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TWIN CITIES FOOD CO-OPS CHALLENGE AREA RESIDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN EAT LOCAL, AMERICA!

Initiative Part of National Co-op Challenge

MINNEAPOLIS (June 16, 2009) – The 11 Twin Cities natural food co-ops, along with dozens of food co-ops nationwide, challenge area residents to put their money where their mouths – and producers – are and help stimulate local economic growth by taking the Eat Local, America! challenge Aug. 1 – 31.

Those wishing to join simply sign a large poster at any of the participating Twin Cities and area co-ops, or register online at www.eatlocalamerica.coop to show their commitment to eat local food. Seasoned locavores are encouraged to commit to eating four out of five meals with local food – roughly 80 percent of their diets. Those who are just starting out – the local newbies – are urged to begin by eating five meals a week made with local foods.

The first Minnesota co-op sponsored Eat Local Challenge took place in 2006 at Just Food Co-op in Northfield, Minn. The following year, all Twin Cities area co-ops embraced this “locally grown” initiative, and in 2008 the campaign expanded nationally and became “Eat Local, America!”

The Challenge maintains strong roots among Twin Cities and surrounding communities, with hundreds of people annually committing to showing their support for local farmers and producers for an entire month.

“There are many benefits to eating local food,” said Kim Kusnier, marketing programs specialist for National Cooperative Grocers Association (NCGA) – a business services cooperative, to which the Twin Cities food co-ops and 100 other food co-ops nationwide – belong. “It’s good for the economy, because money from each transaction stays in the region. And it connects residents to the people who grow or produce their food, while helping to support family farms.”

“Plus, local food is more nutritious and simply tastes better, because it’s often harvested or processed the same day it arrives at the co-op,” she said.

For years, Twin Cities and surrounding area co-ops have cultivated reciprocal, long-term relationships with local growers and producers. This allows the co-ops to offer shoppers a convenient connection to fresh and delicious food of the highest quality.

To learn more about the Twin Cities-area Eat Local, America! challenge, visit www.eatlocalamerica.coop or www.twincitiesfood.coop.

About Twin Cities Natural Food Co-ops

The Twin Cities are nationally recognized for their progressive and strong natural food cooperative system. In the metropolitan and surrounding area, there are 11 independently owned natural food cooperatives: Eastside Food Co-op (Northeast Minneapolis), Just Food Co-op (Northfield), Lakewinds Natural Foods (Anoka, Chanhassen and Minnetonka), Linden Hills Co-op (Southwest Minneapolis), Mississippi Market (two St. Paul locations), City Center Market (Cambridge), River Market Community Co-op (Stillwater), Seward Co-op Grocery & Deli (South Minneapolis), St. Peter Food Co-op (St. Peter), Valley Natural Foods (Burnsville) and The Wedge (Uptown Minneapolis). For more than 30 years, Twin Cities natural food co-ops have proudly offered local and organically grown foods and products. For more information and a list of local food co-ops, visit www.twincitiesfood.coop.

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