More Room for Crops

AS VOLUME GROWS IN NORTHEAST COLORADO, COOP MUST ADD MORE STORAGE

Paoli Farmers Coop Elevator
Paoli, CO • 970-774-7234

Founded: 1919
Storage capacity: 2.1 million bushels at one location
Annual volume: 3 million bushels
Annual revenue: $15 million
Number of members: 750
Number of employees: 7
Crops handled: Oats, hard red winter wheat, corn, millet, sunflowers
Services: Grain handling and merchandising, seed, wheat seed cleaning

Key personnel:
• Steve Bahnsen, manager/merchandiser
• Wanda Austin, office manager/grain accountant
• Mark Baker, operations manager
• Mike Gracey, seed cleaning

Supplier List
Aeration fans ..... Rolfes@Boone
Catwalk .. LeMar Industries Corp.
Concrete tank .... Hoffmann Inc.
Contractor .... RBP Construction LLC
Conveyors ........ The GSI Group
Dust collection system ... Air & Energy Solutions LLC
Millwright .... RBP Construction LLC
Speed reducers ............ Dodge

New hybrids and varieties have been bringing bigger yields to the semiarid plains of northeast Colorado. Handling the increased volume has been a challenge for Paoli Farmers Coop Elevator at Paoli, CO, since in addition to improved seed, the cooperative has been dealing with a switch of acreage from wheat to corn. Under irrigation, corn potentially yields more than five times as much per acre as wheat.

“We’ve been having to rent 400,000 or 500,000 bushels worth of storage space to handle the fall harvest,” says Manager Steve Bahnsen, who also serves as grain merchandiser for the single-location cooperative.

In 2010, the coop board authorized the construction of additional storage space at Paoli, and Bahnsen brought in RBP Construction LLC, Ogallala, NE (308-284-4328), to plan the project.

“We’ve been working with RBP for more
than 30 years,” says Bahnsen. “We really don’t look anywhere else for construction or millwright work.”

After discussions, Paoli Farmers and RBP settled on the addition of a 310,000-bushel jumpform concrete tank adjacent to a 1976 slipform concrete workhouse, selecting concrete over steel for longevity with frequent loading and unloading. (The cooperative can load 26 railcars at a time on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe bound for the Gulf or Pacific Northwest for export.)

The coop and contractor selected Hoffmann Inc., Muscatine, IA (563-263-4733), to build the tank. “We liked their design for a Bobcat door, so we can go in with a front-end loader for cleanout,” Bahnsen says.

Work on the $1.1 million project began around March 1, and the project was completed by mid-June, in time for wheat harvest. “We still have new-crop wheat stored in it,” says Bahnsen.

**The Tank**

The new jumpform tank stands 60 feet in diameter and 126 feet tall. The tank is designed with a flat bottom and an 11-cable Rolfes@Boone grain temperature monitoring system. With a Bobcat door, no sweep auger was required.

Four 75-hp Rolfes@Boone centrifugal fans are capable of supplying the 1/7 cfm per bushel recommended for coarse grains and 1/13 cfm for wheat.

A 10,000-bph GSI drag conveyor carries grain out to the new tank from the elevator’s main concrete house. The tank empties onto another 10,000-bph GSI drag housed in an above-ground tunnel and running back to existing grain handling equipment.

“Everything has worked out great,” Bahnsen comments. “We may add another concrete tank in 2011, but no final decision has been made on that yet.”

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-Steve Bahnsen, Paoli Farmers Coop Elevator