

## Dawson Grain Co-op – Dawson, MN (1887 – 2009)

Being one of the oldest continuous farmer-owned elevators in the State of Minnesota is quite an accomplishment.

Founded in September of 1887 as Dawson Produce Company, the business's original purpose was to buy, sell & store grain and farm produce of all kinds. The first building that housed Dawson Produce was a flat warehouse, 24' X 48', and the work of unloading grain was done by hand or by using wheelbarrows or carts. Thankfully, work became easier and more efficient as a chain bucket elevator powered by one or two horses working a capstan was installed in 1892. In the 1900's, a new grain elevator was built which was powered by a gas engine. An electric motor system was installed in 1923.



Unfortunately, with a house full of grain, a fire burned the elevator to the ground in 1926 but was rebuilt in 1927. This building was added onto in 1934. In 1941, it was deemed advantageous to rebuild an unused elevator purchased in South Dakota & brought to Dawson at a cost of \$4500. A feed mixing annex was added in 1960, & the elevator offices were remodeled around 1974. The elevator, which stood along the railroad tracks for 118 years, was carefully taken down during "Demolition Day" on September 13, 2005. The demolition included both elevators, the seed storage building, the feed mixing annex, the scale & elevator office.

The current commercial office of Dawson Grain Co-op, along with three storage bins, has been located in the former Lac qui Parle Co-op Fertilizer office since 1981. The Dawson Grain West Complex, located just west of the city of Dawson, contains the bulk of the 1,241,000 bushel storage capacity of the business. It includes 12 large storage bins, merchandising equipment & a sub-office. 280,000 bushels of bunker storage with a concrete foundation is also present at this location.



Mark Willand has served as the General Manager of Dawson Grain Co-op since 1996.