

COOPERATIVE DYNAMICS WORKSHOP SPEAKERS 2020



Margaret Bau, Cooperative Development Specialist, USDA

Margaret Bau has been a Cooperative Development Specialist with USDA Rural Development since 1998. She has assisted in the formation of over 30 cooperatives across her home state of Wisconsin in industries as diverse as long-term care, ownership conversions, distributing local foods into regional institutions, arts marketing and galleries, housing, disability services, forest products, and employment among people living with mental illness. Margaret now works for the USDA national office as a resource on cooperative development, but remains based in central Wisconsin.



Cynthia M. Currin, General Counsel, Wake Electric Membership Corporation

Cynthia M. Currin has forty (40) years of experience serving as Legal Counsel for Rural Electric Cooperatives. Since 2017, Ms. Currin has served as “In-House” General Counsel to Wake Electric Membership Corporation in Wake Forest, North Carolina and Central Electric Membership Corporation in Sanford, North Carolina. From 1980 to 2017, Ms. Currin practiced law with the Law Firm of Crisp, Page & Currin, LLP in Raleigh, North Carolina with a concentration in Rural Electric Cooperative Law. Ms. Currin has handled corporate and litigation matters for Cooperatives across the State of North Carolina for forty (40) years. She also served as Editor of two national Legal Publications for Electric Cooperatives from 1990 to 2017. Ms. Currin has spoken on “Governance” Issues at National Conferences for the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association, for the American Public Power Association and for the National Telephone Cooperative Association. She grew up on a farm in Northern Granville County, North Carolina. She lives in Raleigh with her husband, John F. Webb.



Jeff Hardin, Director of Cooperative Initiatives, CCUL

As director of cooperative initiatives for the Carolinas Credit Union League, Jeff works to build relationships and foster a strong sense of community among credit unions in the Carolinas, and to strengthen connections with other cooperatives throughout both states. Jeff works closely with the chapter system in NC and SC to provide them with the resources, support and networking they need to thrive. Jeff also leads the CUaware Protégé Mentor program, which connects credit union professionals with a mentor for a period of one year. Through a process that is collaboratively designed by the mentor and protégé, a plan and goals are developed, and a strategy for maintaining regular contact is created. A proud Credit Union Development Educator (CUDE), Jeff works with a volunteer network of CUDEs in both states to raise awareness of and appreciation for the history, principles, and philosophy of credit unions and cooperatives.

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Rich Larochelle, Founding Director, Fredericksburg Food Co-op

Rich Larochelle is a founding director of the Fredericksburg Food Co-op and is currently the co-op's Board Chair. He is an Adjunct Instructor at the University of Mary Washington (UMW) where he co-teaches a course on Cooperative Business. Rich worked for cooperatives for 40 years prior to moving to Fredericksburg in 2014 with his wife Linda who is an accomplished artist and retired art teacher. Rich was Senior Vice President at the Cooperative Finance Corporation until retiring from there at the end of 2013, and Legislative Director at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association where he worked for 12 years. He continues to serve as the Board Chair of the Cooperative Development Foundation, a national c (3) organization that supports the creation of cooperatives as a way of positively impacting economic and social problems. Rich was inducted into the Cooperative Hall of Fame in 2017.



Emma Norman, Director of Learning and Development, LGFCU

Emma Norman is the Director of Learning and Development, works at Local Government Federal Credit Union where she plans, directs and implements learning programs that enhance staff's knowledge and skills. A 20-year veteran in the training industry, Emma delivers dynamic platform training and facilitation. She has delivered hundreds of courses in areas including Human Resources, compliance, wellness, soft skills, technical, management and leadership. Having a clear understanding that learning never ends because we will never know it all, Emma is inherently a student as much as an instructor. She approaches each engagement by seeking what can be discovered from experiential learning.



Adam Schwartz, Founder & Principal, The Cooperative Way, In a strategic alliance with Columinate

Adam Schwartz is the founder and principal of The Cooperative Way, a consulting firm dedicated to assisting all types of cooperative businesses succeed. The Cooperative Way is a strategic partner with Columinate a shared services cooperative of 42 cooperative consultants. He provides strategic guidance (for employees, boards, and members) for organizations seeking to utilize cooperative principles and values as a primary force in serving their members and the community. He is an adjunct instructor at the University of Mary Washington- College of Business in Fredericksburg, Virginia teaching about the cooperative business model.