

MOBILE LEARNING SESSIONS

(Both Mobile Learning Sessions will run on Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00 – 5:00 PM)

TOUR A

Assiniboine Credit Union is Manitoba's largest credit union by membership, with more than 108,000 members, nearly 600 employees and 24 branches. It also provides access to financing to many social economy organizations in Winnipeg, including worker cooperatives, non-profit housing groups, and social service agencies. The credit union is a recent winner of the Leadership in Co-operative Governance Award honoring excellence in board governance. www.assiniboine.mb.ca



ACU's newest LEED Silver branch in Winnipeg

Last month the Manitoba government announced a landmark initiative to enable low-income households in Manitoba's 48 non-profit housing co-ops (housing more than 7,000 Manitobans in some 2,800 mixed-income units) to maintain affordable rents. Research from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada) indicates that 11.3 per cent of Manitoba households need core shelter. Helping is **Village Canadien Co-op Ltée (VCCL)** in south Winnipeg. Its original site consists of 150 townhouses, while a second site consists of 42 townhouses and an apartment block with 31 apartments. This summer VCCL has a Youth Co-op Services worker cooperative for

11 to 17-year-olds. The purpose of this project is to educate young people about the co-op business model, in addition to providing work experience and leadership opportunities. Quebec has used this program successfully for many years, but this is a new venture here. VCCL president Linda Ferguson is board member and treasurer of CHF Canada. www.chfcanada.coop

Mondragon Bookstore & Coffeehouse, a worker cooperative and "focal point of friendly anarchism in Winnipeg since 1996," serves up local, vegan, fair trade and organic food and offers radical books, magazines and music. It also recently opened within its space a vegan, organic grocery store. Mondragon is part of Winnipeg's **Old Market Autonomous Zone** which includes other economic participatory ventures including **Natural Cycle Courier and Bike Repair** (see photo). This year, Mondragon will be providing the book shop for ACE's Institute. www.mondragon.ca



TOUR B

Neechi Foods Co-op Ltd. is a worker cooperative based in Winnipeg that was created more than two decades ago. The cooperative, with more than \$600,000 sales annually, is a full service grocery that also sells bannock,

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a variety of other deli foods prepared in-house, local produce, jams, jellies, honey and meats. It also has a focus on Aboriginal-produced goods from other regions such as wild rice, wild blueberries, fish, moccasins, mukluks, mitts, gauntlets, and books and music by Aboriginal artists or about Aboriginal issues. In 1994 it developed a list of 11 CED principles that are used widely today to guide ethical, locally-based development. The co-op will soon open a community business complex under the name “Neechi Commons” which is expected to have 70 employees and annual sales of over \$5 million within two years. It will feature a neighborhood supermarket, a fruit and vegetable courtyard and farmers market, a cafeteria, specialty boutiques and an Aboriginal arts store. As a result of amendments to Manitoba’s Cooperatives Act

in June 2011, Neechi is now considering evolving into a multi-stakeholder co-op, with worker, consumer and supplier member categories. www.neechi.ca

Arctic Co-operatives Limited can trace its modern roots back to 1959. It now has 31 member co-ops across Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Business units now include retail stores, hotels, cable services petroleum operations and art. The federation, which is based in Winnipeg, has nearly \$135 million in annual revenue and its members, close to \$200 million. The Arctic Co-operative Development Fund, created in 1986, is a revolving-loan that has provided more than \$488 million in financing to cooperatives for their growth, and is a model for other cooperative development funds. www.arcticco-op.com



NorWest Co-op Community Health Centre has served northwest Winnipeg since 1972. It is a non-profit community based health care network providing a wide range of services. From settlement counseling for New Canadians to adolescent health, it delivers education and help through home care, on-site clinics, and at its satellite offices and main site, soon to be upgraded to a new facility called ACCESS NorWest. It has 400 co-op members, but serves more than 5000 people annually. In addition, its promotion of wellbeing benefits the larger community. NorWest is the only health care co-op in Manitoba. www.norwesthealth.ca