

River Region Cooperative - Established – 1890

The Sleepy Eye Farmers Warehouse Association was founded on December 2, 1890 by a group of 133 local farmers who were disappointed with private grain merchants. They would be one of the first farmer-owned co-ops in the state of Minnesota. They built their first grain elevator in 1898 – a 16,000 bushel elevator, which cost \$2998. Eleven years later, in 1909, they changed their name to Farmers Elevator Company of Sleepy Eye.



In 1921, the stockholders decided to demolish the old elevator and build a new one in downtown Sleepy Eye for \$44,409. That building still stands today. In 1958, another 130,000 bushel elevator was built just south of the existing elevator.



The co-op bought their first fertilizer plant from Monsanto in 1970, just west of town and an elevator, owned by the Farmers Union Grain Terminal Association, a year later in 1971.

The 1980's were a time of expansion. The Farmers Elevator Company merged with Brown County Co-op Oil in 1983. In 1984, the company bought the Cargill facility to increase storage & unit train capacity and added an additional 650,000 bushel storage building at their west elevator site. A new office was built in 1987 and a new feed mill was constructed in 1988.

They purchased Cobden Grain & Feed in the fall of 1994. A

year later, they put up 5 new steel bins, adding another 550,000 bushels of storage.

In 2000, an expansion project at the fertilizer plant was completed, adding an 8,000 ton agronomy plant east of Sleepy Eye.

On August 1, 2003, Farmers Elevator Company merged with Community Co-op Oil of Essig and was re-named River Region Cooperative.

In 2007, the old Cargill elevator was torn down and replaced with a new steel facility with more than 1 million bushels of additional storage at the east elevator location. Brown County Ag, a fertilizer company, was also purchased in 2007.

In 2011, the Cobden location went through an expansion project which involved removing 11 small grain bins, building a new dump facility and 2 new steel bins with a capacity of 760,000 bushels. Two 30,000 gallon LP storage tanks were also added.



Today, River Region Cooperative has grain storage in excess of 7 million bushels over 3 locations; a 250 ton per day feed mill; a 20,000 ton agronomy plant & chemical warehouse; a 2 million gallon petroleum and 3 million gallon LP business; a convenience store and BCA lawn & garden products. All combined, River Region Cooperative's annual sales are approximately \$100 million dollars. Kevin Subart is the General Manager.

