

HUDSON Happenings

SECTION **B**

Hudson Grocery Cooperative surpasses 100 members

Goal is to open
downtown store

Sometimes people need to take matters into their own hands, say the organizers of the Hudson Grocery Cooperative.

A growing number of area residents have become part of the movement to open a community-owned grocery store in downtown Hudson. What began as a casual conversation on a school playground has become a shared venture with more than 100 owners.

Last Thursday, the co-op celebrated the milestone with a "100 Owner Party" at American Sky Brewery.

The event brought together current and prospective grocery co-op owners to enjoy local beer, listen to local musician Sam Salter, sample local cheeses and meats from Specialty Meats and Gourmet, and browse displays from several local farmers and vendors.

The focus on "local" is no accident. It's central to the co-op's mission.

"We really want a grocery store that supports local farmers and showcases local products," says Board Presi-

dent Suzanne Hambleton.

Although a location has yet to be finalized, organizers believe that a full-service grocery store will also be a magnet that draws more visitors and commuters, as well as residents to downtown Hudson and its locally owned businesses. In 2007, Econofoods relocated and since then the downtown has been

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without a grocery store.

"There has been a lot of interest and support from business owners," according to Sarah Atkins, whose architectural building material business has been located in downtown Hudson since 2001 and who serves as the co-op treasurer.

"This is a community effort that can benefit everyone. Now we need to build on the

enthusiasm we're seeing here tonight and really make this thing happen because it won't happen unless people literally take ownership," Atkins said.

The cooperative structure means that individuals and households can buy a share in the co-op. The one-time purchase makes them part owners and allows them to participate in decision-making and governance.

Once the store opens and is successful, owners may receive dividends in the form of store credit or a direct payment.

Hudson Grocery Cooperative has a reciprocity agreement with River Market Community Co-op in Stillwater, so its owners can enjoy the benefits of cooperative membership even before there is a store in Hudson. If the store fails to open, owners will be able to cash in their share for its current value.

Hudson Grocery Cooperative is actively seeking new owners to join the 100-plus individuals and families who have already purchased shares.

"We need everyone who wants to shop at a new, lo-



PHOTO BY RANDY HANSON

Hudson Grocery Cooperative board members attending last week's 100 Owner Party at American Sky Brewery included, clockwise from front, Treasurer Sarah B. Atkins, Steve Fox, President Suzanne Hambleton, Bridget O'Meara and Secretary Bess Hambleton.

cally owned co-op in the future to make their share purchase today. This is an exciting adventure and we want to invite all residents in

Hudson and surrounding communities," says Hambleton. "Together we will shape our very own co-op."

To find out more about the

co-op, visit www.hudsongrocerycooperative.org or email hudsongrocerycoop@gmail.com.