjo Phtogrphay

A soft clucking from high up in the hay bales reveals a hen nestled on a clutch of eggs. Farmer Bruce Craven mentions in a patiently exasperated tone that some in the flock know that they can fly, and this is one of those hens who flies over the fence, and waits for him to open the door so she can get to her favorite spots in the barn.

Backwater Farm, run by Bruce and wife Desiree, delivers fresh eggs to the Astoria Co-op once a week. Their 40-acre farm on Puget Island is named for the peaceful backwaters of the Columbia River that border their pastures in the form of the East and West Sturgeon Sloughs.

A diverse flock of hens are fanned out across the red stems of mowed buckwheat: Black Australorp, Speckled Sussex, Welsummer, Novogen Brown layers, Americauna and other breeds. The buckwheat cover crop was planted to improve soil tilth after the



Emily Renee Vollmer is a flower farmer, floral designer, writer and farmers market manager on the North Oregon coast. She delights in dancing, cooking, and playing in the ocean.

heavy traffic of pasturing their heritage Lowline Angus beef cattle over the winter. In midsummer, when the buckwheat bloomed, it became a source of nectar for their honeybees, and now the chickens scratch for fallen grain and insects. A henhouse that Bruce custom built on the frame of an old Winnebago trailer can be pulled with a tractor to rotate the chickens through the fields. These integrated natural and sustainability-focused farming practices are central to how Backwater Farm is managed.

The eggs from these free-range chickens are flavorful and have rich orange-yellow colored yolks due to their varied diet. In contrast to chickens raised in confinement, these chickens also lay fewer eggs since they expend more energy when they run about and forage. In Bruce's packing room, the eggs fill the cartons in orderly rows with colors ranging from creamy brown to chocolate, and the occasional teal or white egg. They're packed as ungraded eggs, which means that they aren't sorted by size so each dozen contains a mixture of small to extra-large eggs. In general the small eggs are laid by younger chickens, and a hen lays larger eggs as she gets older.

While delivering to the Astoria Co-op one week, Bruce was walking in with cartons of eggs when a family approached him and said, "You're the egg guy?! Can I shake your hand?" They shared that the kids really enjoyed the eggs from Backwater Farm.

Bruce compliments the Astoria Co-op on how great they have been to work with. The Co-op has been understanding of the realities of sourcing from small scale local farms, and they've been willing to accept the natural, seasonal fluctuations in egg production, or unexpected demands of the farm that might delay a delivery.

The constant need for problem-solving and creativity is an engaging aspect of farming for Bruce. "More often than not, I don't decide what I'm going to do; the farm tells me what I'm going to do for the day." There are frustrations, like the fence he spent several hours on only to have a hen fly over it two minutes after he'd finished. On the other hand they also find themselves part of a community on Puget Island where neighbors will come over to help out when needed. He finds he enjoys the daily variety and physical activities.

Bruce's first connection with Puget Island was as a place to go fishing when he worked and lived in Portland. While technically retired now, Bruce is too busy to go fishing as he and Desiree build and manage the farm so that the chickens, beef cattle and honeybees contribute to the mortgage. Yet, he says they find their days are pretty rich and full.



Bruce in the packing room where they sort about a 100 eggs a day.



A hen nesting in the hay bales.



The chickens roam the mowed buckwheat field scratching for bugs and fallen grain.



Lighten Up with Legumes

Legumes lend protein to these satisfying, low-fat main dish recipes.

Reprinted by permission from StrongerTogether.coop. Find these and other recipes, plus information about your food and where it comes from at www.strongertogether.coop.

Lemony Lentil Spinach Soup

Serves: 4. Prep time: 10 minutes active; 6 hours, 10 minutes total.

- 1 cup lentils
- ½ large lemon, seeds removed
- 2 large carrots, chopped
- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups fresh spinach, chopped
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped

1. Place the lentils, lemon half, carrots, water, oregano, salt and pepper in the slow cooker. Cover and set on low, and cook for 6 hours.
2. At 6 hours, take off the lid and stir in the spinach and parsley. Stir for 1 minute to wilt, adjust seasonings and serve.

Add oregano and a crumble of feta to give this lemony soup a Greek flavor profile. Serve with pita wedges and hummus.



Crockpot Red Beans and Rice

Serves: 4 – 6. Prep time: 15 minutes active; 7 hours, 15 minutes total.

- 1 cup dried kidney beans
- 5 cups water
- ½ cup long grain brown rice
- 1 large red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning
- 1 bunch collard greens, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt

1. Heat a pot of water to boiling, add kidney beans and boil beans for ten minutes. Drain beans.
2. Combine 5 cups water, drained kidney beans, brown rice, bell pepper, carrot and Cajun seasoning in a slow cooker. Cover and set on low, and cook for 6 hours.
3. Open the cooker, add the collard greens and salt, and stir. Cover and cook for another hour.
4. When the beans are tender, serve or transfer to containers to refrigerate or freeze.

This New Orleans classic is incredibly easy to prepare in a slow cooker. Try it as a side dish to roasted chicken, or as an entrée with a slice of cornbread.



Split Pea Soup with Spinach

By: Robin Asbell

Serves: 4 – 6. Prep time: 30 minutes active; 2 hours total.

- 1 ½ cups split peas
- 7 cups water
- 1 medium potato, cubed
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 ounces baby spinach, chopped
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Pick over the peas for any stones or twigs, if necessary, then put in a large pot with the water and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, and add the potato, celery, onion, carrot, bay leaf, thyme and salt. Simmer for an hour and a half, checking occasionally to stir and add water if needed.
2. When the split peas are falling apart, stir in the spinach and simmer just until the spinach is wilted. Add black pepper. Serve hot.

Paired with a hunk of crusty bread, creamy split pea soup is comfort food that will warm you from the inside out.

New Products

Here are some new items we've made space for. We hope you love 'em as much as we do!



Glory Bee Creamed Honey

The fine folks at the Zimmerman's farm in Grays River, WA are making a creamed honey that works great as a healthy spread. Try it on toast and avoid the drips on your counter top.



Chickapea Pasta

Grain-free diets continue to gain in popularity. Sometimes it is just nice to mix it up and give your body something different. These pastas made from chickpeas are worth a try even if you still love your grains.



Health Ade Large Kombucha

Do you find yourself buying bottles of kombucha throughout the week? Now you can save money and buy your favorite Health Aide flavors in a 64 ounce growler! All Health Aide kombucha is brewed in glass to boot.



Siete Chips

The Co-op staff are hooked on these grain-free tortilla chips cooked in avocado oil. They are super light and crispy and come in sea salt, lime, and nacho varieties.



Smart Chicken - Ground Chicken

The same high quality organic and certified humane chicken you expect from Smart Chicken conveniently prepared for easy use in a variety of meals.



City of Dreams

Fort George Brewery describes this hazy pale ale as "pillowy, magical, dreamy". With its tropical aromatics, it just might change the minds of those who think hops are bitter.



You've gotta try 'em!

Staff Picks by Joe Wrobel

I'm from Michigan and I came to the West Coast to see the sights a few years ago. I loved Astoria and the coast so I decided to relocate for good. I was fortunate enough to get a job at the Co-op and have been here since 2013. I love working at the Co-op because you can always find the foods you want there and also find new things to try. I enjoy cooking and find the food turns out the best if I keep it simple. My favorite things to make are chili and pasta dishes. When I'm not at work I enjoy gaming in the winter months and bicycling in the summer. I love going out to Fort Stevens on the weekends because it's so close and there's so much to do there.

Joe's staff picks:

- Quinoa in the bulk aisle. Quinoa is great because it tastes good by itself but can also be combined with other foods and seasonings to make healthy meals for lunch or dinner. So versatile.
- Equal Exchange French Roast coffee in the bulk aisle. This is a tasty coffee for the mornings or afternoons. Equal Exchange is only \$8.99 a pound now so you can enjoy gourmet coffee at a great price.
- Go Macro Peanut Butter and Chocolate Chip Macrobars. These bars are tasty and much more filling than many protein bars on the market. They go on sale with Co+op Deals regularly also so you can get them for a price that's hard to pass up.
- Bubbies Kosher Dill Pickles in the cooler. These pickles are like no other pickles out there, give them a try and you won't be disappointed. You will want to have them in the fridge all the time. The Bubbies Dill Relish is also great on burgers or hot dogs for summer cook-outs.



Produce Report: Food Bank Visit

By Danny Rasmussen/Produce Manager

I recently had the pleasure of visiting the Clatsop Community Action Regional Food Bank distribution center in Warrenton. The CCA's distribution center truly is a hub of food—pallets of rutabagas, cabbages, eggs, and many other foods filled the warehouse from floor to ceiling. A dozen friendly volunteers and employees stood prepared to hand out food. Outside, people were lined up and ready to shop. It was an impressive operation to behold.

The food bank's goal is to eliminate hunger and provide food to those who need it. That lofty goal is difficult for one organization to achieve—but CCA seems to be making a huge impact on Clatsop County. The food bank distributes about 1.5 million

pounds of food in the county per year and almost half of that is now fresh and frozen produce. The food bank embraced fresh food before many of their contemporaries. It was the first food bank in Oregon to do a fresh mobile produce pantry starting about five years ago.

"This by far is the greatest program our food bank has ever gotten by impact of people served but also cash donations," Food Bank Operations Manager Dusten Martin said.

Thursdays anyone who needs it can pick up fresh produce year-round at the food bank's Warrenton location. May-September they take their show on the road, distributing fresh food in outdoor locations. In these months CCA provides

about 1,200 Clatsop County households with produce for the week.

"The stigma that went along with food banking is that people that go to food banks... that they don't know how to do anything but eat out of cans... it just seemed wrong to me," Martin said.

CCA often buys large quantities of vegetables directly from farms for mere pennies per pound. They also partner with local grocery stores, like the Co-op, to bring unsold food to those who need it through CCA's "Fresh Alliance" supermarket recovery program.

When food is deemed no longer sellable by a Co-op staff member, we set it aside and CCA staff and volunteers pick it up. They then distribute it to a nearby food pantry, meal site, or shelter. While our goal is to provide the highest quality produce to our shoppers, it's wonderful to have CCA available to redistribute edible food when it no longer meets our standards. When produce is no longer edible, we put it in a compost bucket that is picked up by farmers and shoppers who have livestock to feed. Through these two channels, the Co-op is producing nearly no food waste.

If you'd like to help the CCA in their goal to eliminate hunger, know that your dollar goes a long way when put into CCA's hands. Visit ccaservices.org or call (503) 861-FOOD to find out how to donate today. CCA will be one of our Beans for Bags recipients this spring, so you can also help support the food bank simply by shopping at the Co-op with a reusable bag.



Dustin from the food bank and Danny from the Co-op. Below is edible food that otherwise could have been thrown away.



Did you know we hardly throw any food in the dumpster? Tony and Mike from the food bank come pick up the stuff that's still in good shape. In a year we donate about 24,000 pounds of edible nutritious food. The rest local farmers pick up for compost or animal feed.

Food co-ops divert about twice as much food as similar-sized grocery stores.



Photo: Run on the River courtesy of Astoria Parks Department. Your Co-op is a proud sponsor of this event that raises money for pool and fitness class scholarships.

Eating for Athletic Fitness

Tips to fuel your body for optimal performance while reaching your goals.

Whether you're training for a marathon or you just exercise to stay fit, it's important to remember that the human body, like any engine, needs fuel to maintain performance. But not all food is created equally, and it's important to eat the right kinds of foods whatever your fitness goals.

For aerobic training (any prolonged activity like running, biking, or swimming), the body's main source of fuel comes in the form of carbohydrates. Carbs have received some bad press in recent years, but they are the key resource for maintaining any fitness regimen. It's true that simple carbs like white bread and pasta, candy, and potatoes won't give you any prolonged benefit; they're used up too quickly and are poor in nutrients. Eat them only immediately after a workout, if at all. But complex carbs such as whole grains (whole-wheat bread and pasta), oats, and sweet potatoes provide lasting energy and nutrition.

Every time you work out, you're actually breaking down your muscles. Ultimately, you build them up as they repair, and for this you need protein. Red meat is often high in saturated fat and hard to digest, making it difficult for your body to use the meat for muscle repair. You should look for lean meats

and other proteins: chicken (especially white meat) and fish (which is also rich in omega-3 fatty acids), as well as protein-rich quinoa, beans, and tofu.

Whenever your muscles or tissue break down, your body generates "free radicals" that can be harmful over time. It's important to keep your diet high in antioxidants, which will "scavenge" free radicals. Luckily, there's a huge variety of antioxidant-rich foods, including veggies, fruits, nuts, seeds, and even red wine. Your local food co-op staff should be able to direct you to the freshest foods high in antioxidants.

And as for what to drink before, during, and after a workout, make it water—and plenty of it. The amount you'll need will vary depending on factors like heat, body weight, and the intensity of your workout. Stay away from juice and soda, which are high in empty calories, and keep alcohol consumption to a minimum. Coffee, tea, and other caffeinated drinks are okay in moderation, as long as they don't upset your stomach during workouts. After you exercise, an occasional sport drink or fruit juice is fine for immediate recovery, but don't overdo it.

How to pack all this nutrition into your daily diet? Eat several small meals to help you maintain energy during your workout and throughout the day. Try to space them out, and snack if you need to; your co-op staff will be able to point you toward healthy, nutritious snacks that you can enjoy and feel good about.



By Charles Davidson. Reprinted by permission from StrongerTogether.coop.



Co-op Board Takes Stock and Looks Forward

By Andrea Larson Perez/Board Member

Every year your Co-op board of directors spends a weekend to work together on long-range planning and strategic thinking about our organization. Getting to spend time together outside of our regular monthly meetings is invaluable – it strengthens our team and we usually make a point to see a fellow co-op in the region.

This year we made a journey to Seattle, where the weather delivered plenty of rain, snow and the perfect opportunity to gather indoors and do some good work on behalf of our co-op. All board members were present and fully engaged in our agenda for the weekend.

After arriving Friday evening, everyone enjoyed making a yummy meal, socialized and got ready to focus on a full Saturday agenda. The first order of business was a visit to a newer location of PCC (Puget Community Cooperative) at Columbia City in Seattle. PCC has 10 locations currently with two more opening this year. Their sales are over \$250 million annually. Touring this facility was a great way to envision the possibilities of our new store. All board

members also bought lots of delicious offerings from their vast hot and cold deli counters for individual lunches. Some even shared! We all thought about the possibilities for the expanded deli in our new store. We also saw a vastly more complex operation that was managed incredibly well. We made connections with staff at the co-op so we can use them as a resource for the development of our new store.

We resumed the retreat after our PCC visit and worked on an update of our mission statement (more to come on that), began a comprehensive review of our by-laws by highlighting areas that need to be updated, and discussed the nature of the next year as we navigate a construction project and open a more complex operation. We recognize that the expansion will bring lots of change and challenges to the organization. Staff support and career development are a priority to the board. Acknowledging the inherent challenges for the staff in the current space, and creating and sharing a vision for opportunities in the new space is in the works. Being a part of the Opening Team will be an honor

and great accomplishment. The hard work will pay off.

The key agenda item was, of course, the store expansion plan. With at least a year before opening, every day is important along the path. Once permits are secured and groundbreaking occurs, the time will surely fly. It really is remarkable that a local grocery business is building a new store in town! The Co-op is so proud to be keeping it local, making good food accessible for all. Until then, every detail will be considered during the process and full details of each phase are available on our website.

Your board of directors is a committed group of professionals. Any work is undertaken with full appreciation and consideration of the full membership. All board members are grateful for your support and are available to receive your feedback, information and input to ensure the future success of our beloved Co-op.

“Getting to spend time together outside of our regular monthly meetings is invaluable – it strengthens our team and we usually make a point to see a fellow co-op in the region.”



Your Co-op Board visits PCC. Left to right (top to bottom): Todd Holm, Norma Hernandez, Angela Sidlo, Co-op General Manager Matt Stanley, Angi Perez, Venus Fromwiller, Board President Allie Evans, and Andrea Larson Perez.



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The Local Difference

When you buy local products at the Co-op, more money stays right here, making our community more economically resilient and sustainable. Local products at co-ops average 21% of sales compared with the national grocery average of 1.8%. Thanks for supporting local entrepreneurs and small businesses. You are making a difference!

Photo by Trav Williams, Broken Banjo Photography