

The Credit Union Association of Oregon Story

Oregon has always been a leader in the American Credit Union movement.

In 1915, Oregon became only the fifth state in the country to pass legislation allowing for the formation of a credit union. And for the next twenty years individuals dedicated to the cooperative tradition worked tirelessly to build a viable credit union movement in Oregon.

In the midst of the Great Depression, these early pioneers saw the need to create a central trade association to promote and protect Oregon's burgeoning credit union movement. In 1936, the Oregon Mutual Credit League was formed to represent the interests of credit unions and credit union members throughout the state. Then, as now, this new trade association defined its mission as representing the legislative, educational, and service needs of Oregon's credit unions.

In 1960, the Oregon Mutual Credit League adopted a new name – the Oregon Credit Union League (OCUL). For the next forty years, OCUL was a full partner in the emergence of a new, more sophisticated credit union movement. From a highly regulated era where the only point of differentiation was often the color of member passbooks and the free kitchen appliances given to members, OCUL was there representing the interests of Oregon credit unions through the introduction of share drafts, deregulation issues, technological advances, membership expansion, and the constant threat of taxation.

In 2000, it was once again time to adopt a new name that more accurately reflected OCUL's role in the marketplace. Expanding beyond its current focus – professionals, volunteers and members – to reach a larger market audience, OCUL changed its name to the Credit Union Association of Oregon (CUAO). The new name serves the three distinct groups credit union leagues and associations need to reach with the credit union message: credit unions (professionals, volunteers, and members), elected officials and the media, and consumers. Reaching these groups, to create an increased awareness of credit unions and the benefits of credit union membership, is one of CUAO's ongoing primary goals.

CUAO is a nonprofit, professional trade association representing Oregon's state-, community-, and federally-chartered credit unions, providing a voice for Oregon's 1.3 million credit union members on issues impacting credit unions at a local level. A 15-member Board of Directors, made up of credit union professionals from CUAO membership, guides CUAO and its various departments including Compliance, Education & Training, Governmental Affairs, Marketing & Public Relations, and its subsidiary entities including OCUL Services, Inc., CU Insurance Services, Inc. and the Oregon Credit Union Foundation.