

SHIFT CHANGE
US Coops and Worker-Owned Businesses, By Region
www.shiftchange.org

Regions with especially strong coop interest and activity

California

SHIFT CHANGE includes Arizmendi Bakeries located in San Francisco, Oakland, San Rafael, Emeryville, and WAGES cooperatives of mainly Latina women who do green housecleaning all around the Bay Area. The Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives helps dozens of other worker coops support one another.

The national office of the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives is in San Francisco. The office of the National Center for Employee Ownership is in Oakland. The San Francisco waste management firm Recology, SF Green Cab, as well as Berrett-Koehler Publishers are employee owned. Renowned energy bar company, Clif Bar is a family and employee owned company in **Emeryville**. The mayor's office in **Richmond** CA promotes worker cooperatives as an employment and community development strategy.

The California Coop Development Center is in **Davis**. The very successful Alvarado Street Bakery Cooperative, recently named one of "Great Places to Work," is in **Petaluma**. Carl Warren and Company (insurance), Entertainment Partners, LeFiell Manufacturing Company in **Los Angeles** all have employee ownership.

UCLA's Anderson Graduate School of Business hosted a special screening of SHIFT CHANGE together with the filmmakers last February. The Beyster Institute in **La Jolla** sponsors academic research on employee ownership across the country, including special programs at Rutgers University. Ata Engineering in **San Diego** received an "[Innovations in Employee Ownership](#)" award in 2008.

Massachusetts

SHIFT CHANGE profiles Equal Exchange, based in West Bridgewater near **Boston**. It was founded in 1986 as a workers cooperative with a social mission, importing fair trade organic coffee, chocolate, tea, etc. Another of the many Boston area worker coops is Community Builders Cooperative, in **Somerville**. At MIT, the Community Innovators Lab (CoLab) encourages cooperatives at its center for planning and development within the Department of Urban Studies and Planning. The New Economy Coalition holds a conference in Boston in early June, especially attracting younger people <http://neweconomy.net/>. Cambridge based Ownership Associates has a long history of assisting privately held companies to become employee owned.

The region around **Northampton** has a strong network of worker coops with paid staff to help them support one another, and encourage new coops. U. Mass **Amherst** hosts the Cooperative Enterprise Collaborative. In **Springfield** there is the newly formed Wellspring Cooperative.

New York City

Worker cooperatives are taking off. There is an active New York City Network of Worker Cooperatives offering technical assistance, and coop leadership training. The largest worker coop in the U.S. is Cooperative Home Care Associates [2200 worker-owners, also members of the Service Employees International Union] located in the Bronx, as are the Green Worker Cooperatives and the Working World. Brooklyn's Federation of Protestant

Welfare Agencies develops worker coops to assist low income people. They helped organize a heavily attended City Council hearing on the promise of worker co-ops in February, 2014. Two recent articles on worker coops appeared in the *New York Times*: http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/30/magazine/who-needs-a-boss.html?_r=0 and <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/20/opinion/sunday/a-way-for-artists-to-live.html?ref=opinion>

Ohio

Ailing rust belt city **Cleveland** hosts the innovative Evergreen Cooperatives, the opening story in SHIFT CHANGE. The city economic development office, the Cleveland Foundation, and key public institutions are working together to revitalize the local economy with 3 new worker coops and more in the works.

The leading academic center in the country for facilitating employee ownership is the 30 year old Ohio Employee Ownership Center at **Kent State University**. Also based in Kent is the Davey Tree Expert employee owned company of 7,400. EBO Group near **Akron** is a fully employee owned engineering and precision manufacturing firm with a worldwide reputation for quality rooted in its participatory work culture. Fastener Industries in **Berea** points to over 30 years of employee ownership as contributing to company success.

Cincinnati is home to Our Harvest Coop, one of the very first cooperatives organized on a union coop model promoted by the United Steelworkers union and the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Washington

In **Seattle** the Massachusetts based Equal Exchange runs Ballard Espresso bar shown in SHIFT CHANGE. There is an active cooperative network, called SLICE, and a new effort called the Emerald City Cooperative Initiative that draws on the Cleveland model. PCC Natural Markets is an 11 store coop supermarket chain owned by its members. Group Health Cooperative pioneered the managed care model of health services. Recreational Equipment Inc. is the very large outdoor gear consumer coop with 100+ stores nationwide. **Olympia** also has several worker coops and the NW Cooperative Development Center. **Bellingham** has Circle of Life coop, and is the home city for the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies [BALLE] which is increasingly collaborating with coops to build more fair and sustainable local economies.

Wisconsin

Organic Valley and many other farm cooperatives inspired by Scandinavian immigrants are headquartered in Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin Madison has an active Center for Cooperatives. **Madison** has a network of worker coops including some of the oldest in the U.S. – some 40 years in business. The innovative engineering firm, Isthmus, also Community Pharmacy and Union Cab appear in SHIFT CHANGE. **Milwaukee** has new worker coops forming and is the home of Harley-Davidson, a world renowned motorcycle company which is employee owned and managed democratically. Scot Forge, a fully employee owned company in business for over 100 years, has a major manufacturing facility in **Clinton**.

Other places with significant interest in coops and employee owned business (not an exhaustive list)

Colorado

New Belgium Brewery in **Ft. Collins** is employee owned with a participatory culture. Namaste Solar in **Boulder** and **Denver** is a large company that converted to become an employee owned cooperative in 2011. The world class engineering firm CH2M Hill with 30,000 employees credits their success in part to their employee ownership program and entrepreneurial culture.

Florida

Publix Supermarkets has grown from a single store in 1930 into the largest employee-owned grocery chain in the United States with 159,000 employees.

Georgia

East Point, south of Atlanta, is home to the Southern Federation of Cooperatives that has promoted African American coops in the South for 45 years.

Illinois - Chicago

The Center for Workplace Democracy works to develop strong local economies and grow small businesses by promoting workplace democracy, cooperatives and other models of employee ownership. Chicago will host the U.S. Federation of Worker Coop conference late May, early June, 2014. <http://conference.coop> New Era Windows and Doors is a worker coop. Employee owned Amsted Industries designs and manufactures products for railroads and other heavy construction. Registered Green Supplier K & C Electric is employee owned.

Minnesota - Minneapolis /St. Paul

Worker coops include The HUB Bike Coop, Equal Exchange, Zenith City Food Coop. The area has several housing cooperatives, and St. Paul is home to a national coop development and training group, Cooperation Works.

Mississippi - Jackson

Excerpts from SHIFT CHANGE were shown at a recent mayor's conference.

<http://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2014/feb/03/jackson-rising-emphasizes-cooperatives/>

Jackson is hosting a community development conference that highlights worker coops in early May.

<http://jacksonrising.wordpress.com/>

North Carolina

Firestorm Café and Books in **Asheville**, and Opportunity Threads in **Morganton** are examples of worker coops in the state.

Oregon - Portland

Home to a branch of Equal Exchange and People's Food Coop, several other coops. Full Sail brewery in **Hood River**, as well as Woodfold Manufacturing in Forest Grove, are employee owned.

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Area Cooperative Alliance is a network of the growing numbers of cooperatives in the area. In **Reading**, PA the mayor's office in collaboration with the United Steelworkers and local leaders has developed a community development model based around worker coops. In **Pittsburgh** the United Steelworkers have a unionized industrial cooperative underway.

Texas - Austin

Many employee owned businesses include Black Star Pub and Brewery, Gaia internet hosting, Monkey Wrench Books, and a coop development organization, Cooperation Texas.

Washington DC

With hundreds of member businesses in many sectors, the National Cooperative Business Association assists with coop development, advocacy and education. The National Cooperative Bank provides comprehensive banking services to cooperatives and other member-owned organizations throughout the country.

Canada

There are numerous Canadian cooperatives and they are strongest in Quebec. The multi-billion dollar Cirque du Soleil is a cooperative. The Canadian Worker Co-op Federation reports a lot of interest in SHIFT CHANGE – so northern border stations - Seattle, Buffalo, Detroit, Minneapolis, Maine, etc. – will attract viewers.

Notes from Melissa Young, producer, Melissa@movingimages.org