

Sample Co-op Month press release for fictitious "Smith City Farmers Co-op."

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Smith City Co-op Helps Build Stronger Rural Economy

Farmer-owned co-op observing National Cooperative Month in October

Sept. 29, 2016 – The Smith City Farmers Cooperative is joining with 30,000 other cooperatives nationwide in October to celebrate National Cooperative Month, which recognizes the many ways cooperatives help to build stronger communities and a stronger economy. “Cooperatives Build” is the theme for this year’s celebration, spotlighting the many advantages cooperatives offer to their members and the communities in which they live and work.

Nationwide, cooperatives create 2.1 million jobs and generate more than \$650 billion in sales and other revenue annually.

“Our cooperative has 450 farmer-members and operates four grain facilities and three supply stores in Smith, Jones and Johnson counties,” says Joe Jones, general manager of Smith City Farmers Cooperative. “We have 40 full-time and 15 part-time workers and generate nearly \$20 million in sales annually.”

Through the real estate, sales and payroll taxes it pays, the co-op is a major contributor to the tax base of local governments, helping to support schools, police and fire protection and other vital community infrastructure. It also donates to a number of local charitable and civic causes every year.

“We like to talk about ‘the cooperative difference,’ because co-ops offer so many advantages to their members,” says Sam Wilson, board president of the co-op and a third-

generation grain and beef cattle producer in Johnson County. “Our business is owned by its producer-members. Members control it through their democratically elected board of directors.”

Any profits from the business are returned to co-op members as year-end patronage or are reinvested in the business, not sent out of town to distant, outside investors, he adds.

Individual farmers lack much power in the marketplace and can be easily manipulated by the ever-more concentrated number of buyers. “But united in a co-op, the power of one is multiplied by the many,” says Jones. The co-op enables producers to tap into larger markets than they could on their own, and to bargain for better prices.

“For the farm supply side of our operation, it means the co-op is a dependable source for the types of quality products and services our members need most – and we offer them at a fair price,” says Wilson.

The general public is welcome to shop at any of the co-op’s three stores, which carry a wide variety of home and garden products, hardware, pet food, horse feed and other products. “And our staff has the kind of expertise you won’t find at a big-box store,” Jones notes.

The co-op will be holding an open house at its Smithville and Jonesville facilities on Friday Oct. 14 and Saturday Oct. 15. There will be tours of the facility and demonstrations of some of the latest satellite-controlled farm equipment, which offer environmental benefits, such as reducing the chances for over-application of fertilizers. Free refreshments will be served, and there will be a raffle, with 1st prize being a \$200 gift certificate.
