

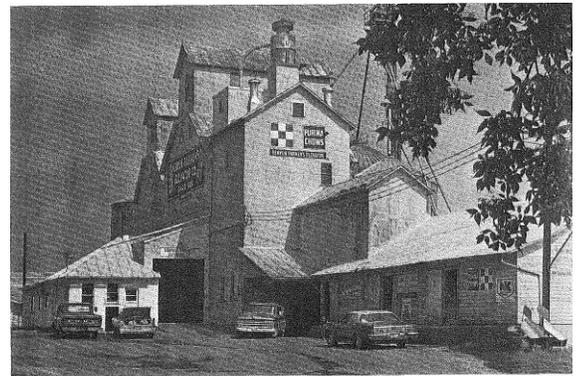
## Kenyon Farmers Mercantile & Elevator Company (Central Valley Cooperative) Established – April 1895

The year was 1895. The entire country was in a depression. Mass unemployment was rampant, and farmers were struggling. Farmers wanted to get out from under the thumb of the private grain interests, especially in the little town of Kenyon. On February 2, 119 years ago, a group of Kenyon, MN farmers met to study the possibility of organizing their own elevator. It was estimated that a new elevator would cost about \$5,000 and they knew they would struggle to raise the funds. They organized a committee that set out to sell 500 shares at \$10/share. Within 2 months they had managed to raise \$4850 in stock.



On April 13, 1895, the stockholders met to name a Board of 9 directors and adopt a constitution and bylaws.

The Board eventually made plans to construct the elevator – a 20,000 bushel facility with a steel roof and corrugated iron coating on the elevator; 2 hoppers stationary with drive outside and a roof over the driveway. The engine house was to be brick and located 20 feet away from the elevator, and house an 18-horsepower engine; the cleaning machine was to handle a capacity of 300 bushels per hour. B.D. Banker submitted the winning bid to construct the elevator for \$3965. The elevator opened later that summer, just in time to store the 1895 crop of wheat and other grain. After their first year of operation, the elevator had earned a net profit of \$2,633.21.



*The Kenyon Farmers Mercantile & Elevator Co. has come a long way since the day 80 years ago when it first opened for business with a 20,000 bushel elevator. Today it has a complex of storage bins holding 350,000 bushels plus feed-grinding facilities, a soil management or fertilizer department and equipment for testing protein content of wheat.*



In 1910, the Board of Directors decided to expand the elevator business by buying the McMullen Lumber Company for \$6,000. Three years later, the farm equipment business was established & a building bought for \$2000. In 1942, the Implement Department began manufacturing the Kenyon Hydraulic Loader, which was quite a success. In addition to the loader, employees also built sweep rakes and attachments for the loader. The manufacturing division was discontinued in 1950.

On March 29, 1967, a disastrous fire occurred in the office building, but the office records were saved and

business continued as usual.

Through a series of mergers and joint ventures, the Kenyon Farmers Mercantile & Elevator Company has evolved into the company it is today. In 1992, Kenyon Farmers merged with Cannon Valley Co-op.

Six year later, in a 50/50 joint venture between Cannon Valley Co-op and ADM – Benson Quinn, a grain, feed & swine services division was formed, now known as Interstate Mills. These same partners purchased a feed mill in Hayfield in 2001. In 2005, Cannon Valley Co-op & Central Co-op of Owatonna merged. The ADM-BQ shares were bought out of the LLC and the business was re-named Central Valley Cooperative.



Just this last fall, a major expansion project was completed at the Randolph location of Interstate Mills – a 5 million bushel grain storage & unit train loading facility.

Today, Central Valley Cooperative is a full service agricultural supply & marketing cooperative. Their revenues exceed \$315 million per year. They employ 175 full-time employees and more than 100 seasonal employees. Jim Dell is the manager of the grain division, Interstate Mills.

