

SELENE WHOLE FOODS COOPERATIVE, INC

305 West State Street

Media, PA 19063

Thursday, December 18, 2008

Dear Members,

You may have heard that Selene will close before the end of the year or within the next 30 days. It's not gossip. Our cooperative is behind in payments to suppliers and late in rent. We do not have the fresh produce and products that members and walk-in customers need. As the only store in Media that sells bulk organic grains, takes bulk orders, and sells fresh produce from nearby organic farms, we could be the leading fresh market in town, complementing Trader Joe's rather than competing with their prices on the same products. With your help, we will be.

We have two fund raising plans for which we are accepting donations immediately. We also have a long-term member loan plan and a comprehensive restructuring and expansion plan, which are as follows:

Fund Raising Plans

The 25 Member Challenge: This program started by Treasurer Dave Minnich (with his own \$200 donation) seeks to have 25 motivated members donate \$200 each as an emergency contribution to Selene to bring its vendor bills current. Several Board members took up the challenge immediately, and we are confident that there are many more members who will rise to this challenge so the coop can survive this immediate crisis. In addition, we will certainly accept donations in any amount to help with this!

The Capital Campaign

\$12,000 dedicated to replacing the produce case, implementing a bar-code point-of-sale system, and installing upgrades to the store; the details were sent out early this fall, and some goals (such as the new awning) have already been realized – but we need to recoup the money that was taken from our operating fund to pay for it. If this looks like a big amount, think of it this way:

- When 100 of us give \$120 each, we'll have it!
- When 150 of us give \$80 each, we'll have it!
- When all 200 of us give \$60 each, we'll have it!

Whatever level works for you please give generously because in the end we still need \$12,000 to make these much-needed improvements.

Long-Term Member Loan Plan

A much larger effort is to raise \$100,000 over the next month through low interest loans from its members. We will provide details in oncoming communications. Now we know we're talking "big money" here, but 40 members loaning – not giving, but loaning - the co-op \$2,500 apiece would get us there! Imagine what Selene could be with this type of funding – and the co-op members would get their money back, with interest!

Comprehensive Restructuring and Expansion Plan

Our most ambitious plan yet! Over the long term, we've applied to a sustainable fund for nonprofits and illustrated a five year plan whereby we purchase a well maintained store building with central air conditioning (preferably in the very center of town), coordinate the purchase with an advertising and marketing campaign, lease out the top residential unit as monthly income, hire a chief executive officer with four permanent staff, and increase our sales and membership on a scheduled monthly basis. The application for this project is already completed and sent, the building is available, and our CEO Search Committee is sifting through resumes and preparing its interview questions.

FINAL WORDS

First, the weakness of a volunteer organization such as the Selene Food Cooperative, Inc., is that all its members are volunteers, and the Board of Directors - drawn from the general membership - is temporary, rotating off after two years. The strength of such a volunteer organization is that the members are united in the following:

- their need to join a community that shares their values;
- an awareness that organic produce and grains are much less expensive than prescription medicines and costly medical treatments;
- that pesticide layered food harms our young as well as ourselves;
- that a soil depleted of nutrients cannot sustain nutritious crops;
- that we should support our local farmers over giant agrobusinesses, since locally grown produce is healthier than that from distant "factory farms".

Finally, our most effective "fundraiser" would be for members to switch some of their current purchases from other stores to Selene. If only 100 people (about half our membership) purchased \$30 extra per week from Selene, that switch would increase Selene's sales by \$3,000 per week. After paying for the cost of goods sold from these increased sales, Selene would have an extra \$1,200 per week clear for overhead and repairs - sufficient to stabilize Selene's current finances. We are working hard to make shopping at Selene a more desirable experience; we ask that you support us in our efforts by buying from Selene wherever possible.

We join you in best wishes for a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. While you are sending your contribution, however modest, please also take time to renew your membership for 2009 (\$40.00 individual, \$30 senior citizens).

Sincerely yours,

The Board of Directors, Selene Whole Foods Cooperative, December 2008