



YOU'RE IN
Mid-County
Country

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Fall 2024 • Vol. 44

www.midcountycoop.com

Annual meeting on December 20th!



Bill Reimers
General Manager
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WHAT'S NEXT...

We have been fortunate to add some very quality people in all of our departments this past year. Along with every other business, we have battled a labor shortage for

several years. We are not out of the woods yet, but things have definitely improved, and at this point, we are looking for one position in our Truck Center, and a Custom Applicator in our Agronomy Department. As we went through the labor shortage, a lot of things got put on hold, but we always stayed focused on taking care of our existing customers.

As a business, we must always be looking forward to the next project to work on. At our main site in Cologne, we are now in the early planning stages of improving our warehouse for seed and ag chemical storage. Also making the sprayer loading building larger and more up-to-date. This project may also include some upgrades to the bulk fuel storage at the Cologne site.

Whenever chemicals or fuels are involved, there are many different governmental enti-

ties to deal with. We will be working on soil borings this fall and winter. This will tell us where there is good soil to build upon, and help us with design. We expect the project to take the next two years to complete.

The diesel fuel market has had some decreases recently. In the last few years, it has been difficult to buy diesel fuel under \$3.00, and we went into harvest with lower prices than we have had for quite some time. As you know, things can change quickly. When there have been major events in the middle east, such as a large scale bombing, it typically sends the markets upward. At this time, we have not experienced fuel shortages at the local terminals. In some years, if harvest comes on quickly in the upper Midwest, out-state terminals run out and trucks have to come to the twin cities for fuel. This can raise prices and wait times to get fuel at our local terminals and refineries. With our three bulk fuel storage facilities, we have several days of inventory to soften the blow of high prices or shortages.

Propane prices never really dropped below last year's. Our prepay prices are almost the same as a year ago. Supplies nationwide are just a touch below last year's. With much of the corn belt showing dry conditions, it is unlikely there will be a strain on the system. Just like our diesel fuel storage, Mid-County

is very well positioned with our propane storage in Cologne. Which can last several days, even during crop drying season.

Our convenience stores are franchised with Holiday Stationstores, which was purchased by Circle K in 2017. You may have seen an image change at some of the Holiday stores to the Circle K brand. We understand this could take place in the twin cities over the next couple of years, at which time they will also change our stores. Many items inside the store have already converted to Circle K products, the next step will be outdoor signage.

If you have traveled Highway 212 between Cologne and Norwood, I am sure you have experienced the construction upgrade to four lanes. If you are curious about how this will all look when completed, do a web search for the Carver County Highway 212 Project—Benton Township. There are some videos that explain the project and show the traffic path when it is completed.

Our fiscal year ended August 31st. Our auditors have completed our annual audit, and we experienced a very favorable year financially, hopefully you will be able to attend our annual meeting on December 20th. See details on page 7.

As always, I appreciate your comments to improve your coop.

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Mid-County Premium Diesel: Winter Fuels

Our Mid-County Premium Winter Fuel additives are specifically formulated for use in all types of diesel including biodiesel blends. Our combination of WASA, Cold Flow Improvers and De-icer added to our premium fuel package will provide cold weather protection without sacrificing fuel economy.

Winter Checklist:

We know much of this information below is a repeat from past newsletters, but all very important information in preparing for winter.

Here are some items to think about in preparation for winter.

Bio Diesel is mandated in Minnesota for all #2 fuel intended for internal combustion engines. You do not need to have Bio Diesel for fuel oil furnaces. #1 fuel is also exempt from the Bio mandate year-round. A winter blend of 60% #2, and 40% #1 will actually have a 3% Bio Diesel content.

The bio diesel mandate changes by the season.

- 5% October – March
- 10% April 1st – 14th
- 20% April 15th – September 30th

We receive several requests throughout the year to sell non-bio diesel. Unfortunately, we are not allowed to deviate from the state mandate.

We will start to offer bulk delivery of winter blends in late October all the way into March. Remember, your tank must be low in order to have the full effect of a winter blend. If your tank is half full, and we fill your tank with winter blend, you are not fully blended for complete winter protection. We usually blend 60% #2, and 40% #1 for bulk deliveries. But if there is an extended cold snap, we may blend 50/50% to make sure no issues arise. If your tank still has fuel in it at the end of the season, we can add straight #1 to achieve the correct blend percentage.

Change your filters! It is cheap insurance to change your fuel filters every season on your tanks and equipment. Water is your enemy, especially in winter! Also remember that newer equipment has finer micron filters creating more of an issue. We have several different tank filters in stock for you at all times, and at very reasonable prices.

At our convenience stores, beginning December 1st, our winter fuel additives and blending are as follows:

Cologne Holiday:

- High Speed Diesel - dispensers 9,10,11
- 100% #2 Diesel with Winter Additive good to +10 F
- Regular Speed Diesel - dispensers 12 & 13
- 60% #2 Diesel & 40% #1 with Winter Additive good to -30 F

Waverly Holiday:

- Regular Speed Diesel – dispensers 7 & 8
- 60% #2 Diesel & 40% #1 with Winter Additive good to -30 F

When we deliver bulk fuels, we have a more tailored program to meet your needs. We can offer straight #2 fuels, straight #1 fuels or blends. When winter is in full swing, we typically will blend 60% #2 and 40% #1 with an additive to easily achieve a fuel that will flow under -30 below. There are other factors to consider with winter fuels:

Bio Diesel – What do I do if I still have B20 left in my tank?

Tank Filters & What Micron to use – How often should I change filters on my storage tank & equipment?

Water in Tanks – How do I know if I have water in my tanks or equipment?

Answers to these questions are different for everyone and there is no “one size fits all” answer.

Please call us at 952-466-3720 with any questions relating to your energy needs.

Dan Hanson wears many hats in the Energy Division of Mid-County Coop

By Mashell Bjorge

Correspondant

Dan Hanson has always had a customer service orientation. Growing up in Glencoe, he was a hard-working, ambitious kid who preferred to be out in the community. He graduated from Glencoe-Silver Lake High School and, right out of high school, started working at a local beer distribution company. He started out as a helper, he said and worked his way up to become a sales team supervisor.

Dan married a girl from Glencoe and chose to stay in his hometown, raising a son, a junior at the high school, and a daughter, a freshman at MSU. After twenty-five years, he left the distribution company to take on a new role with Mid-County Coop. When asked how he made such a decision to take on new challenges after so many years in the same place, he said it was just time. "The company started out as a small, family-owned company when I first started there. A couple years ago, they sold out to a much larger company. I was just looking for that smaller, family-owned sort of feel again, and I landed here."

He was ready for new challenges, and stepping into his role with Mid-County has been both challenging and rewarding.

It was a big change for Dan, but he says it's going really well. He spends his days working with people in the community and has always been able to find a good rapport with people. "It's basically, customer service, talking with current customers about their energy needs, and talking with new customers who are building houses and working through their residential energy needs. Or talking with businesses or farmers. I'm usually their first point of contact."

Being part of the sales and service team feels familiar to Dan, and his abilities, solid people skills, and sales experience were things that make him feel that it's a good fit. "I think we have a solid base of customer service experience here at the co-op," Dan said. "That's important. There's plenty of

competition out there, and you have to stay on top of things. You build relationships with co-op members, and they know that they can trust that you will provide the service you say you'll provide."

Dan said he'll spend time going out in the community, talking with people building homes who may not have even thought about their energy needs. Especially in rural areas, where propane is such a significant part of the energy source. This summer has been busy for Dan because, on his regular drives throughout the countryside, he's seen a lot of new construction in the area. He enjoys talking with new homebuilders, and sometimes it's a bit of a reality check for families leaving metro or urban areas to go to live in the country. "People are used to having natural gas readily available through their city services, but being in the country without those service lines is different. We talk about what the costs are, what equipment is needed, what is the responsibility of the co-op and what is the responsibility of the homeowner. It's about customer service, customer retention, new customer acquisition - and a lot of education."

If a new customer calls, Dan will talk with them and figure out their energy needs and the best way to assist with those needs. For homeowners, many appliances use propane energy, such as furnaces, water heaters, generators, or extra heat sources in the garage or shop. People need to determine what sources they want to use. Dan can help them decide what is most efficient for them and talk through the costs associated with renting or purchasing equipment.

This fall, Dan spends much of his time working with farmers about setting up dryers for their grain bins. "I spent all day today basically installing tanks at farms to run their grain dryers. A lot of them have somewhat permanent tanks, but some have temporary tanks. We get it all set up for them, and when harvest is over, we pick the tanks back up."

The job gives Dan the opportunity to work with many others across the co-op. He really appreciates how much the co-op offers to the community and how many services are provided to their members. He wears many hats for Mid-County Coop's Energy division and enjoys them all. You can reach Dan by phone at (952) 466-3720 or via the website at <https://midcountycoop.com/energy/>.



Mid-County Coop provides several updates during its annual Pre-Harvest Customer Appreciation Event

By Austen Neaton

Staff Writer

Mid-County Coop hosted its annual Pre-Harvest Customer Appreciation Event on Sept. 19. Welcoming patrons to listen to a pair of speakers while enjoying a burger or bratwurst.

The event occurred in the co-op's seed warehouse in Cologne, and the featured speakers were Mid-County General Manager Bill Reimers and Winfield United Account Manager Phil Keefauver.

Reimers provided updates on several matters important to customers, such as the state of the diesel fuel and propane markets, and the co-op's progress on paying out equities. Keefauver used his time to speak about the important roles that the agronomists at Mid-County play.

Reimers opened the event by speaking about the diesel fuel market.

"When it comes to diesel fuel, supply is good and prices are actually pretty good too," he said. "We saw some peaks during the summer and they ratcheted down as time went on when usually it would be the opposite."

"What happens is the big hedge funds get in and out of the market; when you see the market rally, that is typically the big hedge funds getting in, and those are people who are traders and not the end users. Right now the hedge funds are basically out of the market, helping prices go lower."

Reimers said the market will probably go higher when hedge funds begin buying again, though it's anyone's guess when that will happen. He added that it can be difficult to track hedge fund activity because the reporting we receive is after the fact.

He also said that other factors that could cause the market to rise are hurricanes, and refinery outages, which usually occur in the middle of the harvest season.

The co-op currently has a good supply of diesel fuel on hand for the fall, and are cautious in today's volatile market of buying more gallons than what are needed. A 10-cent drop in the market can have a large impact on us.

Reimers also discussed the state of the propane market.

"When it comes to propane, the market pricing is basically set for the winter," he said. "We usually start buying in the spring, and then



PHOTO BY AUSTEN NEATON

Mid-County Coop General Manager Bill Reimers shares updates on the diesel fuel and propane markets with patrons of the co-op during its annual Pre-Harvest Customer Appreciation Event, which took place in the seed shed at its headquarters in Cologne Sept. 19.

we buy and sell and always stay ahead for our customers. Usually this time of year, most everybody has made their purchases for the season."

He said the supply and prices are similar to last year, with the latter being slightly higher than a year ago.

"What can change that is all of the new export facilities in the Gulf of Mexico because they can make propane disappear very quickly if the prices are good overseas." "We will see inventories grow when they get heavy fog or hurricanes down in the Gulf of Mexico."

Like diesel fuel, the co-op tries not to over-leverage itself with its propane supply in case the market falls. However, we still have plenty for our customers.

"We have been adding propane storage for several years, so we can go for several days without a delivery in the middle of the crop-drying season and still make sure that there is a supply for customers," Reimers said. "Having storage for fuels, propane, and fertilizer is very, very critical these days; everything is just in time, and you can't just get the products like



Patrons of Mid-County Co-op share a burger and bratwurst meal with one another following the updates from Bill Reimers and Phil Keefauver.

you used to, so we are sitting good on propane."

Reimers also added that fertilizer prices are similar to last year and that the co-op's supply is solid.

Financials

Reimers said that the co-op's financials are in a good spot, allowing it to acquire more as-

AGRONOMY

sets like new equipment and facilities.

It has also allowed the co-op to return large amounts of equity to patrons.

Reimers said that the co-op paid about \$560,000 in equities to patrons last year and that the Mid-County board recently authorized another \$520,000 in old equities to be paid out by the end of the year.

"We have been pretty aggressive in paying out our equities. We pay out equities in two ways; one by the age of a patron over the age of 75, and one by the age of the stock," Reimers said. "At one time we just paid at the age of 75, but then the stock started to get older. Now we've tried that up more; because we are paying on the age of the stock as well."

Other items

Mid-County is currently looking to add more warehouse space and constructing a new chemical loading facility, as its current one was built in 1991. It would also like to expand its office space, and as always working to keep its fleet of trucks up to date.

Phil Keefauver

The other speaker at the customer appreciation event was Winfield United Account Manager Phil Keefauver.

Winfield United is a division of Land O'Lakes that deals with crop inputs. Mid-County is a member and owner of Land O-Lakes and Winfield United.

Keefauver used his time to provide some insight into the importance of Mid-County's agronomists and pre-emergent herbicides.

"The point I want to leave you with today is that when you're sitting down having conversations with your agronomist here at Mid-County—whether you're talking about seed or the right thing to do for weed control or plant nutrition, whatever it is—the recommendation that they make is based on data," he said.

Winfield United has an innovation center in River Falls, Wisconsin, where new products are tested to ensure they are effective before being passed on to Mid-County and, from there, local farms.

"When margins are tight, no one can afford to make mistakes, so your agronomist at Mid-County isn't going to make the wrong recommendation," Keefauver said. "They're going to do everything they can to do the best possible job for you."

Regarding seeds, Mid-County agronomists will ask about responses to fungicides, nitro-



Winfield United Account Manager Phil Keefauver talks about the important role that Mid-County's agronomists play in helping farmers determine which seeds and herbicides are best for their fields.

gen rates, and population. They will also ask about field locations, field management plans, and thoughts on nitrogen fertility.

"Before they ever make a recommendation on the seed that you plant, they need to know all those things to get that part right," Keefauver said. "That's probably the most important decision you make in a year."

He added that an important factor to consider each year is weed control.

This year, weed control was a struggle in many parts of the state due to higher-than-average precipitation.

However, Keefauver said those who used a pre-emergent herbicide right behind their planter were very happy with their decision.

With fields being so wet this year, most farmers found it difficult to get into their fields after planting, forcing them to watch as weeds grew rampant.

"This year, if we got stuck without a pre-emergent on our corn or beans, we had to try and get the timing right to spray over the top post-application, which was really difficult," Keefauver said. "I know a lot of you are aware that once a Waterhead gives us six inches in your fields, it's very hard to control the weeds, so the guys would say to do a lot more pre-emergent applications for next spring."

He also touched on herbicide adjuvants, saying that the agronomists at Mid-County will tailor their adjuvant recommendations based on the type of herbicide being applied.

"We pick the adjuvant to fit the herbicide so that the herbicide does what it needs to do, so it's really important that when you sit down this winter and talk about putting a farm plan together for next spring to try and be fairly specific with the guys and get a good plan together on what you're going to use for controlling weeds," Keefauver said. "That has everything to do with what they're going to have in their warehouse and what they're going to recommend."

This became an issue last year, as some products could not be provided because they had not been requested initially.

Keefauver said that while adjuvants can add \$2 to \$4 to the per-acre cost of herbicide application, it ultimately increases the odds that farmers have satisfactory weed control.

He closed his time with a thank-you to Mid-County and its patrons.

"I appreciate that you're member-owners of the local co-op; they're great supporters of Land O'Lakes, and we will continue to work every day to support what your team here at Mid-County is doing," Keefauver said.

HOLIDAY OF WAVERLY

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Missie Beckmann chosen for the Mid-County Excellence Award

By Mashell Bjorge
Correspondant

Missie Beckmann grew up in the small town of Wells in southern Minnesota. She and her daughter moved to Ames, Iowa for about four years before moving back to her hometown. When her daughter went off on her own, Missie decided to make a change and moved to the Cologne area, where she rented a friend's basement apartment and started working at the Holiday Station. "I've been in management on and off for nearly thirty years," she said. "I started here in April, and met my fiancé, who was a customer of the store, in August. That was nine years ago. It's amazing how fast time has gone!"

Missie loves working at the store, because, she says, she honestly feels like she's where she's supposed to be. "People have asked me if I wanted to try excelling at something else, but I really take pride in my job. I'm the manager, but I do everything my associates do, and I don't take that role for granted. I find joy in training my associates in the way I would want to be trained."

Missie started as an associate in the Cologne store, then was promoted to work in management in the Waverly store. It was under Missie's management that the Waverly store won the pinnacle award last year for store excellence. This year, she had the opportunity to be chosen among 101 potential franchise managers for the Excellence Award, and she feels it is an incredible honor that she was chosen. To be in the nomination, a holiday markets manager will conduct regular inspections of your store, and make sure that it is running smoothly. The manager will ensure that product is up to date, the store is clean and well-organized, sales are up to Holiday standards, and staff is courteous with customers. "Basically, the nomination goes through different levels of management, all the way up to the Vice President of the company, who gave me the award. I was so appreciative of what he said, that me and my associates are happy about greeting customers, and how welcoming we are, as well as how efficiently we stock the store. It was awesome to be recognized like that."

Missie can't express enough her appreciation for the company. "I love working for Mid-County. It's very family oriented, and it feels like we're just one big family. I like it because I'm not just a number here, and the coop appreciates the actual individual."

Missie takes pride in being able to donate to different community needs throughout the year. "Midcounty is also very community oriented; we're all about helping the community, and that helps us as a local business."

Missie received a trophy for her achievement in winning the Excellence Award, and also a travel voucher for a well-deserved vacation. She and her fiancé are planning a cruise, hopefully somewhere warm and tropical, and she looks forward to that. In her spare time, Missie enjoys spending time with her fiancé's grandchildren, scrapbooking and camping.

Missie enjoys her time, both at work and at home, saying, "I'm very happy with where I'm at."



HELP WANTED

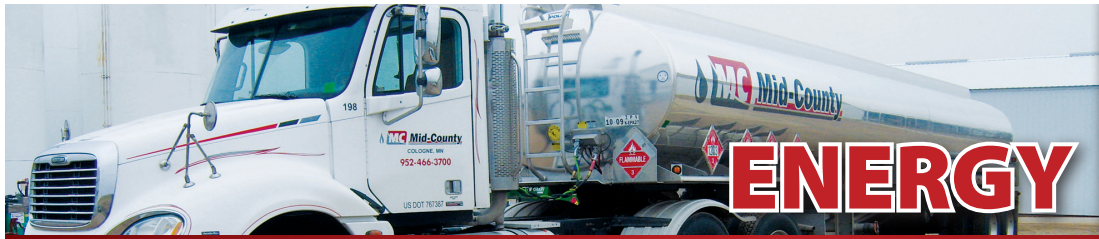
Night Shifts

4pm to 10pm • 4pm to 8pm

*For more information,
contact Missie Beckmann at 952-466-5657 or apply
in person at Holiday Stationstore in Cologne.*



Locally owned and operated by **MC Mid-County**



Propane 101: essential questions to consider before buying, building, or remodeling a home



Dan Hanson
Petroleum Operations
(952) 466-3727
danh@midcountycoop.com

Building, Buying, or Remodeling a house that needs propane – Where do I start?

What questions do I need to answer?

• How many square feet will you be heating?

- What appliances do you plan on having?
- Will there be fireplace(s)?
- Will you be adding a shop or additional building in the future?
- Are you considering a generator someday?
- Will there be other sources of heat (heat pump, groundwater, etc.)

This will help determine tank size and the design of the equipment needed leading to the house.

How do I know where to place all of the equipment?

- We will make an on-site visit to:
- Find a good location to place the tank

- Identify any landscaping issues
- See if we need to set up temporary lines for the contractor

Should I lease or buy a tank?

With the cost of tanks now, most people lease them. That way, we maintain the tank and its regulator. You only have to purchase the lines and equipment attached to the property.

How do I pay for the installation and then the propane when we are up and running?

We have a simple application for you to fill out and set up an account for you; this will also qualify you for the following:

- Prepay or budget payment

- plans
- Scheduled delivery options so you don't run out, including remote tank monitoring

What type of lead time do I need, and when should I be calling to discuss this?

As with everything else, the earlier, the better. We can help with budgeting even before the construction begins.

We can walk you through the entire process, work directly with you, and talk with the builder or contractor to make it easy!

Great Deals Every Month at Holiday in Waverly and Cologne!



GET A GATORADE

FREE

ANY 28 OZ. GATORADE



WHEN YOU BUY TWO.

NOTICE

Mid-County Coop Annual Meeting

Meeting will be at the Willkommen Park Pavilion
(21 Main St. East, Norwood Young America)

Friday, Dec. 20, 2024

Lunch at 12 noon • 1:00 pm Meeting

For more information, call our office - (952) 466-3720



Open to find out what your Coop is up to!

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



**Penny Dietzel -
Cologne Store Shift Leader**

Originally from Hutchinson, MN, Penny Dietzel now calls Cologne, MN home, where she lives on a farm with her family. After getting married, she made the move to Cologne, where she enjoys the rural lifestyle. Penny's career journey led her to Mid-County, where she made a significant change and found a new path that brought her closer to home.

What she enjoys most about working at Mid-County is the community and the fun, supportive atmosphere of the workplace. She values being part of a team where the work is fulfilling, and the location is convenient for her.

Outside of work, Penny is passionate about tractor pulling, a sport she actively participates in. She serves as the Secretary of the United Pullers of MN and works as an Entry Clerk for the National Tractor Pullers Association (NTPA).



**Dorine Vanderlinde -
Truck Center Administrative Assistant**

Dorine Vanderlinde is from North of Mayer and grew up between Glencoe and Arlington. She attended school in Glencoe. Looking for part-time work at a time when such opportunities were scarce, she found a position with Mid-County and has enjoyed the variety of work ever since. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, traveling, spending time at the lake, hanging out with her dogs, and shopping—though rising prices have made that last hobby a bit less fun lately.



**Stoney Johnson -
Waverly Store Shift Leader**

Stoney Johnson started as parttime and was able to meet all of the customers. He got to know them, and was instantly very impressed. He was offered a fulltime position and was greatly happy to accept. His girlfriend Jen, son Liam, and he moved to Waverly because of it. The community of Waverly is so great, they moved to Waverly in January of 2024, and have no plans of leaving.

He absolutely loves the customer interaction as well as meeting new people. He has lived in about 5 different towns/cities. Waverly is by far the best place he has ever lived. It feels like a very good place to raise a family just from meeting the people that live here. A community that makes home a home.

He loves to be outside, take walks and spend time with his family, bbq and smoking meat, and teaching his son what life is really about!

Waverly is definitely his HOME!



**MaryRuth Law -
Waverly Store Shift Leader**

MaryRuth is from Plymouth, Minnesota.

When she moved to Waverly and started going to Holiday, she really liked the atmosphere. Everyone seemed so nice, which drew her in, and she wanted to join the team. She really enjoys it so far.

The part she has enjoyed the most is interacting with the customers. Having worked in other towns, she can confidently say that Waverly has the best community. They are enjoyable to chat with and never fail to brighten her day.

In her spare time, she indulges in painting, drawing, and cooking. These activities serve as a form of escapism, and she loves expressing her creativity through them.

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