

# General Manager's Report

by Gail Graham,  
General Manager



**A**t Mississippi Market we measure success in a variety of ways and I hope you will enjoy reading about some of those successes in this 2011 Annual Report. I want to highlight two things of importance to me.

**We care about achieving operational excellence.** We ended our second full year at West 7th on target with our goals. Our combined sales grew 11.8%, we added 1,277 new members, and both stores had operating income. Because the year was profitable, we are once again distributing a patronage refund to member-owners. Profitability helps us be a sustainable business and profits help us achieve our non-financial ends - but profitability is only one measure of success.

**Our relationship with our members is at the heart of our success.** The real connection between the co-op and its members is forged in the aisles of the store. Delivering exceptional customer service must go hand in hand with delivering exceptional food. We have 167 dedicated staff working hard to deliver the service you expect and deserve—every single day. Behind the scenes we have been diligently planning for the next round of improvements; the upcoming Selby store remodel and parking lot expansion.

For over 30 years we have worked to influence the production, distribution and enjoyment of good food and along the way we have become a trusted advisor. We continue to offer classes and tours, fund Midwest Food Connection, and this past year we took the lead in planning, with other area co-ops, the first Eat Local Farm Tour, which took place in July. The tour connected our consumers with our producers and supported our efforts to foster growth in our local food economy.

2012 has been designated by the U.N. as the "International Year of the Cooperative." Throughout the year co-ops around the world will be spreading the message that co-ops bring people together to meet a common need, and that co-ops are innovative, values-based businesses that create jobs and keep wealth in our communities. At Mississippi Market we can all be very proud of the work we do together in our cooperative business to keep our community strong. Thanks for helping us have another great year!



Metric Giles rakes the garden beds of the Oxford-Selby Urban Farm.

**\$ 22,106 \$/lbs.** to area food shelves for  
Minnesota Foodshare (from shoppers and co-op)

## Giving Back

**\$7,622** EcoStamp donations

When a shopper brings their own bag, they can choose to donate 5¢ per bag to a non-profit organization. 2010-2011 EcoStamp recipients:

- Oxford-Selby Urban Farm**
- Fruits of the City/The MN Project**
- Howard Bowers Fund**
- MFA Immigrant Farmer Training Program**
- Frogtown Gardens**
- Major Taylor Bicycling Club**

**\$13,094** donated to St. Paul non-profit  
community organizations.

## Giving Back

# 2011 Annual Report

by Nilgun Tuna,  
Board Chair



**Mississippi Market**  
Natural Foods Co-op



**W**arm Greetings from your Board of Directors! We've had an **excellent** year - our new West 7th store has exceeded expectations, and we have funds to update our Selby store. Why have we prospered? I recently attended a lecture on strategic planning. The speaker said that the most successful companies are really great at one of the following: product, price, or customer service.

I've always assumed that Mississippi Market's **success** is in our products. However, we continue to be successful even as organics become more mainstream. Then I realized that the co-op has always been about the customer, and that is because of our structure as a cooperative. As someone said, cooperatives exist "to meet human need, not encourage human greed." Having our member-owners **trust** the products that we carry, treating **staff** and suppliers fairly, respecting the **environment** and supporting our **community** are more important than maximum profitability.

Though not everyone who shops at our co-op knows about the cooperative principles, they sense that our focus is a more complex and humane one, and this draws them in. We are not alone - The United Nations declared 2012 to be the Year of the Cooperative. Minnesota is **fortunate** to have the most food co-ops of any state! New food co-ops are being formed around the country at an unprecedented rate, in spite of, or because of, tough economic times. There are so many other kinds of **cooperatives**: farmers' co-ops, electric co-ops, workers' co-ops, credit unions (which are cooperative banks), prison co-ops to rehabilitate and employ criminals, housing co-ops, childcare, the list is long. Could R.E.I. and Organic Valley be more different? Yet the co-op structure works for both.

Since one of the cooperative principles is "**cooperation among cooperatives**", we will be working on making more connections with co-ops in the coming year. Keep your eyes open for cooperatives that could potentially serve your needs.

**In 2012 "Start Seeing Cooperatives."**



Josh Reintz of East Henderson Farm takes part in the first Eat Local Farm Tour.

# People

**190** people toured our stores to learn about green buildings, co-ops and natural foods.

**167** staff members, with 100% of eligible full time staff earning a livable wage of at least \$11.82 per hour.

**24** speaking engagements in the community about healthful eating.

**\$19,000** to Midwest Food Connection, the non-profit organization founded by the Twin Cities food co-ops to educate children about natural foods, sustainable farming, and cultural origins of our food.

**78** classes for 938 participants.

**1<sup>st</sup>** Eat Local Farm Tour spearheaded by Mississippi Market.

# People



The West 7th plant sale

# Planet

**3.97%** increase in our carbon footprint since 2010, and declining since our Energy Audit!

**111** tons of food waste diverted from trash & recycled into animal feed & compost. Provided food waste for composting at Women's Environmental Institute's Growing Power Regional Training Center.

**47.8%** of wholesale purchases were from local producers or MN-owned businesses.

**35%** of staff use alternative transportation to get to work (bike, walk, bus, or carpool).

**15** items sold per bag given away. The higher the number the fewer bags used.

# Planet

# Profit

**11.75%** increase in sales - to \$19,758,651.

**\$3.7** million in owner equity - an increase from \$3.5 million.

**\$100,563** after-tax profit.

**10.45%** increase to over 11,000 active member-owners.

**\$2.2** million in cash - maintaining a strong financial position.

**\$212,020** of member-owner discounts given.

# Profit

