The UW Center for Cooperatives team is proud to share our 2015 accomplishments with our valued partners and colleagues.

This year UWCC celebrated the official dedication of the new **University of Wisconsin Madison Federal Statistical Research Data Center**. UWCC Faculty Director Brent Hueth serves as the executive director of the data center, which is the **first and only** facility of its type in Wisconsin to provide access to federal confidential microdata. The data center will greatly expand UWCC’s capabilities to research cooperative business behavior, performance, and impacts and to better study the food and agricultural economy.

We held our **18th Annual Farmer Cooperatives Conference in Minneapolis** this November, hosting nearly 200 managers, board members, and service professionals. Cooperative leaders discussed pressing issues such as trends in cooperative mergers, big data technology, investment in rural infrastructure and sustainability in the supply chain.

UWCC was awarded **$498,000 in funding from USDA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative** for a four-year research and extension project on “Collective Action in Rural Communities: Mapping Opportunities for Cooperative Conversion and Start-up.” The project will develop and provide decision-making tools and research-based information to cooperative and economic developers, rural entrepreneurs, and policy makers.

In addition, UWCC received a **$200,000 Rural Cooperative Development Grant from the USDA**. Together with our grant partner, Cooperative Network, we will continue to provide technical assistance and counseling to rural cooperatives, groups forming new cooperatives, and businesses interested in converting to a cooperative structure in the Upper Midwest.

Early in 2015 we obtained a two-year **$143,000 grant from the CHS Foundation** to update the 2009 “Research on the Economic Impact of Cooperatives” which provided a description of the economic footprint of cooperatives in the U.S. These numbers have been used by academics, policy makers, economic development professionals, the media and the public, and have become the “official” descriptive national statistics on cooperatives.
UWCC provided leadership to a new cooperative development program initiated by the City of Madison and focused on job creation and reducing income inequality. **Madison plans to spend $600,000 annually for five years**, laying the groundwork for a truly innovative cooperative start-up ecosystem.

In partnership with the Cooperative Development Foundation and the ICA group, UWCC is implementing a **USDA-supported Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grant** to advance the expansion of existing worker-owned homecare cooperatives and the development of replication strategies. Facilitating the creation of new homecare cooperatives is in direct response to the rapidly growing demand for high quality homecare services by an aging population.

Throughout the year UWCC organized educational workshops for cooperative leaders: **Employee Ownership: A Business Retention Strategy** provided practical tools for succession planning and cooperative conversions. **Cooperative Board Leadership Roundtable** - a peer-to-peer board leadership program.

In 2015 **UWCC published several new reports and staff papers** that can be found on the UWCC website:

- "**A Learning and Training Tool for Understanding Worker Cooperative Finances**"
- "**Successful Cooperative Ownership Transitions**"
- "**Revolving Patron-Member Equity in Cooperatives**"
- "**Comparing Nonprofit and Cooperative Structures**"
- "**Stock v. Non-Stock Cooperatives in Wisconsin**"
- "**Report on the 2014 Annual Cooperative Business Survey**"

The **UWCC website** is a national resource for information on cooperatives. It is ranked second and fourth in Bing and Google searches for the term “cooperatives.” **The website received over 200,000 unique visits in 2015.**

UWCC benefits from the insights of an **Advisory Committee** composed of cooperative business leaders, public policy officials, and university scholars. Our programs build on the resources of **UW-Madison and the University of Wisconsin Extension**.

Read more on our **Cooperative Economy Blog**, subscribe to our **newsletter** or connect with us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**!