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COOPERATIVE FUND of New England

Investor Profile: Pedal People Delivery Services

Pedal People is a worker-owned cooperative located in Northampton, Massachusetts that provides bicycle-powered delivery of groceries as well as hauling for yard waste, recycling, and trash. Pedal People recently expanded its membership by welcoming four new collective members in the last year, bringing the cooperative to fourteen worker owners.

“I have wanted to be part of a worker co-op since I worked in one in college, and Pedal People in particular has been a great fit. Sometimes I can’t believe that I work hauling trash through the snow on a bike, and that I have never felt as positive about another job,” says Alison Wilson-Pierce, a worker owner hired in 2010.

Supporting the cooperative movement through development of resources and collaboration with other cooperatives is a core interest of the worker-owners at Pedal People. As a member of the Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives (VAWC), a regional association of twelve worker-owned cooperatives in Massachusetts, Vermont, and Connecticut, the collective helps to educate and develop community awareness about the worker co-op model of democratically owned and managed enterprise.

In 2010, Pedal People worker owners made a decision to use surplus profits for the good of the cooperative

economy, in accordance with the cooperative principles of “cooperation among cooperatives” and “concern for community.” The collective made a significant step forward in their relationship with CFNE by investing their surplus into the fund. “We didn’t particularly want to put it in a bank, and the idea of putting it into a cooperative fund fit with our ideals as a cooperative,” explains worker owner Alex

Jarrett. Pedal People’s investment in CFNE goes towards building resources for other cooperatives, strengthening financial options for start-up cooperatives, and continuing the work that CFNE has been doing to grow cooperatives over the past thirty five years.

Pedal People has been actively working with the City Of Northampton, alongside other

community members and organizations, to deal with the impending local landfill closing in 2012. “Northampton does not currently have a municipal waste collection system. A solid waste task force was created to review different options and make a recommendation to City Council. We’ve attended meetings and been part of the process of thinking through what would be best for **our** community and how our business can be part of it,” explains Wilson-Pierce.

To learn more about Pedal People or to become a customer, visit www.pedalpeople.com -profile by Kalista Aird

“The horizontal leadership model of worker co-ops feels like an especially promising alternative to hierarchal structures I see everywhere”



Winter delivery of farm shares



Collective members of Pedal People



Recycling pick-up by Ruthy, a founding member of Pedal People

The Cooperative Fund of New England (CFNE) is a nonprofit community loan fund founded in 1975. CFNE provides lending and technical assistance to cooperatives and nonprofit community-based organizations working to build a more just, sustainable and cooperative economy. CFNE is a U.S. Treasury certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). For more information, call 1-800-818-7833 or visit www.coopfund.coop.

