



## LETTER FROM THE BOARD



### What Difference Does WSM Make in Our Community?

*From the Weaver Street Market Board of Directors*

This annual report showcases some of WSM's many accomplishments this year and our exciting plans for the future. These accomplishments and plans are driven by a Board policy called the Ends statement, which states WSM's desired impact. WSM's current overarching Ends statement is a "vibrant sustainable commercial center." This has been our Ends for 15 years and has guided us to where we are today.

The Board has been considering updating the Ends to reflect our progress and our expanded aspirations for the future. A number of themes emerged as the Board discussed updating the Ends:

- WSM transforms the food system not only by selling food but by influencing the larger food system from grower to producer to consumer.
- WSM builds community wealth through shared economics, shared community, and shared knowledge.
- WSM is a shining example of a thriving, community-owned business focused on the community good.
- WSM serves current owners as well as potential owners, including an expanding community in the Triangle who want the kind of experience that WSM has brought to downtown Carrboro, Hillsborough, and Southern Village.
- There is renewed interest in the cooperative business model as a way to accomplish community good.

The Board's discussions culminated in a new working draft of the Ends that conveys what WSM is committed to accomplish:

## Weaver Street Market Cooperative:

A vibrant, sustainable food marketplace defined by shared economics, shared community and shared knowledge for owners and potential owners.

### How the updated Ends would translate operationally

The diagram below provides a sense of how the updated Ends would be translated operationally and how results would be measured. This is from the General Manager, whose job it is to develop a plan and budget to accomplish the Ends.

### Draft updated Ends with updated operational definitions and scorecard

ENDS	INTERPRETATION/STRATEGY	SCORECARD of ENDS						
A sustainable, cooperative food marketplace	WSM produces, retails, and distributes food to: 1) Make healthy eating accessible, tasty, and fun; 2) Drive the growth of local and sustainable foods; 3) Invigorate downtowns; and 4) Use net zero energy, create zero waste, and promote responsible packaging.	<div>1. Healthy Eating</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSM healthy foods sales</li> <li>WSM prices are accessible</li> <li>Expanded low-income access to healthy food</li> </ul> <div>2. Local</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WSM local and organic food sales</li> <li>NC local and organic food sales</li> </ul> <div>3. Downtowns</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of downtowns with a co-op store</li> <li>Average weekly co-op customers downtown</li> <li>WSM local economic impact</li> </ul> <div>4. Net Zero</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net energy use</li> <li>Waste to landfill</li> <li>% of packaging that can be recycled or reused</li> </ul>						
based on shared economics, shared community, and shared knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a close connection between the success of the co-op and its workers and shoppers.</li> <li>WSM is a vibrant community hub for enjoyable work and shopping experiences, fun events, and connecting with the greater community.</li> <li>Co-ops are recognized as the preferred business model, WSM's plan is understood, and there is ongoing input that improves the plan.</li> </ul>	<div>Shared Economics</div> <table> <tr> <th>WSM success</th><th>Worker success</th><th>Consumer success</th></tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales growth</li> <li>Efficiency (SPLH)</li> <li>Profits</li> </ul> </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better pay/benefits</li> <li>Worker dividend</li> <li>Advancement</li> </ul> </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great quality</li> <li>Great Service</li> <li>Exciting owner specials and coupons</li> </ul> </td></tr> </table> <div>Shared Community</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer hours</li> <li>Event participation (incl. farm tour)</li> </ul> <div>Shared Knowledge</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Credit union membership</li> <li>Participation in "Co-op Plan" event</li> </ul>	WSM success	Worker success	Consumer success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales growth</li> <li>Efficiency (SPLH)</li> <li>Profits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better pay/benefits</li> <li>Worker dividend</li> <li>Advancement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great quality</li> <li>Great Service</li> <li>Exciting owner specials and coupons</li> </ul>
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for owners and potential owners.	WSM serves current owners as well as an expanding community in the Triangle who values a neighborhood WSM store to shop and work and transform their community.	<div>Owners and potential owners</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of owners</li> <li>Average weekly customers</li> <li>Number of stores</li> </ul>						

### Owners, what do you think?

The Board wants to know what you think about the draft Ends and about management's draft operational definitions and scorecard indicators. There are two ways to provide feedback:

- Take our online survey. (The survey period has ended on October 7, 2015). We thank you for your valuable feedback.

- Talk to us in person at the Co-op Fair.

### Other new Board policies

Updating the Ends is the final piece of an update to the entire set of Board policies. The other sections are a) Board Process Policies (how the Board organizes itself to do its work); b) Management Limitations (how the Board controls the means used by management); and c) Board-Management Relations (how the Board delegates and holds management accountable). The Board plans to put the updated policies in effect in November after it gets feedback from owners about the Ends policy and feedback from staff on corresponding changes to the employee policy manual. The updated policies can be viewed here: <http://www.weaverstreetmarket.coop/pdf/Board-Policies-Updated-for-AnnualReport2015.pdf>

*The Weaver Street Market Board of Directors is Curt Brinkmeyer (worker owner), Lisa Best (consumer owner), Dave Bright, Linda Stier, Jon MacDonald (worker owner), Barbara Keith (consumer owner), and Ruffin Slater.*



## GOAL 1

*Make healthy eating accessible, tasty, and fun:  
We will work with our owners and customers  
to promote practical and effortless solutions  
that will improve the way our community eats.*

### Connecting neighbors in need with healthy food

In addition to selling healthful food, Weaver Street Market provides healthy food to neighbors in need through our Community Food Partnerships.

In the first half of 2015, shoppers donated an astonishing \$65,000, which WSM leveraged into \$130,000 of healthy food donations by using our buying power and supplier connections. We partnered with TABLE to provide 2,800 food backpacks to children in their summer program and with PORCH to provide 1,000 boxes of produce to refugee families. This fall we will partner with Orange Congregations in Mission (OCIM) and Interfaith Council for Social Services (IFC) to provide fresh fruit for their food banks.

By raising funds and providing logistical support to source, package, and transport, WSM frees up these organizations to serve more clients. By focusing on fresh food and produce, we extend the benefits of healthy food to those who could not otherwise afford it. To learn more about our Community Food Partnerships, read our feature story.

### Encouraging kids to eat more fruit

This fall, our produce staff will be encouraging children to try a variety of fruits by offering free fruit. We will experiment with providing kids with fruit in three ways:

1. See a kid, give 'm fruit

Our produce staff will engage customers with children and offer them a free piece of fruit of their choice.

2. Sample the "fruit of the day"

We will sample the fruit of the day, chosen from the ripest and most delicious seasonal offerings.

3. Free fruit station

We will keep a selection of washed and ready fruit available for customers with children in our "Free Fruit Station" with an



explanation of the free fruit program.

### **Keeping organic and natural foods affordable**

WSM is focused on keeping healthy food affordable. We don't have the buying power of big grocery chains, so we need to find other ways to keep food costs affordable.

Pricey brand-name organic groceries can be out of reach for low-income and fixed-income families. To make organic products more accessible to all our shoppers, our stores will soon carry a large selection of Field Day organic groceries. These products are priced 25% to 50% lower than their brand-name counterparts.

We currently leverage the Food House facility to buy directly from a few producers and distribute to our stores ourselves. By being our own wholesaler, we can cut 10-20% off the price and gain access to small regional producers who are ignored by the big wholesalers. We are looking into getting more warehouse space and logistics software, so that we can buy more products direct.

We make about 25% of our food ourselves in our Food House, which enables us to provide tasty food at affordable prices. You are invited to come see our Food House in action during the Co-op Fair on September 20.

## GOAL 2

*Drive the growth of local and sustainable foods: We will develop new suppliers, produce more local food ourselves, and provide co-op owners with tools to track their purchasing patterns. We will mobilize community resources to achieve ambitious goals for local and sustainable food sales.*



### Food House drives the growth of local food

WSM's Food House is the cornerstone of our strategy to sell more locally-produced food. The Food House provides co-op shoppers with a growing product line of locally-produced baked goods, deli items, and meats. The Food House produces 25% of the products that we sell and also supplies three nearby co-ops and other small businesses. The Food House is the largest artisan bakery, kitchen, and butcher shop of any co-op in the country.

Work at the Food House starts at midnight when bakers turn on the ovens and start baking the breads and pastries that arrive in our stores before opening. Food production continues throughout the day as foods are prepared, packaged, and delivered each afternoon. Having a dedicated facility means that we can have the freshest possible foods that are made with care using the best quality ingredients.



In addition to producing food, the Food House is the hub of our distribution network. It consolidates food delivered from local and regional producers and delivers it to our stores. This leverages the trucks that are already running to the stores, saves farmers time by making fewer deliveries, and enables us to receive produce in the stores in the afternoon that was picked that morning.

### WSM helps develop new local suppliers

As we expand our selection of locally produced foods, we're able to encourage new and aspiring artisans. We can provide not only a space to sell their wares but also advice on packaging, branding, and pricing. For example, our Marketing staff reviewed the original label on Ran-Lew Dairy's milk, which showed a cow looking out of a window in the barn. The cow was cute, but when the photo was reduced to fit on the milk jug, the window wasn't recognizable. We sent Ran-Lew Dairy feedback that resulted in a label showing Ran-Lew cows grazing on their pasture.

We helped launch two new local suppliers last year. Seal the Seasons is a company that freezes North Carolina produce for year-round sale. We helped them understand the retail market and helped with sales projections and pricing. We worked with JP's Pastries in Raleigh to meet our need for gluten-free pastries, which cannot be made in our own flour-filled bakery. We helped with their business plan to move from farmers' market sales to wholesale sales.



### Bringing back North Carolina flour

This year, our bread bakers began using flour from Carolina Ground, a mill in Asheville that sources all its grain from southern farms. The motivation for the mill originated with the extreme inflation of flour prices in 2008, not due to weather conditions or a bad harvest but because of manipulation by Wall Street. Baker Jennifer Lapidus founded the mill in 2012 after years working with the North Carolina Organic Bread Flour Project, an initiative of the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, that sought to locate local wheat growers and reconnect them with millers and bakers.



Jennifer and miller Kim Thompson mill up to 1000 pounds of local, organic grain each day. They use an Austrian-made mill, adjusting the stone grinders and monitoring the process manually. Our bakers now use Carolina Ground rye flour in the miche and deli rye breads. They are creating a new bread to showcase Carolina Ground's whole wheat. In addition, Carolina Ground whole wheat flour is available to customers in our bulk bins.



### GOAL 3

*Invigorate downtowns: We will make WSM stores even more vibrant and fun, and attract more people downtown. We will open new downtown stores at a similar pace to the three units we opened last decade.*

#### **New patio at Hillsborough store**

Visit our Hillsborough store and enjoy the new brick patio out front, which makes the outdoor space more usable and attractive. The improved space provides the opportunity for outdoor dining and more events. The next step is to plant an additional shade tree, install outdoor planters, and add more outdoor furniture.



Underneath the patio is a water catchment system that stores rainwater to use for irrigation for the landscape and to provide water for our outdoor plant sales.

#### **Outdoor improvements coming to Southern Village store**

The wide sidewalks in front of Weaver Street Market in Southern Village are a great asset and with a few adjustments can be transformed into a vibrant outdoor space. Working with Southern Village, we

have developed a plan that will be considered by the Chapel Hill Town Council at a public hearing on November 16. The proposed improvements have three parts:

1. Create an outdoor seating area along the street edge for dining and gathering. This involves removing two of the angled parking spaces, extending the brick sidewalk, and planting an additional tree for shade cover.
2. Extend the raised portion of the sidewalk around the corner and cover it with a permanent canopy. This will take advantage of the morning sun and extend outdoor activity to a second street.
3. Enclose a portion of the sidewalk along the front the building. This will





be used to showcase produce and create a farmers market feel with windows facing the street and patio.

Together, these improvements can create a smaller version of what we have in Carrboro: an active outdoor space that is used throughout the day and provides a center for the community. The great thing is that the space is already there—it just needs a few adjustments to make it more useful!

### Expanding our impact with more downtown stores by 2020

Our most recent store in Hillsborough has transformed that downtown into a vibrant shopping and gathering place. It has increased Weaver Street's local and healthy food impact by 50%, brought 10,000 shoppers downtown each week, and helped downtown Hillsborough receive state-wide recognition.

The Hillsborough store's impact demonstrates the difference that having a new WSM store in the center of a community can make. Each year, our existing stores create an incremental community impact, but our impact leaps forward with the addition of a new store.

In addition to expanding our community impact, additional stores benefit current owners and shoppers. They provide volume of sale, which lowers costs, provides better value, and helps us withstand competition from large chains.



WSM wants to open three additional stores in the next six years. This is a familiar pace as we opened the Southern Village and Hillsborough stores and the Food House over a six-year period. We haven't opened any new stores in the last few years, but we have put that time to good use improving our infrastructure and systems and assisting new downtown co-ops in Burlington, Greensboro, and Durham, including supplying them with food from our Food House.

This fall we will be talking to community leaders who are interested in having a WSM store in their downtown. Our process for new stores involves a deep partnership with the new community, including joint planning and sharing of costs. This process ensures the best possible store that is designed around meeting community needs.

## GOAL 4

*Use net zero energy, create zero waste, and promote responsible packaging: We will dramatically reduce energy use and install commercial solar, take responsibility that all of our packaging can be reused or recycled, and keep our waste out of the landfill.*

### **The path to net zero electrical use: Carrboro store saves 50% on electricity following remodel**

Reducing electrical use is the first step in getting to net-zero energy. Electrical use in the Carrboro store is down 50% following the remodel and is now as low as Southern Village which is half the size. Electrical savings came from more efficient equipment, LED lighting, and putting doors on refrigerated cases. Even more savings will come when we install a new dehumidification and HVAC system. Based on the success in Carrboro, we are ready to start implementing similar energy savings strategies in the other stores in the coming year.



### **Rooftop solar can generate part of our electricity needs**

Rooftop solar can meet one-third of our post-conservation electrical needs in Carrboro. Now is a good time to install solar because state tax credits expire this year and federal tax credits expire next year. Our improved financial position makes it feasible to consider investing in solar. We need to first extend our leases or purchase our locations, so that we can take

advantage of the 30-year lifespan of solar panels.

### **NC GreenPower can close the remaining gap**

NC GreenPower can supply the remaining two-thirds of our post-conservation electrical needs. NC GreenPower is a nonprofit program that uses voluntary contributions to subsidize small renewable energy projects in North Carolina. For the last 10 years, WSM has been contributing \$312/month to NC Green Power. We would need to quadruple this contribution along with installing solar to achieve net-zero electrical use in Carrboro.



## SHARED ECONOMICS

**Shared economics** means that there is a close connection between the well-being of the co-op and its workers and shoppers. When one benefits, the other benefits; each supplies what the other needs, and the two act like a unit with respect to the broader market.

### Employee wages and benefits improve as productivity increases

One of the most important dimensions of shared economics is the relationship between WSM's success and the success of our employees.

Over the past three years, sales increases and the corresponding increase in productivity have enabled WSM to increase hourly (non-manager) wages by an average of 7% per year. This puts us on track to exceed \$15/hour next year for this hourly average. In addition, WSM increased benefits by an average of \$1.00 per hour over the last year with improvements to dental, vision, wellness, and retirement. 401k participation went from 38% to 80%.



For the past four years, the board has been allocating 50% of profits to the worker owners. This translates to a patronage dividend this year of 78 cents per hour or \$1,600 for a full-time worker owner.

### WSM saves big by refinancing loan with co-op bank



Weaver Street will save \$200,000 annually after refinancing our loan with NCB, the national co-op bank. The interest rate dropped from 6.5% to 3.75%. We repaid \$400,000 in principal, and \$1.6 million was forgiven as a result of the unwind of our New Market Tax Credit package. WSM received the tax credit for creating jobs when we expanded to Hillsborough.

WSM moved our main bank accounts to NCB in order to bank with a co-op. NCB's customers are cooperatives such as grocery wholesaler co-ops, purchasing co-ops, or housing co-ops. We now have co-op stock in NCB and will receive a patronage dividend on the interest that we pay.

### Weaver Street expands co-op to co-op trade

Another dimension of shared economics is developing direct relationships with producer co-ops. WSM has long-term relationships with many producer co-ops including Organic Valley, Equal Exchange, Once Again Nut Butters, and Frontier Cooperative Herbs. All together **we purchased over \$1 million from co-ops this year** and added two new suppliers:

**PRAGOR** is a progressive group of small-scale avocado farmers in Michoacán, Mexico. This region of Mexico is considered the avocado capital of the world. However, powerful corporate interests have made it difficult for small-scale farmers to compete. In response, PRAGOR courageously organized and decided they would collectively control the entire process from growing to exporting. **WSM purchased over \$100,000 of avocados last year from PRAGOR under the Equal Exchange Brand.**



**LA RIOJANA** is a co-op of small grape growers in Riojana, Argentina. La Riojana is a co-op in northwest Argentina whose members farm an average of six acres. It's in a poor part of the country and the co-op has greatly improved living conditions by **developing a water system, a secondary school, and a hospital among other projects.** The co-op is also working on creating sustainable villages with solar power and organic farms. Although La Riojana sells a lot of wine in Europe, it hasn't been able to break into the US market in a significant way, so Weaver Street is connecting La Riojana with co-ops across the US. Learn more about La Riojana below.



## SHARED COMMUNITY

**Shared Community** means Weaver Street Market is a vibrant community hub for enjoyable work and shopping experiences, fun events, and connecting with the greater community. Two initiatives in this area continue to evolve and grow—WSM’s Cooperative Community Fund and our Food House Garden—and we have exciting plans for launching a Weaver Card, which will have a significant impact on our community outreach programs.

### Cooperative Community Fund awards grants to TABLE and PORCH

Weaver Street Market’s Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) will award \$3,020 in grants to two local nonprofit groups for their projects that address Access to Healthy Food. The CCF Committee, which is composed of consumer and worker owners, selected the two recipients for innovation, collaboration, and the benefits of the project to the community:



**\$2,000 for PORCH’s proposed nutritional education project—PORCH Eats Fresh.** The one-year pilot project will provide education on healthy eating and lessons for developing cooking skills for the families who participate in PORCH’s Food for Families program. Many of the participating families are not fully benefiting from the fresh food that they receive because they are unsure of how to prepare it. PORCH Eats Fresh will provide families with healthy recipes for the food included in their monthly delivery and will hold cooking demonstrations at the food pickup sites. The grant will purchase basic spices and herbs used in the recipes and pay for printing the recipes and assembling them into binders for easy use in the kitchen. A team of nutrition professionals will collaborate on the project to ensure that the recipes are appropriate for the families’ food preferences, which vary widely based on their cultural group.



### **\$1,020 for TABLE’s proposed field trip project—TABLE On the Go.**

The field trips will be designed so that children served by TABLE’s programs have the opportunity to visit farms where local food is grown and to participate in educational classes offered on the farms. The grant will be used to fund two pilot field trips to Maple View Farms in Hillsborough. The field trips will start with a healthy picnic lunch presented by TABLE’s SnackChef volunteers, who will demonstrate how to prepare the food and then send home the recipes and ingredients for the kids to prepare the food at home. The





field trip will include several of Maple View's activities for children, such as visiting (and petting!) some of the animals who live on the farm and a fun hayride all across the farm. The kids will take two farm classes about how their food grows—an "All about the Dairy" class, which is especially significant since Maple View Farms donates fresh milk to these children through TABLE's Weekend Backpack program, and an "All about Autumn" class, through which the children will learn about life cycle of apples and pumpkins and how they grow.

### Employees cultivate a community garden at the Food House



Weaver Street Market employees at the Food House have cultivated a beautiful garden that features a variety of fruits (blueberries, blackberries, apples, persimmons, kiwis), vegetables (tomatoes, beans, squash, peppers), herbs (rosemary, oregano, thyme, basil, mint), as well as native plants and insects that build a healthy eco-system. The garden is tended by

employee volunteers, who share the bounty from the garden. Employees from our stores have been so captivated by the gardens on their visits that some now return to volunteer in the gardens as well. The garden also provides a relaxing space for employee lunches.



### New Weaver Card to keep money local and benefit community programs

Each year the co-op pays more than half a million dollars in credit and debit cards fees—that's as much as an entire year's profit! To reduce these fees, Weaver Street Market has promoted gift cards as a no-fee alternative to bank cards. At last year's annual meeting, owners made a number of the suggestions for making gift cards easier to use and recharge.

This fall when our point of sale system is updated, we hope to implement a Weaver Card program that offers a no-fee alternative. Here's how we think the program will work:

- Offer a Weaver Card—a gift card that we manage and that can be recharged online
- Donate the first year's savings in bank fees to community programs that promote access to healthy food, including the Cooperative Community Fund and Community Food Partnerships
- Provide a \$10 Weaver Card as a benefit for new owners and provide easy-steps for using the card and information on why using the card matters to the co-op
- Promote the benefits of using the Weaver Card at the registers and on our website blog



## SHARED KNOWLEDGE

**Shared Knowledge** is key to our cooperative difference. It means consumers and workers understand Weaver Street Market's vision and the plans for achieving it and provide ongoing input that improves the plan. It also means cooperatives are recognized as the preferred business model. This year we made progress with three initiatives: a new internal communication system called Slack, interactive governance sessions with the Board, and Co-op Plan events in which workers from all business units provided feedback on the 2016 Co-op Plan.

### Slack brings real-time messaging to WSM units

Last winter our staff began using an online communication tool called Slack. We created various "channels" for groups that need to communicate (e.g., the marketing department, the Carrboro store staff, the produce departments in all stores) and user accounts for individuals and departments. Staff can post questions and information for an entire group or tag an individual. Although direct messaging to individuals and private groups are possible, the underlying premise is that shared "public" information creates a more efficient workplace. The interface is easy to use and similar to popular social media sites. The technology caught on quickly.



Having staff post on channels (instead of in group emails) ensures that everyone who needs information has access to it. For example, a conversation about the arrival of local strawberries on the produce channel informs the marketing department that the berries have arrived and can be advertised. A last-minute sale item can be posted and tagged to alert not only the store staff but also the drivers who'll need to deliver the goods. Slack also makes responses more timely, because different staff members can reply depending on who's working that day. Staff can keep track of happenings in other stores or chime in with thoughts for other departments.

Slack has been a godsend for inter-store and inter-department communication, and it provides an unexpected benefit of real-time problem solving. For example, one store may be selling more of a product featured for the WOW Weekend Deal. Using Slack, they can quickly find out if other stores can spare some of their product or if there is extra stored at the Food House.

### Interactive governance sessions provide owners with an inside look

This summer the Board of Directors held an interactive governance session for owners. The session was an opportunity for owners to get an inside look at the work of the Board and the governance system that guides its work. The session was an orientation for consumer owners and worker owners interested



in serving on the Board. It used an experiential format that framed the activities of a regular Board meeting within a broader discussion of ongoing Board priorities.

Owners were shown how the work of the Board is organized into four areas:

- Connecting with ownership to keep Weaver Street Market RELEVANT
- Envisioning an alternative future and defining RESULTS
- Accepting responsibility and delegating it responsibly to control MEANS
- Working as a group and effectively managing RELATIONSHIPS

Owners viewed firsthand how Board policies and the governance system come into play as the Board routinely monitors “relevance, means, results, and relationships” and how the Board draws upon them to make strategic decisions as the co-op plans for a sustainable future. For each segment of the Board meeting, attendees followed along as documents and reports were discussed. After observing the work in progress, owners participated in a Q&A session about what they had observed and what it meant for the larger context.

The session was so well received by the participants that the Board intends to offer the governance sessions regularly in the coming year.



### Workers provided feedback through Co-op Plan events

This summer 200 WSM workers attended interactive Co-op Plan events that featured poster stations about projects and initiatives planned for 2016. The event was organized around the 2020 Goals and WSM’s Co-op Difference. The stations provided an opportunity for workers to visit with the individuals involved with the projects and also an opportunity to provide feedback on the projects and share ideas for new initiatives. Several hundred sticky notes with feedback were collected. Some of the most popular stations were



- WSM's Role Facilitating New Local Products
- A New Co-op to Co-op Partnership with La Rioja Vineyards
- Sampling Our Made-to-Order WSM Sandwiches
- WSM's Award-Winning Bread and Pies
- Store Renovations and Plans for New Stores
- The Weaver Card and the Co-op Bank



Consumer owners will have a similar opportunity to learn about these projects and provide feedback at the Co-op Fair. (The Co-op Fair has passed.)



## CO-OPS IN OUR COMMUNITY

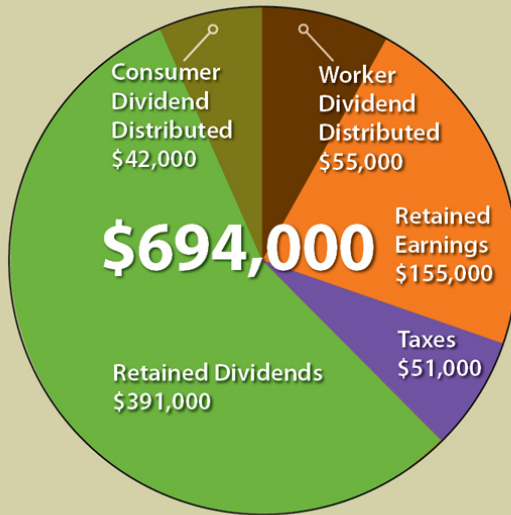
### Co-ops in Our Community



Food co-ops are not the only co-ops. There are healthcare co-ops, co-ops for services like electricity and Internet, and housing co-ops. Credit unions are co-op banks. Even the Associated Press is a co-op! What these businesses all have in common is serving the needs of their owners. Co-ops have existed for over a hundred years and have over 120 million members in the United States. Here are some in our community.

## CO-OP PROFITS

### Co-op Profits Stay within the Community



**Consumer Patronage Dividend Distributed.** WSM distributes a percentage of profits based on how much a consumer owner spends in a year.

**Worker Patronage Dividend Distributed.** WSM distributes a percentage of profits based on how many hours a worker owner works in a year.

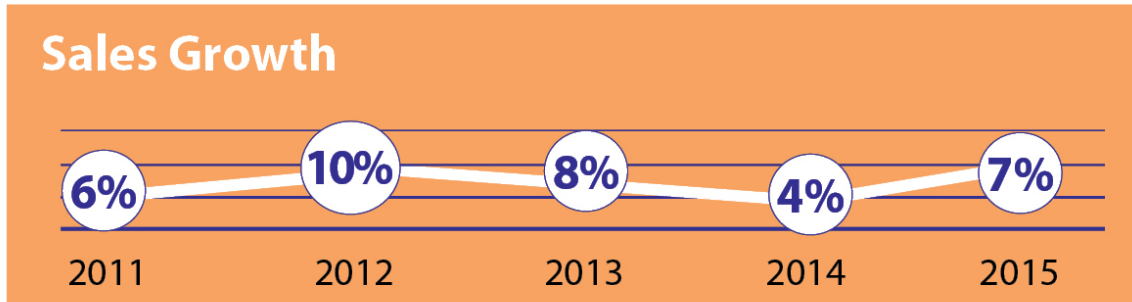
**Retained Dividends** help WSM save for the future and build equity. The Board decided to retain 80% of both the consumer and worker dividend in 2015 to save for future needs and to build co-op equity.

**Retained Earnings** is the profit generated from non-owner business. It is not eligible for the patronage dividend.

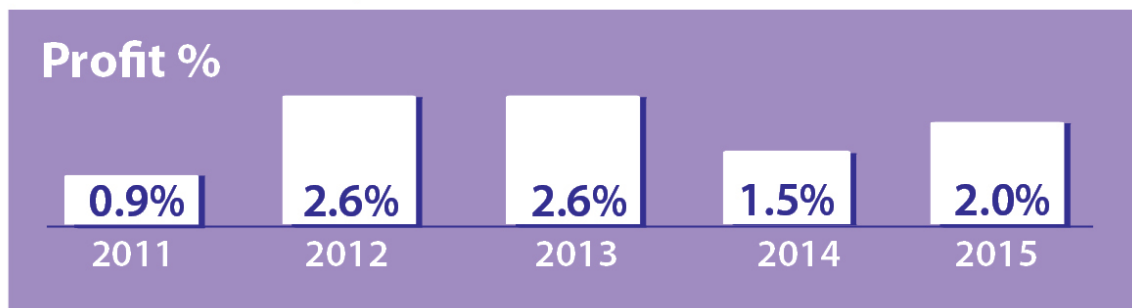
**Income Tax.** WSM pays Income Tax on Retained Earnings but not on Patronage Dividends. Increasing sales to owners reduces taxes and helps keep more money in the local economy.

## FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

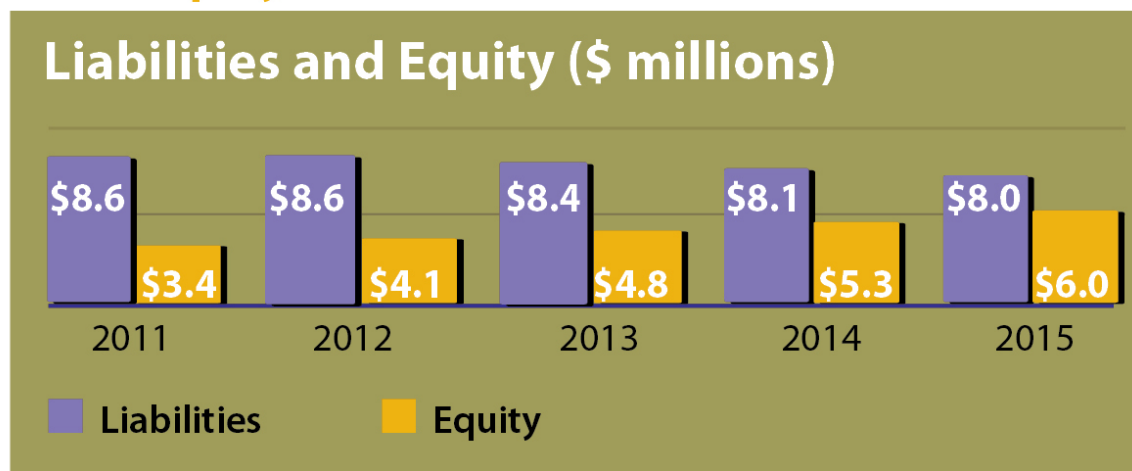
### Sales growth continues:



### Profits are steady:



### WSM is saving more of our profits, which builds equity and reduces debt:



## WSM 2015 Financial Statements

Income Statement	2015*	2014	2013
Sales	35,340,115	33,515,592	32,183,694
Cost of Goods/Occupancy	22,301,776	21,296,785	20,275,727
Gross Profit	13,038,339	12,218,807	11,907,967
Labor Expense	7,924,936	7,395,753	7,001,471
Operating Expense	3,064,395	3,100,233	2,919,683
Depreciation/Interest	1,363,031	1,210,799	1,149,639
Pretax Income	694,377	512,022	837,174
<i>Pretax Income as % of Sales</i>	2.0%	1.5%	2.6%
Provision for Income Tax (benefit)	31,556	(54,860)	(19,570)
Net Income	662,821	566,882	856,744
<i>Net Income as % of Sales</i>	1.9%	1.7%	2.7%
Balance Sheet	2015*	2014	2013
<b>Assets</b>			
Current Assets	4,232,986	3,759,813	3,983,728
Property/Plant/Equip	9,109,496	9,300,626	8,944,343
Other Assets	600,830	616,820	503,860
Total Assets	13,943,312	13,677,259	13,431,931
<b>Liabilities</b>			
Current Liabilities	2,510,842	2,589,799	2,733,387
Long-Term Liabilities	5,459,112	5,805,495	5,969,708
Total Liabilities	7,969,954	8,395,294	8,703,095
<b>Equity</b>	5,973,358	5,281,965	4,728,836
Total Liabilities & Equity	13,943,312	13,677,259	13,431,931

\* 2015 numbers are preliminary and pre-audit

## DIVIDEND

### Patronage dividend coming in October

WSM's Board of Directors declared the co-op's fifth patronage dividend for consumer and worker owners. Though the return is modest, 7,917 consumer owners who spent at least \$492.60 during the past fiscal year will receive a dividend with a percentage-off shopping coupon around October 15th.

Your dividend distribution will appear as a store credit on your owner share. You can redeem it at any store. You also have the option of donating all or part of your dividend distribution to the Cooperative Community Fund.

Another 7,804 owners who made purchases during the fiscal year but did not qualify for a dividend distribution will receive an email with a percentage-off shopping coupon.

### Patronage Dividend FAQs

#### About Patronage Dividends:

- What are patronage dividends?

Patronage dividends are used by most co-ops to distribute profit to co-op owners. Patronage dividends are in keeping with the third Cooperative Principle, which states that owners benefit in proportion to how much they use the service of the cooperative.

- What are the goals of the patronage dividend?

The Board established five goals for patronage dividends:

1. Ensure that WSM has adequate capital to meet current and future needs.
2. Keep profits in the local community.
3. Return any profits beyond the co-op's current needs to our owners.
4. Build savings for worker owners.
5. Build the Cooperative Community Fund by offering the option to donate the cash portion of your dividend.

- What are the advantages of patronage dividends?

**OWNER purchases, LOCAL impact**

**REDEEMING YOUR PATRONAGE DIVIDEND IS EASY:**

1. **APPLY** your dividend toward your next purchase. Your dividend appears as a store credit at the cash register. You can redeem it at any store **until January 31**.
- OR
2. **DONATE** your dividend to the Cooperative Community Fund. Tell the cashier or email [brenda.c@weaverstreetmarket.coop](mailto:brenda.c@weaverstreetmarket.coop).

Please redeem your dividend by January 31, 2016. Otherwise your dividend is donated to the Cooperative Community Fund.

**Co-op Owner #**

**Your purchases (July '14 - June '15)**  
By shopping at your local co-op, you support healthful food, vibrant downtowns, and a sustainable environment.

**Your Local Purchases**  
Your local purchases drive the growth of a local, sustainable food system.

**Your Dividend Retained by the Co-op**  
The WSM Board decided to retain 80% of your dividend to strengthen our financial position.

**Your Dividend**  
A modest amount, since most of it stays invested in the co-op. Below is a coupon to show additional appreciation for your patronage.

**Your retained dividend helps build a stronger co-op.**  
Since 2009, \$2.2 million in retained dividends have greatly improved WSM's financial position, including:

- Repaying \$4 million in loans
- Doubling our equity to \$6.0 million
- Paying for the Carrboro remodel out of cash flow with no new debt

See complete financial results at [annualreport.weaverstreetmarket.coop](http://annualreport.weaverstreetmarket.coop).

**WE OWN IT! OWNER APPRECIATION COUPON**

Shop any day thru November 10, 2015 and save up to 15% on your purchase.

**SAVE 5%** on purchases over \$50  
**SAVE 10%** on purchases over \$100  
**SAVE 15%** on purchases over \$150

**PLU 8000**

**WEAVER STREET MARKET**

**Email** **Owner #**

\* Excludes beer and wine due to ABC rules, so beer and wine purchases do not count toward your purchase total.  
\* One coupon per household. Coupon must be presented to receive discount.



There are three main advantages for the co-op:

1. Patronage dividends are a fiscally responsible way to manage the co-op's profits—patronage dividends are disbursed at the end of the year only after the co-op knows it made a profit.
2. Patronage dividends enable the co-op to prioritize saving for the future by funding capital improvements out of co-op profits instead of relying on outside debt.
3. Patronage dividends allow a portion of profits to be reinvested in the co-op tax-free. This is a significant tax advantage because the co-op doesn't pay tax on profit allocated to patronage dividends.

- What is patronage and how is it measured?

For consumer owners, patronage is measured by the amount of purchases made during the year. For worker owners, patronage is measured by the number of hours worked during the year. These are standard measures for consumer and worker co-ops.

- Are patronage dividends new for WSM?

Fiscal year 2015 is the fifth consecutive year that WSM is distributing a patronage dividend to both consumer owners and worker owners.

#### **About This Year's Patronage Dividends:**

- How much profit did WSM make this year?

WSM made \$694,000 profit for the year ending in June 2015, or approximately 2.0% of sales.

- How much is this year's dividend?

The Board decided to distribute 20% of profits from owner patronage back to owners, and to retain and reinvest 80%.

- Why is 80% of the dividend being retained and reinvested?

Retained dividends help WSM save for the future and build equity. The Board decided to retain 80% of both the consumer and worker dividend for future needs and to build co-op equity.

- How is profit split between consumer and worker owners?

Profits are split evenly between consumer and worker owner. WSM distributes a percentage of profits to worker owners based on how many hours a worker owner works in a year and to consumer owners based on how much a consumer owner spends in a year.

- What happens with dividends that are not redeemed?

#### **Your retained dividend helps build a stronger co-op.**

Since 2009, \$2.2 million in retained dividends have greatly improved WSM's financial position, including:

- **Repaying \$4 million in loans**
- **Doubling our equity to \$6.0 million**
- **Paying for the Carrboro remodel out of cash flow with no new debt**

See complete financial results at [annualreport.weaverstreetmarket.coop](http://annualreport.weaverstreetmarket.coop).

Dividends that are not redeemed by January 31, 2016 are donated to the Cooperative Community Fund.

#### **About the Consumer Owner Distribution:**

- How and when will the dividend distribution take place?

Dividend announcements will be mailed to owners around October 15. Your dividend distribution will appear as a store credit on your owner share on October 15. You can apply your dividend toward your next purchase or you can donate all or part of the amount to the Cooperative Community Fund.

- What is the largest and smallest dividend?

The largest dividend disbursement will be \$40.94, and the smallest dividend voucher will be \$1. Owner households need to have spent a minimum of \$492.60 for the fiscal year to receive the minimum dividend.

- What is the return on my investment as a consumer owner?

The average dividend of \$5.32 is based on spending \$53 per week at the co-op. This represents about a 5.3% return on an average share investment of \$100.

- What happens to the retained portion of my dividend?

The retained 80% will be reinvested for the long-term financial sustainability of the co-op. This reinvested portion is your contribution to building the financial future of your co-op.

#### **About the Worker Owner Distribution:**

- What are worker owners?

Worker owners are employees of the co-op who have elected to purchase a \$500 ownership share. Like consumer owners, worker owners vote for worker owner representatives on the Board of Directors and are eligible to run for a seat on the Board. Worker owners receive their patronage dividend based on hours worked.

- How and when will the worker owner dividend distribution take place?

Checks are distributed to worker owners in late September.

- What happens to the retained portion of my worker owner dividend?

The retained 80% will be reinvested in the co-op through your internal account. Subject to vesting, this reinvested portion is available to you when you retire.

- What is vesting for worker owners?

It takes 5 years of employment for worker owners to become 100% vested. During those first five years, employees receive 20% of their dividend disbursement for every year they have worked. When the

employee retires or leaves the co-op, the vested amount of their retained patronage dividend is paid to the employee.

- Will my individual dividend go down if there are more owners in the future?

Having more owners will not make the dividend to existing owners go down. As more workers become owners, their dividends will come from what is now non-patronage income.

#### **About Income Taxes on Dividends:**

- Do I have to pay income taxes on my consumer owner dividend?

As a consumer owner, you are generally not required to pay personal income taxes on your dividend. The IRS considers a consumer owner dividend a rebate on purchases, which is not taxable. If you purchased goods for other than personal use, you should consult your tax advisor about this issue.

- Do I have to pay income taxes on my worker owner dividend?

As a worker owner, you are required to pay personal income taxes on the entire dividend amount including the retained portion. The IRS considers a worker owner dividend as income which is taxable.

#### **About the Cooperative Community Fund:**

- What is the Cooperative Community Fund?

The Co-op Community Fund (CCF) makes annual grants to local groups working on issues related to sustainable agriculture, hunger, environmental protection, and cooperatives. The CCF is a vital tool in supporting hardworking local groups that help us build a strong vibrant community. See the annual report for this year's recipients (above).

- What is the endowment of the CCF and what are the plans for increasing that?

The Cooperative Community Fund currently has an endowment of \$135,000. Our goal is to increase this endowment to expand the number and size of the grants that can be given. In most co-ops the main way the CCF grows is through the donations of patronage dividends. Although each donation in itself is modest, the cumulative impact is great.



## BEHIND THE SCENES WITH A BAKER



*Our artisan bread is known throughout the Triangle for its authentic Old World style. We sell over a thousand loaves each week in our stores and to local restaurants and other co-ops, and in 2015, we won the Independent's Best in the Triangle award for Best Bread in Orange/Chatham County. We've always sourced organic locally milled flour from Lindley Mills, and we've recently added flour made from locally grown wheat from Carolina Ground in Asheville.*



*Jon McDonald is one of our lead bakers as well as a Board member of the co-op. Here he shares with us some stories about life in the bakery.*

We used to have a window in the bakery. It opened to a completely uninteresting view of the brick side of the next warehouse. But nonetheless, every morning between six and eight in the morning, depending on the season, the sun would begin to rise and send a wonderful ray of light onto our production floor. I have a specific memory of challah one Thursday morning: the entire team crowded around a table, shaping braid after braid, joking with each other about this or that; Mana or LCD Soundsystem or T-Pain playing in the background; and that ray of light illuminating the ambient flour in the air like we were actors in a Terrance Mallick film.

When I was asked to write this piece about the bakery, it was hard to narrow the focus. Do I talk about the baking experience itself? It's hard to put it on paper: shaping takes time, repetition; it requires more mental capacity than I'd like to admit to calculate water temperature at two in the morning. The real story of the bakery is more like the time we spent an entire week assigning each other Sesame Street characters. Or the sunrise coming through the window. That window is gone now—our bagel program required extra cooler space—but the memory, along with many others, remains. So here are a few of those other memories.



I came to baking by accident. A friend emailed me an ad for an opening in the bakery the year it planned to move to Hillsborough. I had no business getting the job. In fact, I found out recently that Rob (the bakery manager) was going to pass on me if not for random luck: my boss at the time, an editor at Algonquin books, happened to like me and literally lived next door to Rob. I don't know which lies she told him, but I'm glad she did.

Despite not having any baking experience, I was in good hands. I've been able to learn from the most interesting group of people. A trio of brothers from near Oaxaca, who grew up baking in their father's adobe oven; a woman from Texas with multiple PhDs in the middle of a career change; an ex-farmer with the most telescopic attention to detail; the former head baker of a rival bakery one town over; artists; multiple chemists.

I recently tried out for the USA baking team. This is a sponsored team of three bakers who compete in the most recognized international bread competition, held in Paris every four years. I had no business trying out: a kid with minimal experience, no culinary training, no baking pedigree. The tryout was relatively straight-forward: eight hours to bake five different types of bread from start to finish, about 70 loaves total. I was able to rep the Carolinas using heirloom grains from Anson Mills and Carolina Ground. (I actually stenciled our state motto, *esse quam videri*, onto one type of bread.)

But what was most exciting was describing our little operation to all the big-name judges. The benefits, the vacation hours, our worker-owner stake in the company...these all piqued the interest of my fellow competitors and the judges. It didn't seem like anyone loved his or her job quite as much as I did.

**Profile: Memo Martinez**

Memo is our longest tenured baker. He's like clockwork: never late, never sick. He'll stand for hours in front of the oven on Saturday mornings, churning out hundreds of loaves, each one baked to perfection, right on time, and not break a sweat, the floor clean and the oven wiped down as if the bread baked itself and magically appeared on the shelf. In what threatens to be the most adorable relationship at WSM, he's married to lead pastry baker Tiffany, whom he met when the bakery was in Carrboro. He's the second oldest of six brothers. His older brother, Pablo, was the former longest tenured baker until he returned to his family in Oaxaca, and Chivo, a younger brother, also works in the bakery.





## CO-OP CAMP ATTENDED BY CHAPEL HILL STUDENT



*Each summer the Cooperative Council of North Carolina holds a Cooperative Leadership Camp for high school students. The students who attend are sponsored by a North Carolina cooperative. This year, Weaver Street Market sent its first student to Co-op Camp—Corey Pahel-Short, a rising high school senior at East Chapel Hill.*

*We selected Corey for the leadership qualities she is already cultivating as she balances commitments to her school's cross country team, her academic studies, and her volunteer work with NatureWay and at UNC. When we asked her the question, "What leadership skills do you see as important for cooperatives?" she responded as follows:*



Since cooperatives bring together a diverse group of people with different skills, a leader must be inclusive, flexible, and open to new ideas. This allows for the free sharing of ideas, which will create opportunities for the co-op to grow. Having a vision for the co-op and community is a fundamental quality of leadership. But having a vision is not enough; a leader must be able to articulate his/her ideas and follow through with them. This requires commitment.

*We asked Corey to share some of the highlights from her week at co-op camp:*

This summer I received the opportunity to attend Cooperative Leadership Camp thanks to Weaver Street's sponsorship. I did not know what to expect, but I figured I should learn more about how a co-op functions



since Weaver Street has always been a part of my life. I grew up in Chapel Hill a few minutes from the Carrboro store, and my father served on the Board of Directors when I was in elementary school.



Students from all across the state attended. I was the only student from a food co-op. At the camp, we organized a t-shirt cooperative by electing positions such as president, the board of directors, and the general manager. We divided into different teams responsible for the various aspects of the co-op, such as finance, marketing, and distribution. I joined the community relations team, which was tasked with organizing a service project. Inspired by Weaver Street's work with the charity TABLE, I suggested the idea of sending letters of

encouragement to terminally ill children in hospitals. Personally, I was at a loss for what to say to children in situations much worse than me, so my letters were mostly drawings of superheroes and Disney characters. The event was a success, and we accumulated a significant stack of letters.

Upon arrival at the camp, we were split into four teams: Blue, Green, Yellow, and Red. Throughout the week we competed against each other in challenges that tested our ability to work with others and take on leadership roles. Many of the challenges required trust, a sense of humor, and a willingness to get wet! Blue Team was the best, of course, which I am definitely not biased about as a member.



My favorite of these activities was a tower building contest. The goal was to build the tallest tower starting from a tabletop. We could only use the materials in our envelope (markers, tape, paper clips, and paper); we could not move the ceiling tiles; and we had just 15 minutes to complete the tower.

While my group was debating how to build a sturdy tower, I realized that the rules said nothing about taping the tower of chains to the ceiling and having it hang down to the table. We discreetly began making paper chains that we would connect to the ceiling at the last minute.





Unfortunately, we connected ours too soon, and other groups copied us with the remaining time. We ended up getting second in this activity due to our chains being less “sturdy” than the Red Team’s tower. I would like to point out, however, that the flexibility of our tower would better withstand an earthquake.

Despite some setbacks, Blue Team emerged as the overall winner of the week’s challenges! We were a group of outspoken individuals, but we formed a good team because we always supported one another.



I should mention that this camp took place in White Lake, NC, right along the water. The trees all featured Spanish moss, and the sunrise in the morning was absolutely gorgeous. Every day we were allotted free time to do as we pleased, which I mostly spent on the water with new friends. Although we were total strangers at the beginning of the week, we managed to build a community.

*We are thrilled that Corey represented our co-op at the camp. Cooperative Council President Jennie Gentry shared with us that Corey was a “bright spot at camp” and described her as “one AMAZING young lady!” We are not surprised that she won the “Unsung Hero” Award—for her creative contributions, her positive attitude, and her commitment to the cooperative principles.*





## CO-OP TO CO-OP WINE TRADE WITH LA RIOJANA VINEYARDS



### Co-op to Co-op Trade



What if you could get a great wine at a fantastic price and know that your purchase goes to **support a small producer co-op**? You can do that when you purchase La Rioja wines from **our sister co-op in Argentina**. As soon as you try

them, you'll know that these are terrific wines. The Rioja Malbec is one of the best entry-level Malbecs we have tasted. It offers lots of dark fruit, subtle complexities, and a smooth round finish—everything we look for in a Malbec. The Chardonnay, Cabernet, and Malbec blend are all of equal quality and taste. The most pleasant surprise about these wines is their price—only \$6.99/bottle, half as much as you might pay for similar wines elsewhere. Taste them for yourself at the Co-op Fair on September 20 or at our wine shows in October.



**La Rioja is a wine co-op in northwest Argentina that has over 500 members**, the majority of whom are small-scale farmers with less than seven acres of land each. The region in which most of the co-op's farmers live is remote and historically a rural and poor part of the country. Through its Fair Trade projects, **La Rioja has greatly improved living conditions by developing a water system, a secondary school, and a hospital**, among other projects. The co-op is also working on **creating sustainable villages with solar power and organic farms**. Although La Rioja sells a lot of wine in Europe, it has



yet to break into the US market in a significant way. Weaver Street Market has been instrumental in connecting La Riojana with co-ops across the US.



**The Riojana wines are certified by Fairtrade International (FLO).**

A contribution on your behalf of \$2 per case is included in the price to help fund La Riojana's community programs. Initially, that money will be split between a hospital construction project and organic certification for the farms. The members are farming organically but have not yet gone through the process of getting certified, which is expensive for small family farms. Part of our \$2 per case contribution will be used to help them gain organic certification. In the meantime, we will have a letter from La Riojana stating that they use organic practices.



**La Riojana wine is such a good value because we order directly from the producer.** The retail price of a typical imported wine includes a minimum importer margin of 30% and minimum distributor margin of 30%. Co-op to co-op trade fills this middleman role with a single 23% margin by buying direct and working with a local distributor who also serves as the importer. This is a pilot program. Once we get the network set up, La Riojana is interested in selling us "reserve" wines—a premium label wine with a \$20 value that we can retail for \$10. If successful, the program will be expanded to import wines from co-ops in Europe.



To find out more about La Riojana, visit their website:  
<http://www.lariojanawines.com>

## IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY FOOD PARTNERSHIPS TO FIGHT HUNGER



### WSM Brings Community Together to Combat Local Hunger



"Making healthy food accessible" is perhaps the most fundamental of Weaver Street Market's 2020 Goals. We pursue this goal as a food retailer. Healthy food continually flows in and out of our three stores and food house. Yet there is another segment of our community that does not have access to sufficient, nutritious food for their daily needs. In Orange County, an estimated 20,900 individuals are food insecure, and the lack of access is primarily due to insufficient income rather than availability. For families who live





below or at the poverty level, a missed day's work to stay home with a sick child or simple car repairs can deplete precious funds needed for food and rent.

Local hunger-relief organizations work in our communities to provide food for families faced with ongoing or emergency threats of hunger. In 2015, WSM made a commitment to expand our healthy food focus to include the food insecure. The first step was to form the Community Food Partnerships. Through this program we are partnering with four local hunger-relief organizations—PORCH, TABLE, Orange Congregations in Mission (OCIM), and Interfaith Council for Social Services (IFC)—to develop year-round access to healthy food for those in need in our communities.



Our simplest contribution would be to place food collection bins in each store where shoppers could drop off canned and packaged goods. We have a vision of making a greater impact, one that connects all the interrelated elements at play in this important opportunity:

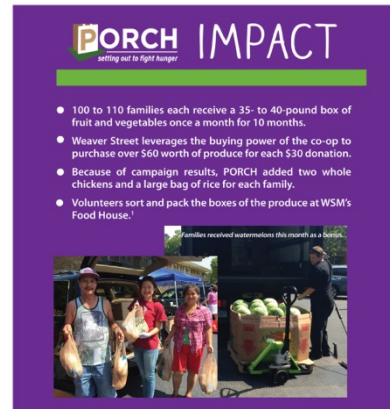
- The needs of our hunger-relief partners and the unique logistics involved in their work
- The nutritional needs of the families they serve
- The value our shoppers and owners place on healthy natural foods
- Our unique position in the community as a food hub and community center
- The willingness and ability of our shoppers and owners to donate to these programs

For 2015, we are hosting a food campaign each quarter. The first two have been immensely successful, with more than \$30,000 collected for each campaign. (Read about the two campaigns below.) With each campaign and subsequent delivery of the food, we are learning more about how we can connect more of the pieces to create an even greater impact on hunger. Our happiest surprise is the willingness of so many co-op owners, shoppers, and staff to contribute to these efforts. Our two campaigns generated more than 6,000 donations and 390 volunteer hours. As Board Director Linda Stier observed, our food partnership is successful because “it’s rooted in community.”

### **PORCH “bag of produce” campaign**

PORCH is an all-volunteer grassroots organization that raises about \$20,000 each month through its monthly food drives in 150 participating neighborhoods in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Our PORCH campaign supported the organization’s Food for Families program. Once a month PORCH delivers bags of pantry items and fresh food to 270 families identified as living in extreme poverty in our community.





Our campaign focused on where we could make the most impact—providing fresh produce and eggs. We asked shoppers to donate bags of fresh produce for \$30 a bag, and we offered half bags for \$15 and quarter bags for \$7.50. We set a very ambitious goal of 1,000 bags of fresh produce or \$30,000 in donations. The results were astonishing—in two weeks our shoppers donated almost \$32,000. We believe the campaign was such a huge success because we offered a donation that resonated with WSM shoppers: bags of natural and organic produce—enough vegetables, fruits, and eggs to feed a family for a week.



With our buying power, we were able to turn the \$30 bags of produce into boxes filled with 35 to 40 pounds of fresh produce. PORCH opted to receive the donations over a 10-month period and selected the 100 refugee families in its Food for Families program as the recipients.

An important new piece of the partnership emerged as we explored the most efficient ways to purchase and deliver the produce. We discovered that we could help PORCH by buying and storing the purchased food at our Food House facility, holding a volunteer-based food sort with PORCH at our Food House facility, and delivering the boxes of food directly to the PORCH pickup sites.

Because of the donations our shoppers made, PORCH has been able to increase the number of families they serve and to provide additional sources of nutrition in the monthly food distributions, including whole chickens and bags of rice.

We have delivered boxes of food for the PORCH

refugee families for six months, and we will continue through November. We will hold our second PORCH campaign next January, and our intent is to reach enough donations to provide a full year's support for the refugee families.

### TABLE "backpacks of healthy food for kids" campaign

TABLE provides healthy food to hungry children in preschool, elementary school, and middle school, primarily through its Weekend Meal Backpack program. TABLE relies year-round on community support to provide food for 350 to 400 children during the school year and on school breaks. Their goal is to provide weekend food for 500 kids by the end of the year.



Our TABLE campaign asked shoppers and owners to donate healthy food for TABLE's Summer Program, which provides weekend food for 200 to 350 kids for 8 weeks of the summer break when kids do not have access to free school meals. We asked shoppers to donate backpacks of healthy kid-friendly food, including non-perishables, fresh fruit and vegetables, shelf-stable milk, and freshly baked WSM oat bread. Our shoppers met our goal of food for 2,100 backpacks, and by finessing our buying power, we were able to provide food for all 2,800 backpacks.

As with the PORCH campaign, we discovered that a significant contribution we can make is ordering, receiving, and delivering the food products to TABLE. TABLE has a regular group of volunteers who sort, bag, and deliver the bags of food to the kids at camps and summer school.

WSM hosted two community food sorts on the patio of our Carrboro store so that our shoppers and owners could see the food purchased with their donations and help with sorting and bagging the food. The train of volunteers pushing grocery carts of food down Weaver Street to TABLE showcased the community roots of our new food partnership.

Over the 8 weeks of Summer Table, we delivered 8 pounds of healthy food for 2021 backpacks. Because the projected number of 2,800 backpacks of food was not needed, we'll continue to provide healthy food for the backpacks when TABLE starts its school-year program late August. We will host a second food campaign for Summer TABLE next May, and we intend to help them reach 500 kids next summer.





IT'S ELECTION TIME AT THE CO-OP!

### Vote in the Board election

The voting period has ended.

### Meet the candidates

#### WSM Co-op Fair and Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 20, 2015, 2-5 pm, WSM Food House in Hillsborough

#### After Hours

Thursday, September 10, 2015, 6-8 pm, WSM in Carrboro

#### Jazz Brunch

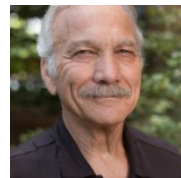
Sunday, September 13, 2015, 11 am – 1 pm, WSM in Carrboro

### Candidate statements



#### Alicia Altmueller:

"WSM is central to the health, happiness, and strength of the local community and its economy. I would like to serve on the board, working alongside worker and consumer owners, to continue WSM's amazing growth." [Read more below.](#)



#### Jim Porto:

"As longtime consumer-member, analyst, and public health educator committed to the community's health, I believe in WSM's mission and that I can add energy and strategic insights into Weaver Street Market's continued success." [Read more below.](#)



#### Lisa Best:

"Helping people heal with nutrition is my passion. I am committed to facilitating healthy food availability, and my leadership role at WSM gives me the unique opportunity to support our community through a socially responsible co-op." [Read more below.](#)





ALICIA ALTMUELLER

Video: <https://youtu.be/tTbsEtlaLys>

**Describe your occupation and community involvement.** I have worked for over twenty five years in building community programs in the areas of health, technology, human rights and the environment. Since moving to North Carolina nearly ten years ago, my professional experience has including working at a research center at UNC and a local nonprofit. At the university, I worked to bring together community and university partnerships including in the area of food justice. That position was followed by a non-profit supporting children with life challenging medical condition. Each role had commonalities – building community programs through leadership, development and outreach. My community involvement includes of a variety of causes and organizations. I have continually volunteered with organizations such as: Chapel Hill Carrboro Public Schools, Book Harvest, Judea Reform Congregation and Weaver Street Market. My involvement is closely tied to working alongside my family toward just causes such as food insecurity, public schools and equality.

**Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors?**

I strongly believe in Weaver Street Market's values and mission toward a shared community, knowledge and economy. When choosing a North Carolina location to move my family, Weaver Street Market was part of that decision. Ten years later, Weaver Street Market is even more central to our lives than expected. It is a destination as a family when we have a weekend breakfast in Carrboro after a bike ride. It is a meeting location in Southern Village when planning a program or a drink after a walk at the Hillsborough river walk. Weaver Street Market has enriched this community and my family's lives greatly. I want to serve on the Board of Directors as a way to give back and support Weaver Street Market as it continues to develop and grow. I believe my work and community experience will complement the efforts of the board. I want to help ensure Weaver Street Market's pivotal role in the communities it serves.



**What experience do you have with the Weaver Street Market, cooperatives or small community-minded businesses?** Growing up, my parents were small business owners. I spent many years working behind a counter of their store or working on the development and ultimate sale of a business. These experiences made deep impressions on my life; always leading me to support small businesses as part of

the survival of the community. Though my work ranged, I always looked to programs that had a local impact. While in New York, I ran a nonprofit technology consulting service for four years that reached nonprofits and small businesses throughout the region. The goal was to help the foundation of their work, in order for them to continue with their mission. When we moved here, I immediately looked to ways to get involved in my community and Weaver Street Market was one avenue. Having experience in development and grant reviews, I became active in the Cooperative Community Fund (CCF). I have reviewed CCF grants for four years and this past year helped to refine the program.

**What experience, skills or perspective will you bring to the Board?** Dedicating over 25 years of nonprofit, small business and community work, makes me a strong match for the Board of Weaver Street Market. With a variety of skills ranging from building programs, grant development and organizational relationship building and strengthening I believe I can make a significant and valuable contribution as a Board Member. My years of community work will help me to be a supportive and constructive team member. Combining these skills and being a dedicated Weaver Street Market consumer owner, I would bring a perspective to the table that would genuinely seek to help ensure the mission of Weaver Street Market.

**Include anything else about yourself that you may like others to know.** When not at Weaver Street Market, I can be found at my multigenerational home with my husband, parents, two daughters and a pet frog named Harry. I might be in the kitchen creating something new with my daughter, Miriam; I might be “upcycling” with my other daughter, Klara or I might be walking with my husband, Stephan. When I am not working and alone, I can be found in in our courtyard creating an entirely edible garden.

JIM PORTO

Video: <https://youtu.be/MYeo-wV2hzo>

**Describe your occupation and community involvement.** I have been on the Faculty at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health for 29 years. I teach in the Department of Health Policy and Management. I have served on the Carrboro Appearance Commission, was Mayor of Carrboro many years ago and have lived in Carrboro for almost 40 yrs.

**Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors?** I want to help our community achieve the healthiest lifestyle possible. Nutrition, along with exercise, is the key to achieving this goal. WSM is the prototype of a new relationship we can have with food...a community-based, trusted source of information and food products that contribute to our health. My major wish is that WSM can become the one stop food shopping alternative for even more products.

**What experience do you have with Weaver Street Market, cooperatives, or small community-minded businesses?** I had a management consulting business many years ago in which I learned how tough conditions can be for small companies, but I have not had experience in a cooperative. However I have taught financial management a dozen times and can read a balance sheet and income statement. My experience with WSM consists of 20 years of consuming WSM products, sometimes twice a day.

**What experience, skills, or perspective will you bring to the Board?** For 29 years I have run a Master's degree program that educates public health and healthcare managers. I have taught financial management and statistics. I have led workshops on leadership, communications, and reputation management. I am analytical; but one of my strengths is thinking ahead...which has helped us keep our degree program ranked highly over the years.

**Include anything else about yourself that you may like others to know.** For more details, see my LinkedIn account at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/jimporto>. WSM is a unique institution with a holistic, if not holy, mission of selling quality food, offering a quality workplace for its employees, and providing a



center for community sharing. WSM is THE model for our relationship with food in the 21st century. However, to achieve the cultural change that WSM suggests requires that it remain a viable financial entity. I would like to see WSM become a one-stop food shopping center for many more products. As a board director, I would see my role as helping define the strategy to get us closer to the food transformation that we need as a culture but in a financially responsible way. One approach is to encourage careful analysis of food purchase patterns and to profitably address needs of specialty markets where other food chains are not. Another interest I would have as a board member is to encourage innovation in food offerings, which can best be fostered by encouraging consumer input on new products...a form of crowdsourcing. In addition, by providing even more opportunities for employees to get specialized training and having them observe best practices around the country, the likelihood of remaining profitable increases. Finally, I would like to see WSM tap into the resources, research and student, available at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Public Health. I believe I can help make those connections. WSM is a community asset and as a cooperative it is one of the few types of organizations that is not part of the great economic concentration of power currently underway. I would be honored to work with WSM as a board member.



LISA BEST

Video: <https://youtu.be/VzqvWE-Qpno>

**Describe your occupational and community involvement.** I am currently a self-employed certified nutritionist and health coach at Healing With Nutrition (HealingwithHolisticNutrition.com). I spend most of my time either coaching clients to greater health through dietary protocols, or publishing nutrition related information on my iPhone app “Health Tip of the Day” and my ezine “Health Tips Weekly.” My approach to preventative wellness is contingent upon consuming healthy, organic foods – a natural fit with Weaver Street Market’s products and goals.

My previous occupations include 21 years of self-employment with my investment real estate company (Best Properties) where I bought, sold, upgraded, renovated and managed single-family homes, duplexes, and some commercial property for both long-term rentals and resale.

Prior to operating my real estate business I was a Financial Analyst with Metropolitan and Baron Financial (10 years) with primary responsibilities of marketing, producing and presenting comprehensive financial plans for physicians including budget analysis and investment strategies. At that time I also marketed various investment and insurance products, including mutual funds, insurance, stocks, options, annuities, real estate limited partnerships, and business insurance.

I am an active member of Pleasant Green United Methodist Church and I play guitar and sing in the Praise Band. I am also a tutor at Orange High School specializing in SAT preparation. I homeschooled my 2 oldest children for 6 years both of whom are now Duke University graduates, and coached my daughter in the National Spelling Bee.

In the past, I have designed and facilitated educational school group tours of our small farm exhibiting over 200 exotic animals ranging from Alpacas to Wallabies. We have also provided homes to distressed and unwanted animals of all kinds for 30 years. I developed a holistic dietary anti-cancer protocol for my cancer dog, which has kept her alive for 7 years past her official 6-month prognosis.

**Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors?** I would like to remain on the Weaver Street Board of Directors because natural and organic foods are the primary tools I use to promote preventative wellness, and the more I can understand and take an active role in the success of the businesses that provide these goods from suppliers to consumers, the better I will be able to help people acquire the products they need to improve their health.

I am excited about the focus and direction Weaver Street is taking, and I want to continue to



play an active role in the implementation of Weaver Street's long-term developmental plans. While a bit of my educational and employment training have followed strong capitalistic models, (where stockholders receive the monetary benefits of corporate success), I find the co-op model of mutual collaboration for the good of all extremely appealing and consistent with holistic concepts. The co-op business model makes sense to me, because there is no conflict of interest between consumers and stockholders in delivering the best products possible.

I love that the co-op model by definition reflects the values of its owners, especially regarding the issues of environmental awareness (i.e. focus on decreasing waste and using alternative energy sources), sourcing foods locally (to reduce transport cost and increase freshness) and adding vibrancy to downtown areas. There are so few opportunities in this world to have your opinion heard and to have an active voice in governing, that I relish the opportunity to have an effect on the institution that provides my family's (and my community's) food.

**What experience do you have with Weaver Street Market, cooperatives, or small community-minded businesses?** I have been a consumer owner representative on the Weaver Street Board of Directors for 4 years. In that time, my understanding of the complexities involved in running a co-operative business has increased exponentially, as has my respect for the dedicated and hard-working people at Weaver Street who serve our community on a daily basis by ensuring the availability of healthy foods.

**What experience, skills or perspective will you bring to the board?** I bring a unique combination of business experience and holistic nutrition practice to the table. My business experience is a strong asset since it's important to understand the rules of the game you are playing in a competitive commercial environment, even while attempting to change them. My holistic nutrition training reminds me to be compassionate towards all creatures and the environment, and to move gently in the world considering the needs of all.

I currently hold the office of Treasurer on the Board. I feel it is my personal responsibility to make sure that every dollar controlled by the board is spent wisely, as are operational expenses for the co-op as a whole. The major complaint from most people regarding organic and natural foods is the cost, and the main reason I was motivated to join the Board of Directors originally was to understand why organic foods cost so much.

As a result of my board experience, I now see that food costs are much more complicated than I previously thought. Providing quality goods, fair labor practices, and environmentally sensitive products does indeed cost more.

I am encouraged, however, that Weaver Street is working diligently towards its long-term goal of providing organic goods at conventionally grown prices. In the meantime, my personal challenge while participating within the co-op is to do everything I can, using the business and nutritional experience I have, to ensure the highest quality foods are available at the lowest possible prices with the smallest carbon footprint.

**Include anything else about yourself you may like others to know.** Two thoughts arise for me as my term of service on the board nears completion. The first is how very grateful I am for the opportunity to participate, learn and grow with Weaver Street during the last 4 years. The second is how sad it would be for this experience to be over. Therefore, it is my sincerest wish to be able to continue serving on the Weaver Street Board of Directors.