

Yahara River Grocery Cooperative Exploratory Committee

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Customer Survey Results Indicate Strong Interest in a Grocery Cooperative for Stoughton

Stoughton, Wisconsin – Stoughton and other area residents who completed a survey from the Yahara River Grocery Cooperative exploratory group (YRGC) have indicated a strong interest in an additional grocery store in Stoughton, particularly in a cooperative grocery store.

71% of respondents indicated they would shop at a grocery cooperative at least once a week, and nearly 2/3 said they'd be interested in becoming members.

“The response was amazing,” said Eric Borchardt, chair of the exploratory group’s marketing communications committee. “379 individuals, or about 8% of Stoughton households, responded to the non-random, self-administered survey

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that gauged interest in a grocery cooperative. Such a high response from potential customers would seem to indicate substantial interest in a grocery cooperative in Stoughton.”

Borchardt was surprised to find that 36% of respondents drive more than 10 miles to shop for food, some as many as 40 or 50 miles. “The loss of Main Street Market is being felt by many in our community,” Borchardt said. “Clearly, not all of the area’s grocery needs are currently being met. YRGC is interested in developing a grocery that meets the diverse needs of all community members, offering them the convenience of shopping in Stoughton and the ability to invest in Stoughton’s future by keeping their dollars in our local economy.”

Respondents also felt strongly about where they would like a new grocery store. 51% preferred the east side, and 33% preferred downtown, with the remaining 16% indifferent to location. These results appear to be consistent with the Grocery Store Market Analysis conducted by Vierbicher Associates for the City of Stoughton in July, 2006. While the YRGC has not made any decisions on location, it is strongly considering the needs outlined in these studies.

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These and other results from the survey were used to help shape a comprehensive business plan for the grocery cooperative, an important document in seeking grants, investors, and loans. The exploratory group is now writing bylaws, articles of incorporation, as well as examining potential sites for the market.

“We can see the momentum growing for this store,” added Borchardt. “Over 325 people have already indicated interest in becoming members once the cooperative is ready to accept memberships, and nearly 40 people are currently involved with developing the cooperative. For those interested in more information and how they can become members, we’re still finalizing the details and will share information as soon as it is available.”

Anyone interested in helping create the cooperative is invited to join YRGC at its bi-weekly board meetings. The next board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th, at 6pm at the EMS Building Training Room, 516 South Fourth Street in Stoughton.

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The YRGC survey was available at several area businesses, the Stoughton Public Library, City Hall, and the Stoughton Area Senior Center from mid-September through October. The survey also appeared as an insert in the Stoughton Courier Hub during that period.

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