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Farmers Union Hires New General Manager



Pictured above, left to right, are Daryl Belik, vice-president of the board of directors of Farmers Union Oil Company, new manager Gary Koschmeder, and Kevin Mell, president of the board of directors of Farmers Union Oil Company.

Although the position of General Manager may be a new title, the face filling the position is familiar to customers of Farmers Union Oil Company of Stanley and Tioga. Last week the board of directors named Gary Koschmeder as the new manager effective August 1. Koschmeder had been in place as the interim manager since May when Jeff Schaefer left.

Farmers Union Oil had 37 applicants for the position and they interviewed three before offering the permanent position to Koschmeder. The company is a busy one, with the increased business because of the oil industry and a good agricultural economy the last few years. Changes are underway constantly, especially in Stanley. The company has purchased the property owned by Arnie Addicott just north of Highway 2. They plan to do some renovations there and move the business offices and a meeting room to the area occupied by the gallery. The house may be available as a rental for the general manager should he be interested. Timelines are tentative for this project.

In addition, they are getting a handle on the expansions at the C-Store in Stanley, the renovations to the store, and the expansions in the agronomy area as well. All of this means that Koschmeder will be a very busy man over the next year or so. Fortunately, he has already had a few months to get his bearings and get things moving in what he believes is the right direction for the cooperative and board members feel he will be a wonderful fit for the company.

Projects underway include a new building going up in the agronomy area at Stanley for a warehouse. It

will be used for storage area for vehicles and include office space for the agronomy as well. The drive-ways approaches are being improved and they hope that traffic flow will improve.

The east pumps at the C-Store are up and running for those wishing to make credit card purchases. The north pumps are in the process of being replaced. Once completed, things will change again as the north pumps will be all gas and the east pumps will be all diesel sales. This will hopefully help improve the flow of traffic in the area. The new north pumps may be done yet by the last part of August or early September. The project includes pouring of new cement and also discussions about the best way to set the pumps for ease of use and practical applications for the store itself.

Inside the store, as was discussed previously, they are looking at changes as well. They plan to expand the customer counters and add more registers to speed up customer times in the store. These and many more plans are underway as they look to improve customer service experiences and they hope that customers will bear with the mess a little longer.

Since arriving in May, Koschmeder has been busy filling what he felt were some much needed positions. They have hired a C-Store manager and a petroleum manager. In addition Dianne Clark continues to be the manager at the Tioga location and each of the two locations has their own agronomy managers that were also in place.

Koschmeder says that in such a busy and growing environment, it was important to delegate to these

two new positions. It was part of a year-long venture to enhance the store's capabilities and to meet the customer needs.

The C-Store clientele is very different from what most convenience stores see. In addition to the normal travelers and local traffic, they see those who are living in the area for set periods of time and the store becomes almost a home away from home for them. These customers are looking for quick meals and convenience items and they get tired of the constant menu. They are looking to expand the kitchen area and hope to offer an expanded menu as part of the year-long project. They are also trying to come up with ways to add things like daily specials to offer something different for their customers.

To improve accessibility for everyone they are looking at how to organize the way traffic moves through the location and have ideas for how to make that flow better also.

In the end, the goal is to make the various areas of the cooperative places you want to choose to come to. That is their goal to offer the services and choices you want. Board and manager want to do things right and do them right the first time. That means it might take a little longer to accomplish all the goals, but they want to make sure they get the details right.

That includes the changes they are making to other areas beyond the convenience store. Agronomy is an important part of the cooperative. They want to put some extra effort into the bulk fuels, propane and oil sales including mini-bulk oil systems for customers. They are adding another person, Tony Joseph, as a bulk delivery person in propane and bulk fuels.

In September, Gary's wife Diane will join him in Stanley. She is a minister serving in Irene, SD right now. He looks forward to her joining him full time.

Gary is also looking forward to bringing his years of experience to the table in Stanley. He has worked in cooperatives in Iowa and Minnesota before. He has also taught English at a high school level and coached wrestling before. He feels that all of his experiences work together to make him a good manager.

He looks forward to getting the job done, but he says he wants to make it fun as well. He wants employees to enjoy working for Farmers Union Oil Company of Stanley and Tioga in whatever capacity they are in. In the end, he says, if it's fun for us it will be a fun place for customers to do business and come for services.

Working Together Increases Safety For Everyone



A cooperative effort between industry, township and county is paying dividends in the way of increased safety for everyone. James Hill Township officers and residents have long been concerned about the safety of an intersection along Highway 8 about five miles north of Stanley. Located in a low spot below the hill, it has always been a somewhat dangerous place to pull out on the highway. With increased activity and several near misses witnessed at the intersection everyone knew it was time for something to be done.

Township Supervisors Wayne Johnson, Brian Hollinger and Bill Kuster were left trying to figure out the best way to get that to happen. They had limited financial resources in the township and the cost for the project would take up those resources leaving little left for any other township road concerns.

Township officers met with Walt Peterson of the NDDOT. He happened to be there on a day when they were hauling gravel from the east and oil from the west. A large number of trucks were making their way down both of the township roads as well as the highway. He recognized it was a spot that needed addressing, but pointed out it was a township matter. The DOT would give them permission to move the intersection but

they would need to find the resources to pay for it. They applied for energy impact funds, but the funds available there are never enough to fund the amount of requests received.

During this process is when the cooperative efforts began. They started discussions with Hess, who has drilling interests in the township and along the road served by that intersection. They also started talking with Mountrail County Commissioners about the funds they have set aside for township applications. They gathered input on how to change the intersection and where to change it to. They purchased land from Omar Hamdan to make the change. Hamdan, too, recognized the potential danger and wanted to help make this happen.

Two meetings with Hess made the project move smoothly. They got the engineering taken care of and bid the job. The township was involved in the decision to accept the bids and the township and landowners worked together to get the project underway as quickly as possible.

Working together was important as they addressed utility service along the roads. Midstate Telephone came out and worked with the contractor to make sure their fiber optic line would not be disturbed. They also had to move a few phone lines.

Mountrail-Williams Electric came out and moved some power lines as well.

Construction on the move started on Tuesday, July 21. Work should finish by the middle of this week and then new gravel will be put on the roads. Work should finish in early August.

James Hill Township is grateful to everyone for being so cooperative. The township's officers know this project couldn't have been done without everyone working together. The project will combine to move just over 2000 lineal feet of roadway between both sides and they hope that this will be a safer access to Highway 8 for everyone.

The project work is being done by Hexom Earth Construction of Williston with Robert Fogarty as the project engineer. Brad Hingtgen of Baja Petroleum and Wayne Biberdorf of Hess were the contact points in the industry for township officials.

Working together will pay big dividends for everyone once this project is completed. The project also shows the importance of those cooperative efforts in identifying and addressing needs as the county as a whole deals with the increased traffic and impact brought about by the boom in the energy industry.

Oil Can Cookfest Draws A Crowd South Of Stanley

When Doug Kinnoin was asked to host the latest in the ND Petroleum Council's "Oil Can" events, he could have hardly expected the crowd that turned out for the evening. One of two Bakken Rocks Cookfests held last week, the one at Kinnoin's on Thursday, July 30, drew a crowd of around 1000. The one held in Killdeer the night before drew around 500 people.

The Cookfest is "a way to bring the people of western North Dakota and those in the oil industry together to eat, learn, and get to know each other," said Ron Ness, President of the North Dakota Petroleum Council.

The evening was an informal event designed to give the people who live in the area an opportunity to learn more about the industry and the people who work in the industry as well.

One of the buildings at Kinnoin's farm was set up with informational booths with topics on the industry. They included booths on the Bakken's geology, pipeline information,

industry updates and safety. Personnel from around the industry manned the booths and wandered among the crowd to address questions individually. There was no formal program at this event, unlike past Oil Can events. Instead, those attending were urged just to take their time, one on one, to try and get their questions answered.

As Ness put it "This was a nice fun atmosphere designed to give those who live and work in the area an opportunity to learn more about drilling and production operations directly from the operators."

It wasn't all about education, though. The evening was about the Cookfest. The oil industry brought some of their best cooks to the evening and invited those attending to sample from each of the stations.

Upon arriving, everyone was asked to register at a booth manned by employees from Scandia American Bank & Trust and American Trust Center. There they were given a bottle of water and a ballot. The ballot asked guests to try each

team's food and then "try" to choose the one team that provided the best "overall experience" at their grill. That included not just the food, but also decorations, giveaways, hospitality, etc.

Teams cooking included Hunt Oil and Stallion; EOG, S&S Sales and GMC; Murex and Penkota; Slawson and Nabors Well Service; Fidelity and Nabors Drilling; Hess and Missouri Basin; XTO and Halliburton; Whiting and Power Fuels; and Marathon.

It didn't take long to figure out that these teams were in it to win it. Each had their own style of cooking and their own unique flavors to add. The people manning the stations were more than happy to explain what you were about to eat and how it was prepared.

The other two out-buildings on Kinnoin's farm provided tables with seating and there were also round pools around the yard that provided other places to stand while tasting the food. It also gave places to visit.

One building even housed bars and desserts, as well as ice cream.

Throughout the evening, people could be spotted enjoying some food and conversation. They were also seen getting some of those questions answered by people from throughout the industry, including Lynn Helms.

Pictured are scenes from the evening's event. At the bottom left, one of the booths included a map that indicated all the areas where the Bakken is busy. This was a popular stop-

ping point for guests. At the bottom right, is a scene of some of the crowd that turned out for the evening. In the middle left is a picture of the winning cookfest team from Hunt Oil and Stallion. At the top right, the evening included things for the kids like this booth that offered facepainting. At the middle right, Ron Ness presents Doug Kinnoin with a small token of appreciation for opening his home for the event.

