

December Owner News



BLOOMINGFOODS



Bloomingfoods has something for everyone this holiday season!

Order your Turkey, Ham, or Beef Tenderloin online now through December 12th

Reservation options include fresh, whole turkeys and bone-in breasts from [Bowman & Landes](#); [Beeler's](#) boneless half-hams, and local Beef Tenderloin from [Rice's Quality Farm Meats](#). We'll also be offering Bowman & Landes turkeys, Beeler's boneless half-hams, Rice's beef tenderloin, local [Maple Leaf Farms](#) young ducklings, and vegetarian/vegan options in our stores throughout the month of December (while supplies last). Side dishes, desserts, eggnog and more will be available in stores as well. For more information and to place your order, please visit our website by clicking [here](#).

Holiday Hours

Christmas Eve - All stores close at 4pm

Christmas Day - All stores closed

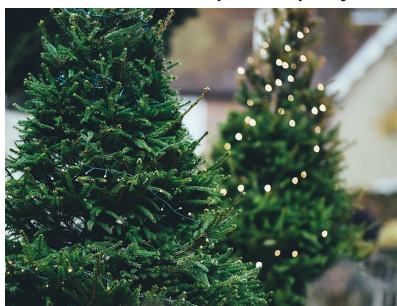


New Year's Eve - All stores close at 6pm

New Year's Day - All stores closed

Holiday Trees Now Available at East

Holiday trees and greenery are on sale now! The tree shop is selling an assortment of both cut and live fir, pine, and spruce trees from 11am to 8pm daily as long as supplies last. If you need convincing that real trees are best, or you're wondering about the health and sustainability impacts of your tree choices, perhaps you'll enjoy this [Rodale's article](#).



December's Local Focus: [Sabun Soaps](#)

Bloomingfoods shoppers receive 25% off all Sabun Soaps and Lip Balms!

"Before we even begin creating a soap, we demand quality from our raw materials. All our raw materials, which include coconut oil, almond oil, palm oil, etc., are plant-based. We only use 100% high quality essential oils, which we purchase right here in Indiana. Sābūn brand soaps are comprised of several completely unique recipes, with each formulated to provide distinctive benefits."



Positive Change gives The Farm to Family Fund a lot to be Thankful for in November

"Bloomingfoods' Positive Change Program singlehandedly allowed us to meet the \$5,000 challenge for a 2 for 1 match from a private family foundation" said Fund Committee Chair, Janice Lilly. "So, we have not only the \$6200+ from Bloomingfoods but also \$10,000 from the foundation with which to buy food at half price from the Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market and make it available to agencies serving low income households in our community! Thank you Bloomingfoods shoppers!"

Bloomingfoods' shoppers donated \$6,276.01 to the [Farm to Family Fund](#) (formerly the Healthful Food for All Fund) in November, setting yet another Positive Change record! Positive Change raises funds by giving shoppers the opportunity to round their purchase up to the nearest dollar, or donate more if they wish. Each month, Bloomingfoods has a new recipient organization, and 100% of the proceeds go directly to the organization.

Since January, the campaign has successfully raised more than \$50,000 for local community-driven organizations, and we're proud to announce that it will be returning next year. The co-op's owner-members have chosen these organizations to Round Up for in 2017: Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, Hoosier Hills Food Bank, Community Kitchen of Monroe County, Interfaith Winter Shelter, Shalom Community Center, Sycamore Land Trust, Bloomington Meals on Wheels, Bloomington Community Orchard, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington, Area 10 Agency on Aging, and the Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market.



"Transparency bites us in the rear...."

By Tony Alongi, General Manager

Ever since Bloomingfoods' financial struggles came to light in early 2015, owners have been clamoring for more "transparency" about the business. I completely agree – although you may find it odd to also find out that I seriously dislike the word "transparency." Why? Because it doesn't have a definition – it means something different to everyone and if we don't meet your definition, then we are often accused of hiding something. Of not being "transparent!"

That said, we recently took two extraordinary steps to increase the transparency of Bloomingfoods business to its owner-members. First, we announced the first Financial

forum (see details below) where we intend to review YTD financial performance with those owner-members that are interested in learning about it. Second, at my suggestion to the board, we took the extraordinary step of publishing our annual Ends Report for all to see.

This report, prepared by the General Manager annually, gives sort of a “state of the business” address to the board on how we did achieving our Ends – the overarching statement that we strive for (but by their nature can never fully achieve) in our effort to be a better business for our community.

Ownership has become too large to simply mail information out to everyone, so as we sit here in 2016, the easiest, quickest and most cost-effective way to disseminate information is to make it available via our website. Which is exactly what we did – in late October. We

put my entire Ends Report on the website for any member (actually, anyone that was interested) to see. And it is a pretty blunt report – stating that we really took steps backwards last year in our effort to become a better cooperative. That shouldn’t be a surprise to any of you who read this regularly, shop our stores, attend various meetings or generally have an interest in Bloomingfoods – it has been a tough couple of years.

So why is this bad? Well, it isn’t really. I believe that this is information that you, owner-members, should know about your business. But imagine our surprise when, on the morning of Saturday, November 19th, we awoke to find that our beloved local newspaper, the Herald Times, decided to take bits and pieces of our Ends Report and make it a front-page, above the fold report using the information, along with the Annual Report (which is also available on-line) to inform readers that we are “still struggling” and that we are a failing business.

This is news? Front-page, above-the-fold news? Information that has been available to any and all who wanted it for over a month? A piece littered with quotes from a report that contains information going back, in some cases, 18 months? And no effort to reach out to management or the board for any comment before going to press? More than a little disappointing.

So I will ask again – was this effort at transparency bad? Well, maybe, actually. Not for the information that it contained and not for the edification of the owner-members. But in making the information so readily available we gave the local paper the opportunity to do a hack-job article that scared many of our staff and members alike. Rather than working to move the business forward, I spent the better part of a week explaining to staff why they shouldn’t be worried about their jobs and talking with members who “didn’t know things were that bad.” They aren’t! Read the report for yourselves. That is why we put them up there in the first place! It’s your business – you have to know what our Ends are; what we strive for year-in and year-out. Read the full report and you will see how ludicrous and irresponsible the HT piece was. Yes, the assessment I gave is blunt and to the point – those of you who know me know that is how I roll. But this was also my only opportunity to set the bar for the future. Much of that report was not in my control because I haven’t been here that long. By setting the bar where I did, I have the opportunity to progress! Next

year, if I have to give the same report then it is 100% on me. The Ends Report was no different than much of my reporting to the board over the past nine months – A blunt assessment of where we are, where and why we have failed to deliver and a long series of action plans to fix it. That is what is expected of me as the General Manager.

I remain committed to the idea of getting owner-members more information about their business. Publishing reports is one way. Inviting you to participate in meaningful forums that should be of interest (product pricing forum anyone?) is another. But given the events reported here, we might need to re-think our methods going forward.

Thank you for your continued support of Bloomingfoods.



Now on Tap: Presto Kombucha

Tap into health with the fizzy, fermented goodness of locally-crafted [Presto Kombucha](#) which is now available at our Near West Side location. Bloomingfoods is offering 4 rotating flavors that you can enjoy in-house, or on the go in a snazzy 32 oz. glass howler.

"Presto Kombucha founder, Nick Murdick, enjoyed his first kombucha while attending an International Horn Society Horn Symposium in Denver, Colorado in 2008, and he immediately began brewing his own. Drinking kombucha for the first time was a life changing experience. Nick realized that he had discovered a wonderful alternative for soda. The response to Presto Kombucha has been incredible, and producing Presto Kombucha commercially is a dream come true. Nick's goal is to introduce as many people as possible to kombucha. Presto Kombucha strives to offer a consistently balanced, refreshing, smooth and tasty kombucha experience."

Get



at Bloomingfoods!

Got a smartphone? Get a deal! [Hooked](#) is a free mobile app that offers short-

term, exclusive deals for restaurants around town. Currently, we are offering "Hooks" at our Near West Side and Ivy Tech locations. With deals like BOGO sandwiches on the weekends and 30% off Hot Bar Happy Hours, this app is something that is definitely worth taking advantage of! Download the app and get Hooked at Bloomingfoods today!

Music is Coming Back to the Stores!

You might have noticed that our stores have been very quiet in recent weeks. IT and Marketing have done some research to explore options for better music, and learn about what kind of music works best for the majority of grocery store shoppers. Our new provider is Soundtrack Business, a division of [Spotify](#). While we realize it's impossible to please everyone 100% of the time, we want to provide a great store experience, and this new source should offer a great variety of enjoyable music.



A Tale of Two Comments: A request from GM, Tony Alongi

We get a lot of comments about our business. We love getting comments – we really do; it's what makes us a co-op. But not all comments are the same. Consider these two very different comments both received within the last few weeks:

The first comment was very general, about three lines long and complained that our “center of store staff were unfriendly.” The second comment was several paragraphs long.

The member in question had a specific issue with one of our staff, who she named, and gave very specific examples. The comment also singled out another one of our staff (also by name) who stepped in to solve this person's issues. There was a lot of specific detail in the comment including times that the incidents happened.

There is almost nothing that we can do with the first comment as it is far too general. I do not believe, for a minute that our entire center of store staff is unfriendly – although I am aware that some are friendlier than others. The second comment, however, allows us to take very specific actions to both change and reinforce behavior with specific individuals. It was one of the most useful comments that we have received in the recent past.

So what is the point? Please, please when writing to us with comments – both good and bad – include as much detail as you possibly can. Names of the staff members involved, which store and times of day are all important pieces of information that we need in order to take any action on your comment. We understand that this can be uncomfortable at times, but, we assume that you are writing the comment because you feel that we (a) need to know something that you find important and (b) you want us to take some kind of action on

the comment. Please help us out by giving us as much detail as you possibly can.

Positive Change Contributions Not Tax Deductible

We have recently been fielding questions asking us if Positive Change contributions are tax deductible. The short answer is no, the program is not set-up in a way for it to be tax deductible. First, not all of the organizations that were chosen this year to receive the contributions are set-up as 501c3 organizations. More importantly, Bloomingfoods is acting only as a conduit for the donations. Donations are accumulated by Bloomingfoods on behalf of the shoppers and then given to the organizations. Any recognition of tax deductibility would have to come from the recipient organization to the actual donor, and in order to do so the recipient would need to know who the individual donors were. Bloomingfoods does not provide this information to the recipient organization, nor do we currently have the wherewithal to do so. Even if we did, it is highly unlikely that the organizations we are contributing to would generate letters for the small amounts that the individual donations total each month.

That said, if you are interested in knowing where and how much you contributed this year, we will be in the position to provide you with a summary after the end of January, 2017. If you would like to know this information, please send an email to

natascha@bloomingfoods.coop after January 30th and let her know. She will email you back after that date with a simple summary of how much you rounded up and for which organizations during 2016.

On behalf of our positive change partners, Bloomingfoods would like to thank everyone who rounded up during 2016! Your contributions have made a huge difference to our partners and we look forward to an even more successful partnership in 2017.

Bloomingfoods Financial Forum – Wednesday, January 11th

Do you want to know more about Bloomingfoods finances? Interested in knowing how we are performing? Then this forum is for you. Join Todd Dixon, Bloomingfoods' Finance Manager and Tony Alongi, General Manager on Wednesday, January 11th at 6:30 p.m. at the East Store Patio for Bloomingfoods first quarterly financial forum. We will walk you through Bloomingfoods financial statements, explaining the ins and outs of the grocery business. The January forum will focus on Bloomingfoods first quarter of operations for fiscal year 2017 (July through September, 2016). Please note, this forum was initially planned for the November/December time frame but the board reporting schedule (the board needs to see and review the quarterly financials first) resulted in a delay until January. Future forums will, if at all possible, be kept closer to the quarter end.

Board News

This past year your board of directors has been working to update the legal documents that provide the governance structure for Bloomington Cooperative Services, Inc. With the support of your vote, we have changed the bylaws to increase the number of directors from seven to nine, and to welcome up to two employee owner-members as directors. In addition, we have cleaned up and simplified our Articles of Incorporation.

We are now working to complete the rewrite of the bylaws. Originally, we had hoped to have this done for a special vote in March, 2017. However, the current plan is to have the rewrite completed by March, 2017 and be voted on in our next board election in September/October, 2017.

This is very important work for the co-op and we need your feedback. Some of the issues we are still discussing are inactive status for owner-members, institutional owner-membership and quorum requirements for owner-member meetings. Caroline Beebe, the board president, will be in the Eastside Patio Room from 5:00-6:00 PM on Thursday, January 26th, 2017 to talk with you about these changes. We would like to hear your questions, suggestions and comments. Please come!

The board would also like to give a big thank you to Claire Cumberland, who recently resigned from the board of directors due to relocating to State College, Pennsylvania. Not only did Claire serve on the board since the last election, she was one of three ex officio board members who graciously volunteered to be part of the board for five months before the election. In this role, she was an important part of the work on the bylaws and articles. Thank you Claire, and best of luck in your new home!

Janice Lilly, Board Member

Upcoming Board of Directors Meetings:

Regularly scheduled monthly board meetings are held the last Thursday of the month at 6:30pm in the Patio Room of the East Store. Board Meetings are open to co-op owner-members and guests of the board. Familiarity with the Bylaws, Policies, and the Policy Governance Method will enhance your understanding of the board meeting process.

Thursday, January 26th, 2017

Owner-Member Connection Committee Meetings:

Wednesday, December 21st @ 6:30, @ East Patio Room

Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market: Saturdays, December 3rd – March 25th (except Dec 24th), 9am-12:30pm @ Harmony School

"Want to keep getting your favorite farmers' market goods all winter? The Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market has over 30 vendors with a diversity of produce, meats, eggs, dairy, soaps, flowers, plants, mushrooms, honey, syrup, prepared foods, and holiday items. Come for breakfast, live music, and a great variety of local products."

St. Nick's Workshop: Saturday, December 10th, 12pm - 5pm @ Monroe County Public Library

"Come make some gifts for your loved ones this holiday season. **Discardia** will bring sewing machines, and Bloominglabs will provide scrap fabric. Make a mold of your favorite object in Bloominglabs' vacuum former and then make a bar of soap from the mold. Or create a pop-up holiday card. All ages welcome and family friendly."

Save the Date

10th Annual Percussive Dance Extravaganza: Thursday, January 19th @ Ivy Tech Waldron Arts Center Auditorium

Bloomingfoods will be selling tickets for this "evening of percussive dance and American roots music, featuring special guests Clelia Stefanini and Eric Frey, along with Brad Leftwich, Sam Bartlett, and more!" Stay tuned for ticket order information.

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