



Caledonia Food Co-op Newsletter

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Co-op Receives USDA Grant



The Caledonia Food Co-op Board is delighted to announce that the Co-op has received a \$70,000 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant, with a matching requirement of \$31,450 in Co-op funds and in-kind contributions.

“The Caledonia Food Co-op has been very fortunate to receive assistance from the Town of St. Johnsbury, the Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC), and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association (NVDA). We are very heartened and grateful for the trust that the USDA has in our project and by investing this critical financial support,” said Co-op Board Chair Eric Skovsted.

[Interested in Volunteering? Email us!](#)

Our Last Grant: A Snapshot

Partnering with the Town of St. Johnsbury, our last grant allowed us to accomplish the legwork necessary for a project of this scale. Here is a snapshot of how the money was spent:

- We have construction pricing and preliminary lease/purchase negotiations on two sites and, with the help of White + Burke Real Estate Advisors, are working towards a letter of intent to formally express the Co-op's interest and expectations;

- We hired grant-writing services through NCIC and applied for two grants, securing one for a total of \$70,000 USDA funds. We are still waiting to hear back on a second grant;
- We hired Marketing Specialist Mel Reis, whose work dramatically boosted our membership;
- We purchased membership appreciation materials to be used in the coming year: bandanas, T-shirts, etc.

The Power of Numbers: 618 Founding Members



Your membership speaks volumes; it says loud and clear that we want a local food co-op! Strong community support in the form of memberships is a critical indicator to potential financial partners and allows the co-op board to apply for grants, effectively leveraging member equity. The funds allow us to bring in expertise in fields like marketing, architecture, and real estate. These are expensive services that the co-op would otherwise struggle to afford. “Every member is an owner, every owner has a voice,” said Margaret Healey, Board Treasurer. “That’s 618 voices, which is truly incredible!”



This past Wednesday, the Caledonia Food Co-op met with JQ Hannah of the Food Co-op Initiative (FCI) and Bonnie Hudspeth of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association. JQ, Assistant Director at FCI and a former General Manager at

Common Ground Food Co-op in Urbana, IL, and instrumental advisor to numerous startups, dived into our pro forma and market study, and delivered some exciting news as well as a few reality checks. JQ noted that our market is exceptional:

"Your co-op's potential market is very strong; we have not seen a market study this strong for a start food co-op in multiple years, anywhere in the nation. The demand is clearly there for your co-op and what it offers, if your community has the will to step up to grow it and fund it together. It's not easy, but it absolutely can and has been done by startups in communities just like yours, and the resulting impacts have been amazing."

-JQ Hannah, former General Manager at Common Ground Food Co-op in Urbana, IL, and instrumental advisor to numerous startups.

Volunteer! - This is YOUR Co-op

Got talent? Know a way you can contribute or donate? Please contact the board at office@caledoniafood.coop. Your help is welcome.

Testimonials - Send Us Yours!



"My family and I chose to live and work in the Northeast Kingdom because we value nature, our health, and community. And we chose to become members of the Caledonia Food Co-op for the same reasons. Creating a place where we can nourish our bodies and our community by supporting local growers and makers was an easy choice."

Jeremy Korsh, M.D.
Four Seasons Orthopaedics

Send us your testimonial, along with a photo to: office@caledoniafood.coop. We will share it on social media, and once a month we will pick one to go in the newsletter. **Include your name, where you live, and what motivated you to become a Founding Member.**

Visit our Facebook Page

Visit our Instagram Page

Become a Founding Member [HERE](#)

Help us Build a Food Co-op in St. J.!

Your founding membership shows that you want to bring high-quality locally-produced food and beverages to St. Johnsbury and contribute to the economic development of the Northeast Kingdom.

The Caledonia Food Co-op will be a full-service grocery store located in St. Johnsbury. It will feature an exceptional variety of local and international food and beverages. It will assist in the economic redevelopment of the region; provide a new market for local producers; expand access to natural and organic products; and advocate for healthy lifestyle choices.

Email us at office@caledoniafood.coop

You can view previous newsletters on our website [HERE](#).