

# Durango Natural Foods Co-op

## Board of Directors – 2015 Election Information Packet



Revised February 27, 2015

**All applications are due April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015 by 5:00 p.m.**

### Our ends statement:

DNFC is a member-owned food cooperative committed to providing quality organic local products and educating our community on the value of healthy living. We

- Engage the community in cooperative principles
- Participate in a sustainable local economy
- Educate consumers about the broad impact of their choices
- Provide tools for living a healthy lifestyle
- Respect the environment through our actions

575 East 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Durango CO 81301 970-247-8129

[www.duragonaturalfoods.coop](http://www.duragonaturalfoods.coop)

**Thank you** for your interest in joining the Board of Directors (BOD) of Durango Natural Foods Co-op (DNFC)!! We hope this packet will help you understand DNFC's history, mission and current goals, as well as the role of the DNFC BOD.

For 40 years, DNFC has been providing the community with quality natural, local and organic products, education and service. In 2009, the DNF membership voted to convert from a Colorado not-for-profit corporation to a Colorado cooperative corporation. DNFC is governed by its members, for its members, and is supportive of the community at large. It has grown from a buying club to a member-owned retail store that is grossing nearly two million in annual sales.

In addition to a committed membership, a large part of DNFC's success can be attributed to the loyalty and commitment of the store's General Manager (GM) and staff. Every day, their belief in DNFC's mission, their customers and each other makes DNFC a warm, inviting place to shop. Their knowledge of the products allows customers to leave more informed and better able to take control of their own health, as well as, the health and success of the local community and planet.

Another important part of DNFC's success is the support of its BOD. Each member brings a variety of professional and personal experiences to the group, forging a BOD **committed to fulfilling DNFC's mission, maintaining its quality and financial stability, and providing strategic planning for its future.** As such, it welcomes fresh ideas, energy and talent.

*Sitting on DNFC's BOD is a responsibility and requires commitment. The right person needs to have a deep belief in DNFC's mission and the time to listen, learn, and contribute to its exciting future. All BOD positions are voted on by the membership, or by the standing Board, if the position is uncontested.*

If you are interested in a seat on the board, please complete the application form located at the back of this packet and either submit it to the "Board election" wooden box in the store or email it to [board@durangonaturalfoods.coop](mailto:board@durangonaturalfoods.coop).

#### 2015 Board election schedule:

Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Applications due by 5 pm

Monday April 13<sup>th</sup>: Paper and electronic ballot ready

Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>: Annual meeting: candidate forum, in person voting

April 25<sup>th</sup>- May 5<sup>th</sup>: 10 days to vote via electronic or paper ballot

Tuesday May 5<sup>th</sup>: Voting ends at 8 pm

Friday May 8<sup>th</sup>: Election results verified by a third party and results announce via email blast and posted in the store.

Monday May 18<sup>th</sup>: Monthly Board meeting including newly elected Board members; Board officers will be elected.

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## The Cooperative Identity

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**Definition:** A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet its common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

**Values:** Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of its founders, DNF cooperative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

**Principles:** The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. DNF is a cooperative grocery store, founded on the Cooperative Principles.

- **Voluntary and open membership** Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use the services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
- **Democratic member control** Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting the policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member (household), one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.
- **Member economic participation** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
- **Autonomy and independence** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
- **Education, training, and information** Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute to their effectiveness. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
- **Cooperation among cooperatives** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
- **Concern for the community** Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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## History

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In the spring of 1973, a few grassroots visionaries chose to establish a local buying club to share low-cost, quality food and soon rented its first 10 x 30 ft. room located in the back and northern side of 700 Main Avenue. DNF operated on all volunteer efforts and donations using an unlocked, red fishing tackle box as its cash register. In 1974, it was legally registered with the state of Colorado to become Durango Natural Foods, Inc. In 1975, it moved to a 600 sq. ft. rented space in the alley of 2nd Ave. and 7th St. DNF invited a Social Services Program, the Single Purpose Application Referral System (SPARS), to initially share the premises.

In addition to manning the store, DNF volunteers worked with the community through SPARS by providing services and transportation for the elderly and the disadvantaged. Its first organic community garden flourished on the ground where The Mears House now stands. DNF organized a network of local farmers and producers to supply, as much as possible, its bulk grains, beans, nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, herbs, honey, beef, and eggs.

In order to accrue sufficient assets to buy its own building, DNF first invested its savings in a duplex at 3100 & 3104 West 2nd Ave. Using this property as collateral, members stepped forward to loan the down payment in March 1979, and purchased the northern half of its current 575 East 8th Ave. property. Community involvement continued through helping the Local Organic Produce Project (LOPP), the Soup Kitchen and San Juan Resource Recovery, among others. Education, too, has been one of DNF's priorities so throughout its history, informative newsletters have been sent plus a wide variety of classes and training videos have been offered.

In July 1987, DNF planned a parking expansion and improved handicap accessibility by first selling the duplex in order to buy the adjoining property to the west; it built a wheelchair ramp entrance and removed the house on the west property in August 1990. In January 1999, DNF purchased the adjacent property including an older house to the south. After removing the older house, it constructed a new adjoining building for larger retail and storage areas including a deli.

In 2006, the BOD planned the installation of the automatic glass sliding front doors, the filling of the depression in the parking lot and the painting of the building's exterior. Most existing member loans were consolidated and the commercial bank loan was increased by an additional \$50,000 to pay for the improvements. In 2009, members voted to replace the membership structure with an owner-equity system. Patronage dividends (the profits of the business) may be shared with member-owners in profitable years.

Currently, under Brian Gaddy's management as the General Manager, the store is looking toward a positive future and is continuously making strategic decisions to better serve its owner-members.

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## **DNFC BOD Responsibilities**

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The BOD governs in a way that emphasizes vision, strategic and proactive leadership; it provides clear distinctions of BOD and management roles; it deliberates in many voices but governs in one voice.

**The BOD's job is to:**

- Create a shared vision and “ends” policy that guide strategic planning
- Develop effective communication between the cooperative and its member/owners
- Hire a GM and direct and evaluate the GM's performance by monitoring against written policy
- Perpetuate itself through recruitment, training and ongoing professional development, including monitoring and self-evaluation.

The DNFC BOD operates using Policy Governance, a governing style that clearly defines the role of the BOD and GM. This style of governance allows the BOD to have its arms around the store without having its fingers in it. *It should be noted that the BOD is NOT involved in the day to day operations of the store.* Training will be provided to new BOD members in this system of governance.

The BOD receives support and training as needed from the National Cooperative Grocers (NCG) and Cooperative Development Services (CDS).

## **Frequently Asked Questions about Board Service**

**How often does the DNFC board meet?**

BOD meetings are generally held on the third Monday of the month, from 5:30-7:30 pm. The meetings are currently held in the DNFC Office.

**As a board member how much time am I expected to commit?**

Outside of monthly BOD meetings, a minimum of 3 hours a month is necessary to work on other BOD tasks, readings (i.e. monitoring reports) and committees. DNFC board members serve 3 year terms with staggered start dates to allow for continuity of leadership.

**How many DNFC Board members are there?**

The bylaws currently state a requirement for 7 BOD members. There are 5 vacant seats this election; three 3 year terms and two 2 year terms.

**Do I have to be a member-owner to serve on the DNFC Board of Directors?**

Yes, cooperative ownership-membership is required

**What does it cost to be a DNF member-owner?**

An active owner pays an investment of \$100 (either in one payment or in \$20 yearly or quarterly installments) and is then eligible to participate in elections and hold elected office. Only members current in their payments are considered active.

**Do DNFC Board members receive any additional benefits?**

BOD members receive a 10% discount on all purchases. And they have tons of fun!

If you have any additional questions, please contact the BOD at [board@durangonaturalfoods.coop](mailto:board@durangonaturalfoods.coop).

# Durango Natural Foods Co-op 2015 Board Application Form

The following information will be used to create the board election ballot. Phone number, address, and email will be used internally only.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your DNF member number:

Your occupation:

Your education:

Previous Board of Directors or other related experience:

Please answer the following questions in 300 words or less:

1. Why do you believe members should choose you to represent them?

2. In what areas do you think the board should be putting its attention in the next five years?

3. What else, if anything would you like to share with the membership?

*We would like a photo of you for the ballot. This will be scheduled to be taken the week of April 6<sup>th</sup> by Jules, the DNF marketing outreach manager.*

**Please submit this form to the “Board elections” wooden box in the store or send via e-mail to [board@durangonaturalfoods.coop](mailto:board@durangonaturalfoods.coop) by 5pm April 3, 2015**

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