

## Article for Volunteer Ventures

On Wednesday October 8, 2008 the NETCO cooperative hosted a school food show at the Freedom Hall Civic Center in Johnson City Tennessee. This is becoming an annual event for the NETCO cooperative that represents 12 school systems in Northeast Tennessee serving over 45,000+ lunches per day with a combined food budget of over \$6,000,000. Our member schools served over 7,900,000 lunches and 2,700,000 breakfasts during the last school year to our students.



Sixty four vendors used this opportunity to showcase the new and improved products to over 600 students in attendance. Time was also scheduled in the day for a private viewing of the products by the Directors of the School Nutrition Programs and the school level managers of those programs. This gave the directors and managers time to interact with the vendors and discuss our needs with them. With rapidly rising food prices, the Directors were looking for products that were not only nutritious and appealing to the students, but cost effective uses of school nutrition dollars.

Over 200 products were shown. New products included grab-and-go breakfast items such as bagels and fajita wraps containing turkey ham, eggs and cheese. Also on display for viewing and tasting were new items including roasted potatoes, mini baked potatoes, mini-hamburgers, whole wheat spaghetti noodles, cracked wheat rolls, fruit snacks, 100% orange and tangerine juice, and infused chicken rice. Vendors included such grocery store and common names as Cades Cove BBQ, Bob Evans products, Pepperidge Farms, Lamb Weston and a host of other vendors.



NETCO, formed in 1997, includes the school systems of Bristol City, Carter County, Cocke County, Greene County, Greeneville City, Hamblen County, Hawkins County, Johnson City, Johnson County, Newport City, Rogersville City, and Sullivan County. Our website may be accessed at: <http://www.netco-tn-snp.org/index.htm>.