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Merchandising Issue

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room to expand

COOPERATIVE FARMERS ELEVATOR builds a new country elevator outside of town when in-town location ran out of space for expansion.

It's not uncommon for country elevators to find a need to expand as crop yields soar higher and the time it takes to harvest it all grows shorter.

Cooperative Farmers Elevator (CFE), handling corn, soybeans, and a small amount of oats grown throughout the northwest corner of Iowa and a little bit of Minnesota and South Dakota, found the needs of its members outgrowing its George location, says Location Manager Katie Koopman, who has held the role since 2016.

Prior to that she was a merchandiser with United Farmers Cooperative, one of the predecessor companies that formed CFE

in 2015, along with Cooperative Farmers Association and Farmers Elevator Cooperative.

"We purchased 20 acres close to town at the intersection of two blacktops, county Road L14 (Kennedy Avenue) and the Ashton blacktop (230th Street).



Katie Koopman



★ George

IOWA

COOPERATIVE FARMERS ELEVATOR

Ocheyedan, IA • 712-758-3636

Founded: 2015

Storage capacity: 45 million bushels at 25 locations

Annual volume: 57 million bushels

Annual revenues: \$600 million

Number of member-owners: 4,967

Number of employees: 310

Crops handled: Corn, soybeans, oats

Services: Grain handling and merchandising, feed, agronomy, lumber

Key CFE personnel:

- Rob Jacobs, CEO
- Dave Muilenburg, COO
- Matt Zeman, vice president-grain
- Bob Frank, regional manager
- Katie Koopman, George location manager



Cooperative Farmers Elevator's new 2.8-million-bushel elevator outside of George, IA, which replaces a 745,000-bushel in-town elevator that had no room for expansion. Aerial photos courtesy of LandMarc Construction, Inc.

GEORGE SUPPLIER LIST

- **Aeration fans** • AGI Airlanco
- **Bin sweeps** • Sioux Steel Inc.
- **Bucket elevators** • Schlager Inc.
- **Catwalks** • LeMar Industries
- **Contractor** • LandMarc Construction, Inc.
- **Conveyors (belt)** • AGI Hi Roller
- **Conveyors (drag)** • Schlager Inc.
- **Distributor** • Schlager Inc.
- **Electrical contractor** • Ten Kley Electric
- **Elevator buckets** • Tapco Inc.
- **Engineering (foundations)** • NOHR Wortmann Engineering
- **Engineering (soils)** • Certified Testing
- **Engineering (structural)** • DGR Engineering
- **Excavation** • Mitchell Huss Excavating
- **Grain dryer** • GSI Zimmerman
- **Grain temperature system** • Tri-States Grain Conditioning Inc.
- **Leg belting** • Continental
- **MCC** • Steve Thole
- **Millwright** • LandMarc Construction, Inc.
- **Motion sensors** • Maxi-Tronic, Inc.
- **Motors** • Toshiba International
- **Office** • Arnie Eben, Brad Hinsch, Glen Geerdes, Marty Klaassen
- **Plumber** • Leuthold Plumbing
- **Shed** • Chad Bechler, Arnie Teunissen
- **Speed reducers** • Dodge
- **Steel storage** • GSI
- **Steel tank erection** • Global Bin Builders
- **Temporary storage tower** • LeMar Industries
- **Tower support system** • LeMar Industries
- **Truck scales** • Vande Berg Scales

The cooperative took bids and selected LandMarc Construction Inc., Hawarden, IA, to build the 2.87-million-bushel, all-steel elevator. Work on the project began in the

spring of 2021, and the elevator began receiving grain the week of Oct. 13.

Portions of the old in-town elevator remain in use, but CFE knocked down an outdated concrete annex.

Koopman reports that much of the concrete was crushed into gravel and used for access roads around the new site.

The New Elevator

The new site includes two GSI 750,000-bushel corrugated steel tanks, a GSI 370,000-bushel wet tank, and a 1-million-bushel temporary storage pile that can be expanded to 1.5 million bushels. It also includes a GSI Zimmerman 7,000-bph dryer fired by propane.

The two big tanks are 105 feet in diameter, 93 feet 6 inches tall at the eaves, and 121 feet 8 inches tall at the peaks.

They are equipped with outside stiffeners, flat concrete floors, 5,500-bph Daay bin paddle sweeps, and 24-cable TSGC grain temperature monitoring systems. A set of four AGI Airlanco 75-hp centrifugal fans deliver 1/7 cfm per bushel of aeration through in-floor ducting.

The smaller wet tank is 72 feet in diameter, 101 feet 6 inches at the eave and 119 feet 11 inches at the peak.

Like its later counterparts, this tank has outside stiffeners, flat concrete floors, and 5,500-bph Daay bin paddle sweep. The TSGC grain temperature monitoring system consists of 12 ►



Million-bushel LeMar center fill storage pile being filled during the 2021 harvest. It's expandable to 1.5 million bushels.



Eighty-foot Vande Berg inbound and outbound truck scales with Gamet Apollo truck probe. Ground-level photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

cables, and the tank has four AGI Airlanco 60-hp centrifugal fans delivering 1/6 cfm per bushel of aeration.

The LeMar temporary storage system is 275 feet in diameter, with a concrete floor and 4-foot-tall perforated sidewalls in 11.5-foot-wide sections capable of holding 1 million bushels under tarp. The sidewalls can be expanded out to 315 feet, Koopman says, increasing storage capacity to 1.5 million bushels.

An AGI Hi Roller 30,000-bph overhead enclosed belt conveyor carries grain out to the pile, which is equipped with a center fill tower. The tower is topped by four AGI Airlanco 60-hp centrifugal fans.

Grain Handling

The facility also includes a 36-foot-

x-68-foot single-story steel office building and a 60-foot-x-80-foot single-story storage shed containing feed and agronomy products.

Adjacent to the office building are a pair of Vande Berg 80-foot pit-type truck scales, one for inbound and one for outbound traffic. A Gamet Apollo truck probe stands between the two scales, taking grain samples and sending them into the office building, where they are tested in a Perten moisture meter.

After weighing, drivers are sent on to one of two 12-foot-wide-x-30-foot-long receiving pits to unload their grain. The mechanical pits feed a pair of Schlagel receiving legs – 15,000 bph and 20,000 bph – outfitted with a single row of Tapco 20x8 low-profile buckets mounted on a Continental 22-inch



Propane-fired GSI Zimmerman tower dryer rated at 7,000 bph with five points of moisture removal.

belt. The legs are enclosed by a LeMar 18-foot-x-18-foot support tower with switchback stairs.

The legs deposit grain into a Schlagel rotary 22-duct triple distributor. From there, grain travels out to storage via Schlagel 35,000-bph drag conveyors.

The two dry tanks have sidedraw spouts, and all of the tanks empty onto 10,000-bph or 15,000-bph Schlagel reclaim above-ground drags.

The dryer can be reached from the distributor. It empties into a Schlagel 12,500-bph dry leg, which is outfitted with Tapco 16x8 low-profile buckets on an 18-inch Continental belt.

In addition to the sidedraws, trucks can be loaded through a pair of 6,000-bushel surge tanks.

Koopman says the new location has enough space to add seven more 105-foot tanks and a second dryer when needed.

Ed Zdrojewski, editor