

Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company

Rushford, MN

1903 – 2008

The Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company of Rushford was honored at the 101st Annual Convention of the Minnesota Grain and Feed Association (MGFA) for its century of continuous service to the community.



The Farmers Co-op Elevator Company of Rushford began in 1903 as the Farmers Elevator Company and organized as a stock company to buy, sell and ship livestock. The cooperative had 39 original investors.

In 1921, the Farmers Elevator Company was reorganized to become a cooperative and changed its name to Farmers Cooperative Elevator Company. The company operated one of only three known country grain elevators in Minnesota that were constructed of brick (the others were located in Lamberton and Fairfax).

In 1930, after many years as manager, G.L. Rollins resigned and accepted a similar position with the elevator in Byron. Rollins is succeeded by W.B. Richards, who moves to Rushford from New York State. Richards expands warehousing, installs a new 10-ton scale, starts handling ear corn and builds the first cement, round ear corn crib in Minnesota.

About midnight on March 11, 1950 a fire was spotted in a building constructed a few years earlier, a 50-foot round wooden structure covered with iron sheet metal, which resulted in a total loss estimated at \$30,000. That same year, the town was flooded including the old brick elevator and out-buildings.

In 1967, Stan Jorde became the first assistant manager, and the elevator built a fertilizer plant west of town. Stan would take over as general manager in 1974, a position he held until he retired in 1990.

In 1981, the co-op purchased Lundberg Feed and Grain in Houston, added additional storage bins, a new dryer system and liquid fertilizer tanks.



In 1990, Bill Grindland, a 17 year employee at the co-op, took over as general manager for the retiring Stan Jorde. Soon after, the co-op purchased the Houston-Money Creek Cooperative (1999) and two facilities in Spring Grove in 2001 and 2004.

In 2007, a severe flood ravaged the community, leaving the elevator and fertilizer plant severely impacted. Today, the co-op has nearly 100 patrons and operates four locations in Fillmore and Houston counties. The cooperative has over 40 full time employees, with an additional 20 seasonal workers

hired. The co-op has 2.5 million bushels of storage space across all locations.

The current general manager is Mark Schwanbeck, a 29 year employee of the co-op, who took over in 2004 from Bill Grindland.