Each of us have differences in what we perceive as risk along with the amount of risk we are able to tolerate. For example, one might hunker down in response to a winter storm warning while another thrives in driving in whiteout conditions. Another might tolerate an icy glaze but acknowledge that an inch of ice covering roads and trees could prove catastrophic. And still another person with no experience of either situation may react with significant fear or ignorant bliss. Each member of a board or management team has varying tolerance for risk along with the perception and reality of risks their cooperatives might be exposed to. Attitudes towards risk will influence how decisions are made. New members coming to and senior members leaving the team can change the dynamics on how risk is viewed and the decisions agreed upon by the group.

This hands-on workshop, lead by members of the Cornell Team and Leadership Center will examine how each of us responds to risk along with how a group works to develop best practices useful to make decisions and build consensus in spite of the individuals’ differing thresholds towards risk.

Facilitators include:

**Karel Hilverson**, Dan Tillemans Director of the Cornell Team and Leadership Center. He has lead 100s of workshops over 20 years. He holds an MS in Experiential Education and Educational Leadership from Minnesota State University and is currently a PhD candidate in Organizational Leadership at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

**Marcus Brooks**, Cornell Team and Leadership Center Coordinator has lead international trips to destinations as far away as Kilimanjaro. He comes from NYC with an MBA from Columbia University. He combines his formal business skill sets in leadership, organizational development, strategy and finance with his deep passion for human development through outdoors and experiential learning.

**Robert Gravani**, Professor of Food Science at Cornell serves on the Cornell Outdoor Education Advisory Board. He focuses on food safety extension/outreach activities within all sectors of the food system including production, processing, retailing, and food service. He co-teaches Food Choices and Issues, a course that examines the relationship between food, diet and health, food technology and contemporary food issues.
**Business Risk Beyond Price Volatility**

A number of responsibilities are imposed upon cooperative boards of directors when they assume office, i.e. represent members interests, establish policies, hire management, oversee business assets, assess performance, and inform the members. The complexity of the cooperative business coupled with changing regulations and case law suggest that directors need to re-evaluate their roles and responsibilities associated with cooperative governance especially in the context of risk assessment and management.

- **Duty of Care in the 21st Century**

  Cooperative leadership does due diligence in managing risks through setting policies and procedures. Different risks are emerging that require new ways of thinking to protect the organization to maintain business vitality. **Charles Sullivan, Bond, Schoeneck and King, LLP** will suggest how boards of directors can consider policies useful to protect the cooperative business. Sullivan has over 20 years experience in mergers and acquisitions, business formation and restructuring. He was recognized as *Best Lawyers in America®* 2017. He is a Delegate to the Legal, Tax, and Accounting Committee of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC).

- **Building a Process for Risk Assessment and Control**

  Managers put procedures in place to monitor and control the operation. Different procedures may be necessary to safeguard the cooperative. **Jay McWatters, CPA, Dopkins & Co.** will provide insights into building processes to monitor, measure, and manage risk. Jay was Managing Partner with KPMG, Buffalo, NY and Audit Practice Leader for the Upstate NY Practice before moving to Dopkins & Company where is a Partner, Assurance Services Department. Principal areas of expertise include cooperatives, cooperative governance, pool accounting methodologies and risk assessment and management. He is a member of the NCFC LTA Committee and Chair of the Financial Reporting and Audit Subcommittee.

- **Aligning Risk Management Strategies: A Director and Manager Point of View**

  Alignment between board policies and management protocols will be critical for success when managing risk. **Leon Berthiaume, CEO, St. Albans Cooperative Creamery** provides a unique perspective as a cooperative manager and as a board member. He is a CPA who worked for a Vermont accounting firm before joining St. Albans Cooperative Creamery in 1984. He was named CEO in 1991. Currently he serves on the board of directors of the Peoples Trust Company of St. Albans, a locally-owned bank and Vice President and Director of the Northwestern Medical Center, headquartered in St. Albans, VT.

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**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Please plan to join us for the upcoming NECC Annual Meeting and Leaders Forum, March 2nd. A dynamic program has been organized that is sure to benefit all cooperative leaders. The event is a great professional development opportunity for early career employees to gain insights in and outside of their respective organizations. We will recognize the recipients of the Cooperative Internship Recognition Award.

I am pleased to announce that the NECC Future Leaders Conference will be held July 11-13, 2017 in Mt. Morris, NY, just north of the Grand Canyon of the East, Letchworth State Park. Cooperatives are encouraged to identify and sponsor young adults who aspire to leadership positions. Previous participants said, “I never knew there were so many cooperatives.” “It exceeded my expectations.” See you in Syracuse.

Rob Smith

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**SAVE THE DATE—JULY 11-13, 2017**

**FUTURE COOPERATIVE LEADERS CONFERENCE**

**MT. MORRIS, NY**

**HOSTED BY DAIRY FARMERS OF AMERICA**

**Evolution of Millennials in the Market Place**

Farm and food sector businesses will be rewarded when they meet the needs of their customers. Consumer preferences seem fleeting at best. Everyone is interested in trends in the market place and how to communicate value of the product they produce to the customer. **Gail Street, SVP, American Dairy Council North East** oversees the Marketing Communications Team. Over her 20-year career she has been responsible for the strategic design and tactical implementation of a full range of marketing communications programs that enhanced and protected the reputations of political figures, government agencies, corporate and non-profit clients, as well as programs to augment corporate missions and increase media awareness. She has worked with a variety of entities such as McDonald’s, SUPERVALU, and Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield Delaware. She began her career as a television news reporter in the Midwest including Chicago and Milwaukee. Street explains, “Whether operating my own McDonald’s hamburger franchise or supervising marketing communication activities at several retail grocery store chains, I understand how important it is to focus on the needs of the consumer. Her presentation will center on how to identify emerging trends and products to meet the needs of the evolving millennial customer.”
CoBANK, ACB Northeast Customer Meeting
Friday, March 3, 2017

THOMAS HALVERSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COBANK, ACB

Thomas Halverson will speak to Rural America: Global Opportunities and Challenges and provide an update on the performance of CoBank over the past year. As chief executive officer, he is responsible for implementing the bank’s strategic and business direction as set by the Board of Directors. Previously he served as CoBank’s chief banking officer where he was responsible for the bank’s Agribusiness and Rural Infrastructure banking group as well as the Banking Services group and Corporate Communications. Halverson is the chairman of CoBank’s Management Executive Committee and serves as chairman and director of Farm Credit Leasing. Prior to joining CoBank in 2013, he spent more than 15 years with Goldman Sachs. He was most recently managing director and chief of staff for Goldman Sachs Bank USA, a $120 billion commercial bank subsidiary of the Goldman Sachs Group.

TUCKER CARLSON, COMMENTATOR, FOX NEWS

Tucker Carlson is a veteran journalist and political commentator. He is the co-host of “Fox and Friends Weekend” and is the editor-in-chief of TheDailyCaller.com. Before coming to Fox News he was the co-host on CNN’s “Crossfire” when he was the youngest anchor in the history of that network. In addition he hosted a weekly public affairs program on PBS. He has filed dispatches from around the world, including Pakistan, Lebanon, and Vietnam. He has also been published in New York magazine, The New York Times, and The Daily Beast. His most recent book is entitled, “Politicians, Partisans, and Parasites: My Adventures in Cable News.” He will speak to Election Aftermath: U.S. Politics and Public Policy.

MARCI ROSELL, ECONOMIST

Economist Marci Rossell has a unique ability to take complex financial issues and make them relevant to people’s lives, families, and careers. She is best known for the time she spent in broadcast television as chief economist for CNBC. She has also served as a corporate economist and investment spokesperson for Oppenheimer Funds, one of the nation’s largest mutual fund companies. She began her career as an economist for the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Ms. Rossell earned a doctorate in economics from Southern Methodist University, where she was also named Young Alumni of the Year in 2002.

BILLY BEANE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
OAKLAND ATHLETICS

Considered one of the most progressive and talented baseball executives in the game, Billy Beane molded the Oakland Athletics into one of professional baseball’s most successful teams after taking over as general manager following the 1997 season. Changes in team ownership forced management to cut costs. Beane worked with former General Manager, Sandy Alderson to use research and analysis through sabermetric principles as a means to find under-valued players. Through sabermetrics he led the Oakland A’s, one of the worst teams in major league baseball at the time to six American League West division titles. That strategic methodology has become known as the “Moneyball” philosophy, named for the bestselling book and Oscar-nominated film. In 2013, Beane was named MLB Executive of the Year for the second time by Baseball America.

Conference Registration
Register online by February 20th at:
http://www.cobank.com/Events-Meetings.aspx
Limited number of rooms available at conference rate until February 8. Contact the Doubletree by Hilton at 315.432.0200 (Mention CoBank affiliation.)
A CENSUS OF COOPERATIVES IN THE NORTHEAST

The Cooperative Development Institute seeks to create a comprehensive and maintainable directory of co-ops in the 6 states of New England and New York State as a first step in researching the extent of the cooperative economy in the Northeast.

This initiative will:
1. Identify and verify lists of co-ops in New England, New York City, and Upstate New York.
2. Gather consistent information on the location and contact information, industry sector, ownership type and age of the co-ops.
3. Make well-designed and user-friendly publicly available directories of co-ops available online.
4. Set up ongoing relationships with local groups to do ongoing maintenance of the directories to keep them up-to-date.

Outcomes of the project include raising the profile of Northeastern cooperatives to be recognized as a vital element of local community economic development. The directory/database will provide the opportunity for co-ops to come together in mutual support and mutual benefit. CDI is seeking matching funds for a $30,000 pledge of investment by Cabot Creamery Cooperative.

Sponsorship Levels:
- $250 and under: Sponsors thanked on the directory website
- $500: Sponsors thanked on directory website and in promotional materials
- $1,000: Sponsors will be thanked and their logos will be included on the directory websites and on promotional materials
- $2,000: In addition to the aforementioned, co-ops will be featured in directory results.

Major sponsors already committed to the project include Cabot Creamery Cooperative, Broad Reach Foundation and the Vermont State Employees Credit Union (VSECU).

For more information contact Noémi Giszpenc at phone: 413.665.1271.