



Integrity. Accountability. Community. Ethical behavior. These core values were identified at our board retreat as guiding principles for all that we strive to accomplish at Bloomingfoods. The retreat provided a wonderful opportunity for the board and our new interim general management team (Dee Bohler, Jennifer Riley, and Phil Phillipy) to set the tone for our actions this year. It is crucial to bring our values to the forefront as we continue to ask hard questions about the future of our beloved cooperative. Our goal is not just a financially successful Bloomingfoods but a thriving cooperative integrated with the larger community.

You likely already know that summer poses a challenge to Bloomingfoods (and other local businesses) due to the departure of IU students. This year, very limited cash reserves are putting us in a particularly fragile position. We cannot afford to burn through cash the way we have in past years. With that in mind, the board is taking actions to right-size our expenses and increase our cash reserves. What steps are we taking? First, Tony Alongi started the process of reducing labor costs which we will continue to implement over the next few weeks. Second, the board has resolved to freeze member equity – no member equity refunds for the remainder of the calendar year. Third, we are collaborating with our interim general management team to tighten up operations, launch additional programs to increase sales, and develop a plan to minimize sales decline if the anticipated corporate competitor moves into the College Mall.

These immediate actions are focused around the short-term goal of keeping Bloomingfoods cash positive long enough to reinvent ourselves. Now, we need to radically examine what we want to be in 3 to 5 years and build a plan for how we get there from here. This is a great opportunity to rebuild ourselves from the ground up and to really think about how we increase access to good

food. Cooperatives took the natural food movement from the fringes into the mainstream. We changed the way people eat. Now we need to innovate again.

How can you help us lead the charge to that next step? Let's start by beginning a conversation. **Please join us for an owner-member forum on Thursday March 1st, 7:00-9:00pm at Harmony School (909 E. 2nd Street).** We will be building off a meeting held on January 29th where we discussed the future of Bloomingfoods with the owner-lenders who invested \$1.2 million toward the Elm Heights store. Bloomingfoods needs a strong business model moving forward, and the owner-lenders started us off with some great ideas, but we need you to add your voice! Our March owner-member forum is only the beginning of an ongoing conversation about what Bloomingfoods can and shall become. The forum is also one small expression of our commitment to clear and honest communication – sharing the actions and intentions of the board while listening to your ideas for the future. We look forward to increasing owner-member involvement as we build our future plans.

How can you help right now?

- Buy Bloomingfoods first. Most of us shop for groceries at multiple places and that's okay. Just buy everything you can at Bloomingfoods first. (Unless you can buy it directly from local producers or grow it yourself. Do those things before Bloomingfoods!)
- Attend the member forum on March 1. We need your ideas, your hopes, your dreams.
- Be an ambassador. Share your story of why Bloomingfoods matters. Encourage your friends and family to shop Bloomingfoods.
- Volunteer. With over 12,000 members, our community of owner-members represents an amazing array of skills, knowledge, and passion. Tell us how you might be able to help. Host an educational event? Serve on a committee? Help organize future member forums? Chair a membership drive?
- Recruit a new member. \$90 to own a piece of Bloomington and support an institution that truly keeps your dollars local.
- Pay cash. Did you know we lose almost 2% of sales to credit/debit card processing fees? That's more than \$200,000 a year!
- Hug a staff member. Well, at least tell them you really appreciate the work they do. Selling groceries may not be glamorous but our passionate and dedicated staff work hard to make Bloomingfoods a great place to shop.
- Be on the lookout for future communications. We will be posting in the e-newsletter, on the Bloomingfoods blog, via paper flyers, through social media, and with additional member forums. We want to keep you in the loop and we want to hear your thoughts. Let's keep communicating.

Thank you again for your support of Bloomingfoods. Please don't hesitate to reach out with ideas, questions, or concerns.

Thank you,
Maggie Sullivan

Bloomingfoods Board President

Maggie@bloomingfoods.coop

[812-345-1592](tel:812-345-1592)



Owner-members are invited to join us for an owner-member forum to discuss the future of Bloomingfoods. The board will present a brief update on the current state of our stores and finances, answer questions from owner-members, and hold brainstorming sessions for both short-term and long-term plans. We need your ideas for the future!



The board is excited to announce the appointment of a new interim General

Manager team: Jennifer Riley, Dee Bohler (center), and Phil Phillipy. Dee will serve as the team lead and will step back from her current position of Near West Store Assistant Manager. Phil (Near West Store Manager) and Jennifer (Human Resources Manager) will remain in their current positions as they step up to offer operational and administrative support respectively. Although a single GM is the norm, the board decided to explore the team concept to assure everyone felt comfortable and proficient in their new roles. Additionally, the team concept will be essential on all levels of staff, management, board, and owner-members as we move forward and reinvent. The board has also created three ad-hoc committees (teams) focused on finance, operations, and culture to offer further support. The work in front of Bloomingfoods is daunting during this transitional period. Please share our appreciation of and confidence in Dee, Jennifer, and Phil to lead the way. Thank you also to all the passionate and qualified candidates who applied. We are grateful for your ongoing hard work, creativity, and dedication to Bloomingfoods.



2018's Positive Change campaign started on a great note: Bloomingfoods shoppers gave big for [Area 10 Agency on Aging](#) for the month of January. An amazing \$8,160.37 was raised in the name of providing mobile meals to our community's home-bound seniors!

This program could not exist without the hard work of our staff as well as the overwhelming generosity of our shoppers. Thank you for your dedication to our community of non-profits!

The campaign continues at all three Bloomingfoods locations. For the month of February, the co-op is raising funds for [Sycamore Land Trust](#).



SYCAMORE LAND TRUST

Sycamore Land Trust protects land and connects people to nature in southern Indiana. They protect 9,320 acres of land -- and counting! Their 16 public nature preserves across the region invite hikers, birdwatchers, and nature lovers to enjoy the great outdoors. They bring environmental education programming to more than 5,000 people a year, in schools, community groups,

and public events. Sycamore actively stewards the land they own, and never does timbering on their properties. In addition to forests, wetlands, and prairies, they also protect family farms like Capriole Goat Farm through conservation easements with private landowners.



February's Local Focus Vendor Sober Joe Coffee

Every Saturday in February, support your local community in multiple ways while enjoying 30% off the entire line of [Sober Joe](#) products!

Great taste meets community action in every delicious cup of Sober Joe coffee. Micro-roasted to dark perfection right here in Indiana, Sober Joe's beans deliver a flavor that's full-bodied and exceptionally rich from start to finish.

But the Sober Joe experience doesn't end on your palate. It continues into the world of recovery and beyond, with the profits from every bag going to help the lifesaving work of Bloomington's [Courage to Change Sober Living Communities](#).

Meet the Sober Joe crew and try their coffee on Saturday, February 17:
East 8:30 am - 11:30 am
Near West 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

OWNER EQUITY

announcement

Given our current cash flow difficulties, the Board of Directors has voted to suspend the return of equity payments for owner-members wishing to terminate their memberships in the cooperative, as provided in the bylaws (Article II section 2.7). This suspension is for the period of February 1st through December 31st 2018 and will be re-evaluated in December for continuation or re-instatement for 2019. During the suspension period, termination requests will be placed on a waiting list. If Return of Equity is re-instated for 2019, the termination requests for 2018 will be the first processed in the order in which they were received.

Upcoming Board of Directors Meetings

Regularly scheduled monthly board meetings are held the last Thursday of the month at 6:30pm. 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.

Meetings are held at Noodles & Company Conference Room, Eastland Plaza, 2560 E Third St.

Thursday, February 22nd
Thursday, March 29th
Thursday, April 26th



Bloomington Winter Farmers' Market - Saturdays @ Harmony School,
December 2 - March 31

11th Annual Percussive Dance Extravaganza

Mike's Dance Barn, 2277 State Rd 46, Nashville, IN

Saturday, March 3, 2018

7:30pm, doors at 7:00

Starting February 14, Bloomingfoods East & Near West will be selling tickets for the 11th Annual Percussive Dance Extravaganza! \$15 for adults and \$10 for 14 and under.



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