



## What is the Co-operative Way?

**CO-OPS CAME ABOUT FROM A BELIEF IN ECONOMIC EQUALITY!** One person's desire for profit should not drive many other people into poverty.

**WHERE CO-OPS BEGAN!** The year was 1844, and Rochdale was a dirty industrial town in the heart of England's manufacturing area. Working class men, women & children worked as weavers in the factories under oppressive conditions, victimized by an economic elite. After an unsuccessful strike they decided to set up a co-operative store to help each other during those hard times. These were rugged individualists united by a common bond to work for a better, more co-operative world.

**CO-OPS ARE REVOLUTIONARY; THEY ARE RELEVANT!** Born in the hard times of the industrial revolution out of a sense of socioeconomic revolution, co-ops survived and thrived during the Great Depression, and there is good reason to anticipate that co-ops will thrive and many more will be born during our current incarnation of "hard times" The word crisis can be defined as both "danger and opportunity" The cooperative model has shown itself to be an opportunity not only in prosperous times, but especially in the "dangerous" hard times.

Since 1844 when the Rochdale pioneers formed the first consumer co-op, the movement has grown and today reaches into virtually every sector of the economy: food, finance, agriculture, insurance & housing. Today's common practices were yesterday's revolutionary ideas. Co-ops and the values, ethics and principles they stand for are as relevant and revolutionary today as they were when they were established by the Rochdale Pioneers more than 165 years ago.

**CO-OPS ARE VISIONARY; THEY FIGHT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE!** Co-ops work for a more just world so that many will not bear extraordinary burdens for the benefit of a few. Many concepts considered no-brainers today - such as organics, the local-food movement, environmental sustainability and fair trade, - were advocated by people in the co-operative movement decades ago.