

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 16, 2009**



Contact: Margaret Mittelstadt, director of communications  
[margaret@outpostnaturalfoods.coop](mailto:margaret@outpostnaturalfoods.coop)  
414-431-3377 x170

---

### ***Being environmentally friendly is in the bag!***

Visit any Outpost Natural Foods and you will see shoppers from all walks of life being eco-friendly by bringing their own reusable grocery bags. From cloth and reused paper bags, to handmade totes and hand-woven market baskets from Ghana, shoppers enter the checkout lane ready to take action.

Since it's beginning in 1970, Outpost Natural Foods has encouraged its shoppers to reduce, reuse and recycle. "We've been 'green' before green was cool. Our customers have been bringing in re-usable shopping bags for years," says Margaret Mittelstadt, director of communications.

In 1990, Outpost started the Green Scout program where shoppers would get a 5-cent rebate for each reusable bag used. According to Pam Mehnert, general manager, "Offering cash rebates for canvas or used paper shopping bags was a good way to lower our costs and at the same time do something good for the environment." The program turned out to be a great success. In April 2008, feeling pressure from the marketplace to offer a higher rebate, the co-op began offering 10-cent bag rebates.

The interesting twist in the story is that because Outpost has created such a high percentage of eco-minded shoppers, the cash rebates now began costing the co-op more than what the program could support. Starting April 2009, Outpost will end its bag rebate program altogether. By eliminating the program, the co-op could save as much as \$38,500 annually. This money will go into other community programs that are important to Outpost owners and its shoppers. Outpost shoppers will naturally continue to be eco-friendly and reuse their shopping bags.

"We think it's great that so many of our shoppers are willing to take action in helping to save the environment! The savings to the co-op will help to support our local community!"

*Serving the greater Milwaukee area since 1970, Outpost Natural Foods Cooperative operates three successful locations at 100 East Capitol Drive, Milwaukee, 7000 West State Street, Wauwatosa, and 2826 South Kinnickinnic Avenue, Milwaukee. Co-owned by over 13,500 individuals from Southeastern Wisconsin, it employs over 300 people, as well as publishes a free monthly food and wellness magazine (The Exchange). Outpost is one of the largest cooperatively owned natural food grocers in the country.*