



# 2019 Annual Report

**"Building the Common Co-operative Table"**



ALBERTA COMMUNITY & CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION  
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# Message from Randy Taylor

## ACCA Board Chair



As many of you know, this last year has been one of transition for ACCA. Difficult decisions had to be made, but we believe they were the right ones to help move ACCA forward to fulfill our vision for a strong co-operative sector in Alberta.

I extend sincere appreciation to the ACCA staff for sticking with us during this transition as they are the ones who make things happen. I would also like to thank Paul Cabaj who rejoined ACCA in April as interim executive director and helping us through the transition before accepting the permanent role in November.

Despite the many changes ACCA has faced in the last year, we have had some successes as well.

We increased education around co-operatives in our post-secondary institutions, hosted a co-op CEO luncheon, launched a very well-received and well-attended Community Renewable Energy Incubation project, and provided training and education that led to the incorporation of three new co-operatives, with several more poised to start in 2020.

We also changed up our Annual Gathering of Alberta Co-operatives Conference last year and combined it with the MLA Reception. The event was our best attended yet, and while there were still a few bumps – particularly trying to secure MLA attendance – the conference was very well received by attendees.

We are using the lessons learned from last year's Gathering to make our 2020 event even better and we are excited to share more details with you over the coming weeks.

The co-operative sector in Alberta is undergoing many changes. Some are challenges we need to overcome through dialogue and frank discussion, while others are opportunities we can pursue in collaboration that will make the sector stronger.

On behalf of the Board, thank you for your continued support of the ACCA. We are encouraged by the new path we are taking and look forward to working with you in building that path together.

## Message from Paul Cabaj ACCA Executive Director



2019 was a year of transition for ACCA with our co-operative experiencing significant staff and programming changes.

I joined ACCA as Interim Executive Director in April 2019 and accepted the permanent role in November. Having worked in the co-operative sector for more than two decades, I look forward to working with our board of directors, our members and our staff, to develop strategies that strengthen Alberta Co-operatives and communities.

Guiding us is our new strategic plan. It sets up some ambitious short and long-term goals built around four themes: Advance the Co-op Model, including with the public; Create Connections with a range of partners and government; Strengthen the Co-op Sector with a focus on sharing best practices; and Inspire Co-op Innovation to answer the opportunities and challenges of the coming decade

In the words of the ACCA Board of Directors, it is a pretty ambitious plan, but we're confident we have the right people to get it done! Staff worked in the

latter part the year to build and operational plan to give the strategy legs.

One of the key insights I took away from our strategic planning experience this year was that the purpose of an association is to associate.

For an organization like ours to thrive, our members have to associate with us and with each other. We ask that you, your colleagues, and your staff be open to participating in the many opportunities coming forward this year to interact with new ideas and collaborate with each other in lobbying and learning.

Together, we can work to satisfy our collective curiosity on the potential future of the co-operative in our great province and our great country.

It has been a very challenging start to the job and more challenges face us ahead, but I am confident we are on the right path. I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to the Board of the ACCA for their trust in me, and for our great staff team. Together with you, our members, we can use co-operatives to make a better world.

# The Stats

## ACCA 2019 Statistics

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- **Eight** workshops with **200** post-secondary students
- Incorporation of **five co-ops** as a direct result of ACCA services and support
- **Six** new ACCA members in 2019 and one in 2018
- **\$555,000** grants and sponsorships secured to support programming and staff positions
- **17 per cent decrease** in operational overheads vs 2018
- **223 youth** at the 2019 Co-operative Youth Leadership Program
- **1 united sector**

## Member Statistics

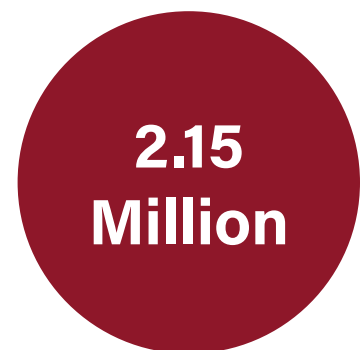
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ACCA Members



Refunded to Members  
since 2017



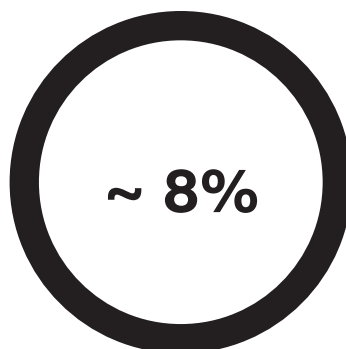
Member Owners

## Alberta's Co-op Sector

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Incorporated co-operatives  
and credit unions



of all co-operatives in Canada  
are found in Alberta



Albertans are a member of a  
co-operative or credit union

# Welcome to our New Members

## Alberta Co-operative Energy

ACE operates as a member-owned energy retailer who supports renewable energy production in Alberta. ACE offers a variety of choices including electricity and natural gas, and supports renewable energy in partnership with SPARK.



## Elliot H. Bridgewater

Founded in 2017, Bridgewater Law is a full service law firm providing legal services to Alberta families, the Alberta co-operative community, and small business throughout Alberta.



## Goldeye Foundation

The Goldeye Foundation is a corporately sponsored non-profit organization that was set up to help support the Goldeye Centre, home of the ACCA's Co-operative Youth Leadership Program.



## Momentum

Located in Calgary, Momentum works with individuals, businesses, communities and systems to increase each individuals' income and assets and create a thriving local economy for all.



## Peace Energy Co-operative

Located in Dawson Creek, Peace Energy Renewable Energy Cooperative is the first of its kind in western Canada. They have over 500 members that share a common vision: a clean energy world filled with hope and opportunity.



## Solar Power Investment Co-operative of Edmonton (SPICE)

SPICE facilitates community renewable energy investment, focusing on solar projects that bring local benefits and strives to create a world where investments measured by a triple bottom line (people, planet, and profits) are a default.



## Wayfinders

Wayfinders Business Co-operative is a member-based organization to support small and medium sized businesses, entrepreneurs, managers, self-employed professionals and non-profit organizations.



# 2019 in Review

## Finances

ACCA started with our new auditor this year, who conducted in-depth review of previous years' financials. Despite a range of adjustments by the auditor and significant losses of management contracts, the 2019 financials saw a slight increase from 2018 revenues of 6.8%. We ran a deficit of expenses over revenues of \$9697, just over a quarter of the previous years' deficit.

## Youth Program

- An increase in participant registrations in 2019, which is fantastic
- Gained 18 new sponsors for 2019
- 114,710 people reached on our Youth Program Facebook page – an average of 551 people per post. The fun promotion of the program shows youth learning new skills and is a big driver of word-of-mouth interest.

**“This program allows me to experience things that I wouldn’t in the community I live in. I have developed better social skills and better communication and public speaking skills. I’ve opened up to the people here more than I do at home and I have become a more confident person.” KB – 2019 Youth Program Participant**



## Co-op Services

- Delivered a CEO luncheon bringing featuring a panel of CEOs from UFA, Calgary Co-op, and EQUUS. This innovative event connected leaders with students, faculty, and emerging leaders from the co-operative sector
- Energy Efficiency Road Show. Worked with the Government of Alberta to educate Albertans on co-operative solutions in 13 communities located across the province
- Post-Secondary. 200 students at Mount Royal University and University of Alberta received an introduction to co-operatives course. Content was also delivered in conjunction with staff from Servus Credit Union (huge thanks to Tyler Hope for volunteering his time and enthusiasm!)
- Community Generation Project Incubator. With funding from Energy Efficiency Alberta and in working in partnership with Peters Energy Solutions Delivered three two-day workshops in Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge. This work resulted in the pre-feasibility of 20 projects representing 80MW of renewable energy. These workshops were well attended by existing and emerging co-operatives.
- Supported the creation of five new co-operatives!

## Advocacy

- Built a government relations plan to inform advocacy for the coming years with the support of New West Public Affairs
- Briefing notes on solving challenges together with government submitted to the Ministry of Health, Municipal affairs, Alberta Rural Caucuses.
- Steps for collaborative lobbying taken at the 2019 Gathering to encourage members to support each other's GR efforts.
- Provided support to Lakeland REA to hold off a takeover attempt by a private firm. Support done in conjunction with other REAs and our general membership.

**A total of 72 people registered for the 2019 ACCA Gathering and 62 for the MLA Reception. Approximately 12 MLAs attended the Reception, including The Honourable Jason Nixon, Government House Leader, and The Honourable Josephine Pon, Minister of Seniors and Housing**



# 2019 Board of Directors

## Board of Directors

Randy Taylor, Board Chair  
FedGas

Alexandra Frison, Vice Chair  
Credit Union Central of Alberta

Joe Bowhay  
Federated Co-operatives Limited

Sandra Thornton  
EQUUS REA Ltd.

Earl Graham  
Blue Mountain Power Co-op.

Harvey Hagman  
UFA Co-operative Limited

Rob Hellenius  
Canadian Workers' Co-operative Federation

Jacob Middlekamp  
North Parkland Power REA

Chris Ross  
The Co-operators Group Ltd.

Bart Willmore  
Calgary Co-operative Association

In 2019, ACCA's voluntary board met six times and was comprised of 11 representatives from the membership, with four vacant positions. The Board operates independently and is responsible for approving budgets, setting strategic direction and monitoring performance of the co-operative.

Through the governance model, there are three small working committees, each involving one member of the operational team. These committees are chaired by Harvey (Finance & Audit), Jacob (Governance) and Sandra (Government and Stakeholder Relations).

## Committees

### Governance:

Jacob Middlekamp (Chair) Earl Graham, Joe Bowhay, Randy Taylor (ex-officio) Paul Cabaj (Staff)

### Stakeholder Relations:

Sandra Thornton (Chair), Chris Ross, Alexandra Frison, Paul Cabaj/Jackie Sargent (Staff)

### Finance & Audit:

Harvey Hagman (Chair), Bart Willmore, Chris Ross, Cindy Dixon/Paul Cabaj (Staff)





## 2019 Staff Highlights

I was very encouraged by the willingness of many of our members to start down the path of collaborative Government Relations. Choosing the co-operative model is, in part, a political act, neither left nor right, but up. Co-operatives are formed to meet the needs of the members, and sometimes those needs are advanced on the policy and political front. By supporting each other GR goals, we demonstrate that the co-op sector in Alberta has broad and deep political clout, we will all better serve our members.

*Paul Cabaj, Executive Director*

2019 was a year of re-creation and redirection for ACCA. With the leadership of our Board of Directors and new executive director, my highlight was seeing our new team uniting while creating a new directional map for 2020 and beyond.

*Cindy Dixon, Director of Operations*

The Community Generation Project Incubator. Seeing such strong co-operative presence in an emerging and innovative sector is what this work is all about. Change is happening and it is being led by communities that have the gall and the grit to make it happen. It has been a ton of fun to see these projects coming together.

*Seth Leon, Manager, Co-operative Services*

There were several highlights for me throughout the transitional year of 2019. As usual, I had remarkable volunteer staff that went above & beyond to ensure the program ran smoothly, with several staffing at two different programs. There was a lot of personal reach out to sponsors and previous attendees and different social media marketing and we saw an increase in numbers! Another highlight for me was an increase use of the website & online registration!

*Liane Courchesne, Youth Program Co-ordinator*

When I joined ACCA in August, I hit the ground running coordinating the 2019 ACCA Gathering of Alberta Co-operatives and MLA Reception. Event planning is "my jam," so I had a great time pulling together all the pieces and helping ACCA host a great, successful event.

*Jackie Sargent, Manager, Communications and Strategic Partnerships*





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