

Candidate Statement: Jerry McGeorge

It has been my privilege to serve on the NCBA CLUSA Board for the past twelve years. While I believe I have made a positive impact on the organization, I also recognize that it has had a positive impact on me. In particular, it has broadened my understanding of the breadth and depth of the co-op movement and has opened my eyes to the potential this business form has to be transformational to the way we do business in this country. I truly believe co-ops represent a better business model.

NCBA CLUSA has an opportunity to be at the forefront of efforts to create a compelling picture of what a more robust, dynamic cooperative economy can be. I think our organization can position itself to be a champion, a pre-eminent voice for cooperation and cooperatives, both here in America through our trade association identity, and abroad through our cooperative development activities.

This will not be an easy task. Rather, I see it as a huge challenge, but one that I believe NCBA CLUSA is up to. Further, I believe my years of experience on the Board of Directors and the leadership positions I have held (including stints as Board Chair, First Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Executive Committee member) make me uniquely qualified to help provide the guidance and direction necessary for NCBA CLUSA to provide leadership and vision for the whole cooperative movement in our country.

More specifically, I believe we have a role to play in really encouraging all cooperatives to incorporate Cooperative Principle 6—cooperation among cooperatives—into their business thinking. I believe we have an opportunity to educate younger generations on the benefits of cooperatives and to enable them to go out and start up their own cooperative enterprises. I believe we should be highlighting the incredible and life-changing projects we are sponsoring in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, as these show the real power of the cooperative movement.

I also believe NCBA CLUSA has an obligation to first reach out to its existing member base and truly understand what you all want and need from us, and then to reach out to the broader domestic cooperative community to understand what it would find valuable from a trade association. We have an incredibly diverse set of cooperatives in America—from multi-billion dollar cooperative banks, to small worker-owned co-ops, and from well-known retail names like REI and Ace Hardware to small retail groceries or housing co-ops. As we know, diversity can be a strength, but finding common ground can also be a challenge. If NCBA CLUSA can meet this challenge, it will be providing an incredibly valuable service to our cooperative community.

It has been an honor to be a part of NCBA CLUSA for the past twelve years, and, if the membership sees fit to re-elect me, it will be an honor to be a part of it into the future.