

MC Mid-County Spring Messenger

YOU'RE IN
Mid-County
Country

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Spring 2021 • Vol. 39

www.midcountycoop.com

Growing through a unique time



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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities seem endless for a young person in agriculture, not only in respect to launching a career, but being able to earn an attractive salary and benefits at the same time. Mid-County has always enjoyed the opportunity to offer internships and helping a young person get started. We also offer the chance to teach and train in other areas. There is a tremendous need in auto repair and transportation industries, all of which we are involved in.

AGRONOMY DEPARTMENT



We are looking forward to another great year in agronomy. The addition of more application and delivery equipment should help us maintain the high level of service you are accustomed to receiving. As soon as the crops are planted, we are going to tear down and replace the fertilizer plant throughout the summer. We are very excited to operate the new facility next fall. It is our goal to continue to keep up with our customers' amazing speed in which they plant a crop.

ENERGY DEPARTMENT



The energy markets took an interesting turn in mid-February with the country wide cold snap. One doesn't think of the importance of water to extract and transfer natural gas, propane and crude oil. Also, the southern states are not prepared for a long-term freeze like we are. Consequently it brought the whole energy industry to a screeching halt for more than a week. As I am writing this, most of the refineries are operating again, but it is a slow process to get them at full capacity. We do not expect any supply issues this Spring.

UPDATES

Usually in December we have our annual meeting, but that was not possible with the meeting restrictions in place. Without a meeting, we did not hold elections. Jonathan Henschen was the only director whose term was up and expired. To fill the position, the Board of Directors reappointed him to the Board until the next Annual Meeting. We were disappointed that we were unable to share the results of another very positive year for your coop. We are expecting that next year we should be able to have the meeting as usual.

As always I appreciate your comments to improve your coop.

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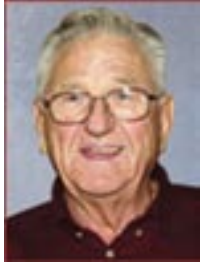
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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Meet your board member - Dave Williams



Dave Williams
Director

Dave Williams grew up in the Chaska/Victoria area. His parents were farmers, and Dave helped his father on the farm until he graduated.

After graduating from high school, Dave went into the military and spent four years there. During his time in the military, Dave's father sold the family farm and started plumbing.

When Dave returned from his service in the military, he did some odd jobs and learned plumbing from his father. Dave found a job at what now is called the Three Rivers Park District, where he worked for 35 years, and retired as a supervisor.

During this time, Dave was reunited with Rosie, who he met in high school. Rosie had gone to nursing school after graduating from high school, and then went to California to work before making her way back to Minnesota. They started dating and were married. They have three sons and five grandchildren.

Some of Dave's favorite memories have been with family and friends at their cabin near Siren, WI.

Rosie has five younger sisters and Dave became a surrogate father to them when Rosie's father died at a young age. They

lived all over the country, but when they come back to Minnesota, their house was home to them. Sadly, after 52 years of marriage, Rosie passed away in September. Dave has been recovering from surgery, but hopes to be able to get back to the cabin this coming summer.

Mid-County has been part of Dave's life for a long time as his family used the company for fuel oil and to buy gasoline. Dave's mother-in-law worked as a secretary for the coop and because Dave was always interested in its inner workings, he joined the board to help make decisions for the coop's success.

"I have always thought that the premise of a coop is to help everyone, pulling their resources together for the greater community, is a good thing," Dave said. "Mid-County is about integrity. You can trust the people that work there, they do a great job; and work hard for you," he said.

Dave sees the future of Mid-County being strong as long as it continues to innovate and update.

"We have the new fertilizer plant being built, we have the Holiday Station stores that are competitive, we have done great things with our bulk fertilizer and fuel hauling options," Dave said. "We are on the edge of the cities and the country, and we need to make sure that we keep positioned and have products and options that people want," he said.

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What we learned this winter



Quay Zander
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I would like to recap the things we have learned in the fuel and propane business after the winter season.

WINTER DIESEL FUEL BLENDING



We blended all of our winter fuel at our Holiday stores and our bulk fuel deliveries to a 60% #2 & 40% #1 blend (60/40 blend)

plus our Winter Additive. It was mild for much of the winter until we suddenly experienced a big drop in temperatures. By having our tanks pre-blended, we saved a lot of heartache when the weather changed quickly, and the additional cost of blending was minimal.

Lesson learned: Blend early, stay blended all winter long, and don't forget that it still can get cold in March and April.

FILTERS ON TANKS



We talk about this constantly and for good reason. Today's fuel is different than it used to be. There is a different sulfur content and a different bio content. There can be problems getting fuel out of the

tank when it's cold. Different fuels need different filters. We stock numerous sized filters for different conditions. Water is your greatest enemy, if there is water in the tank, it must be removed.

Lesson learned: A tank filter can save you hours of work on the coldest days, and consult us as to which micron filter best fits your needs.

FILTERS ON YOUR EQUIPMENT



With the everchanging world of equipment, filtration has become very important to the performance and longevity of their engines. By keeping a quality filter on your equipment you will help to keep your equipment running better for longer.

Lesson learned: Follow the manufacturers directions for diesel fuel and fuel filter change intervals.

HEATING



We monitor most of our customer's home heating consumption by using "Heating Degree Days" from the National Weather Service. Our computer then estimates the gallons you use based on your previous history, and produces a report that tells

us when your tank is due for a fill. Occasionally things change, it may be warmer, but there is more wind cooling your house down. Or you may turn up the heat in your house or shop compared to what you have in the past. Plus, there are things like wood burning, heat pumps, geo thermal or electric plenum heaters that can change usage. A computer is not able to factor in these changes.

We have recently started to add more electronic tank monitors on leased propane tanks. We now have the opportunity to see your tank levels online or on your smart phone at any time. This takes the guesswork out of how much is in your tank.

Lesson learned: If you make any changes to your house or shop that would cause you to use more or less fuel oil or propane, please let us know and we can make those adjustments to our system to make deliveries on a more timely basis.

Dale Schmitz

Petroleum Delivery



Dale Schmitz grew up between Cologne and Waconia, and graduated from Central High School in 1980. After high school he worked at Custom Formulations, and worked on a dairy operation for 14 months.

When Dale first joined Mid-County Coop in 1989, he was employed in the agronomy department.

Over the years, he became involved in the entire coop, doing repair work in the shop, making fuel deliveries, and more.

"Dale is a person of many talents. He's able to benefit multiple departments, and run multiple types of equipment," Mid-County General Manager Bill Reimers said. "He can drive a semi, he can install a propane tank . . . he can do it all."

Currently, Dale travels about 125 miles per day as a propane driver. In the spring, he's busy helping out in the Agronomy Department.

Dale is happy to have a job close to home, and has enjoyed getting to know the customers and staff at Mid-County Coop.

When he's not working, Dale can be found serving the community. He has been a volunteer on the Cologne Fire Department for more than 28 years.



AGRONOMY

Equipment, Equipment, Equipment!



Scott Nelson
Agronomy Manager
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Due to our large growth over the past year, your coop continues investing in equipment to deliver the type of service our customers are used to.

The first purchase was a new RBR spreader with the most technically advanced New Leader spreader box included. It's a spinner spreader that is considered a game changer in the application world.

The hydraulic spinner spreader, with its patented 16-section swath width control technology, lets operators apply fertilizer with pinpoint accuracy. By automatically shifting the spinner assembly fore/aft and left/right, and leveraging the conveyor speed adjustments along with the latest in VRT technology. It will spread a full rate right to the edge of the field and ensures nutrients are placed only where needed.



We have also added an additional 24 ton dry tender truck to the fleet to make sure our spreaders can stay ahead of you while planting!

Our pull type spreader business has also grown quite a bit. We purchased 11 pull additional units to bring the fleet from 14 pull type spreaders to 25. We are also in the process of retooling our 6 ton spreaders to increase their capacity to 8 tons.

While we continue to invest in rolling stock, don't forget that we are also building a new fertilizer plant this upcoming spring after planting is complete.

Thank you to all the customers that have put their trust in Mid-County Coop, we do not take that responsibility lightly.



We are ready for Spring

We have all the seed and supplies to get your season started and make it a success!



From the farm to the boardroom, women in agriculture are helping to pave the way for the future

Women have been a critical part of farm operations across the state and around the globe for centuries. Women in agriculture have a powerful story to tell—one of stewardship, resilience, and leadership from everywhere from the combine to the boardroom.

FarmHer.com creator Marji Guylar-Alaniz describes women on her website as the often unseen faces of agriculture.

Women have always played a vital role on the farm. They work the fields, birth livestock, do daily chores, keep the books, and take an active role in farm management decisions. And, often, they bring their own twists on farming.

Several young women from our area would agree with Guylar-Alaniz, but they would say that the days of women being behind the scenes in farming is going away.

One of those young women is Elizabeth Krienke, whose family is a longtime Mid-County customer. For Krienke, farming is just in her blood. She loves the life, and the work that goes along with it.

"My parents are the fifth generation owners of our family farm, Prairie Dairy, and I hope to be the sixth generation owner along with my brothers, if they want to be," she said. "My parents raised me to be a hard worker. They taught me that while farming is our livelihood, it is also very important in the world, because we provide food for others," Krienke said.

Krienke is a 2018 graduate of Lester Prairie High School. She takes her education in agriculture seriously.



Elizabeth Krienke is a 2018 graduate of Lester Prairie High School and is currently a junior at South Dakota State University majoring in dairy.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lester Prairie school was unable to offer a wide array of agriculture courses, but through a partnership with the larger Howard Lake, Waverly, and Winsted (HLWW) district, Lester Prairie has the ability to offer its students the ability to attend agriculture courses at HLWW while attending Lester Prairie High school.

Krienke took advantage of that partnership and attended agriculture courses at HLWW, and was also able to be part of its FFA program.

While in the FFA program she participated in contests, chapter events, and also served on the chapter officer team.

After graduation, Krienke chose to attend South Dakota State University (SDSU), located in Brookings, SD, and major in the dairy field.

Krienke is currently a junior, and starting to look at her future in the Ag Industry, and what she wants to do immediately following graduation. She said that before coming to college she felt that it was going to be hard for her to find her path in an ag-related field.

"Prior to coming into college, I would say yeah, I felt like there was a barrier, and it's really hard, being a woman in agriculture because you are viewed different, like you're sometimes maybe viewed as the one who only takes care of the young stock, or you're only there to make meals," Krienke said. "Women have always had a place in agriculture, though we were not always viewed as the owner or partner, but sort of as the helper," she said.

Things have changed since Krienke first came to SDSU. She has experienced "tremendous support" from her professors and peers about her decision to work in an agricultural related field.

"It is incredible how many people here support a woman's role in our industry. When I talk to people in the workforce, women are viewed as so much more than just another hand to help on the farm. They are viewed as a full-fledged contributor to the ag industry in all its forms. There aren't any hindrances," Krienke said.

According to USDA's 2017 Census of Agriculture, women now make up 36% of the total population of US farmers. This growing base of women in agriculture is changing the face of the industry.

In the 2012 census, women were principal operators of 13.66% of farms in the United States. In the 2017 census that number grew to 29.13%.

A little more than 36% of American producers were women, as reported by the 2017 census, which was an increase from 31.5% in 2012.

This means more than 500,000 women than in 2012 are now principal producers on their farms or ranches. More than 250,000 women are involved in agriculture in any capacity than in 2012.

The USDA defines the principal producer as the person who runs the farm and makes the day-to-day management decisions. Not labeling themselves as the principal producer does not mean that women are not involved in the day-to-day decision making on farms and ranches.

Almost 960,000 or 78% of all female producers stated they were involved in the day-to-day decisions of the operation.

According to the Ag Census, women are more likely to run livestock operations than traditional corn, soybean, and wheat farms. A high percentage of those considered principal farm operators run farms of less than 180 acres.

Krienke said she isn't sure exactly what she will be doing right out of college, but she definitely knows her passion is in the dairy industry.

"So I have two really specific, very different kinds of thoughts as of now about what my life will look like after college," Krienke said. "I would either like to be working for a farm where I'm overseeing the calf care, or the management of cows and calves together."

"I would really like to be in a management position to oversee that, and be in charge of that type of operation. Although I want it to be really hands on."

"On the flip-side, I'm very passionate about telling dairy farmers' stories, communication, and public speaking. If there was a way to put those two passions together, either working for a company that works with dairy farmers, or maybe just kind of doing it on my own, like work on a dairy farm and have a successful blog," she said.

Krienke has already started on that path by creating her own blog on Facebook called The Moovelous Farmer.

Spring is here and it's time to clean your car



Mike Blood
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Spring is finally here. Nature is coming back to life. It's time to start taking care of that nice car of yours once again. No more cold hands. The sun is shining.

The very first thing to do, even before you change your winter tires for summer ones, is to thoroughly wash your vehicle. Of course, it would be nice to wash it all yourself. However, it is best to start with a visit to a high pressure car wash to get rid of all the mud and the salt that still cling to the most intrinsic parts of your car's body and frame.

Next, if you own a pressure washer, use it to meticulously clean the areas between the trims, inside the door frames, and under the fenders. Be careful not to use too much pressure to prevent damaging any of the fine details on the vehicle.

The next step is to hand wash the car with a special mild soap. After wiping it dry with a clean (or new) chamois cloth, ideally you should apply a good coat of wax to protect the paint finish. Now you are ready to tackle the car's interior.

Winter is very harsh on our vehicles. Even last fall's brand new car or truck can end up making funny noises come spring.

These can be squeaking or rattling sounds. How do you get rid of noises inside your car?

It's not that easy nowadays but it is worth a try. If your car is new, you will probably prefer to have the dealer look at it. However, before rushing to the dealership, try to identify where the noise is coming from. Try to pinpoint the exact location of the sound, and provide a written report to the consultant.

Be precise.

If your car or truck is a bit older, examine the interior thoroughly. A good clean-up is the best way to start your inspection. Not only will your car's interior be cleaner, but you may also discover a loose panel or nut. If nothing is found, use the right screwdriver to tighten all the screws within reach. Be careful not to over-tighten the screws and break some parts.

Check to see if anything is loose in the glove compartment. If the noise seems to come from under the dashboard, look for any loose wires or unfastened clips that need to be readjusted.

Unglued trims or loose accessories could be causing the noise. If you can, try putting them back into place. Finally, look under the seats. Perhaps, a piece is broken or a lost item is rattling. Who knows? There are so many parts in a car.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



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Open to find out what your Coop is up to!

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Julie Clemensen

Julie Clemensen has been an administrative assistant at Mid-County since January of 2006.

Julie has an associates degree in marketing and business administration. She says “the people I work with are hard-working people who care about our customers and go out of their way to deliver the best possible services.” That’s why she loves working at Mid-County.

Julie mainly works in accounts payable, but handles many other administrative tasks such as applying payments to accounts, setting up contracts, customer service and more.

Julie lives in Cologne with her husband and two sons. She enjoys attending her sons’ sporting events, reading, singing, and spending time with her family.



Ryan Pawelk

Ryan Pawelk is a sales agronomist at Mid-County. He started his position in September of 2020.

Ryan grew up in Hollywood Township just north of New Germany, and currently lives in Watertown. After graduating from high school, Ryan attended Ridgewater College in Willmar and received his AAS degree in agriculture business. He then attended Southwest Minnesota State in Marshall and earned a degree in crops, soils and pest management from the University of Minnesota.

Ryan said “working with the farmers to help them produce their crops.” is his favorite part of his job at Mid-County.

“I like being outside and scouting fields. I love having a job where you can work outside. I like how variable the job is. There’s always something different going on,” he said.

When not at work, he likes playing softball and volleyball in the summer, and bowling in the fall and winter months. He also loves spending time with his family, his wife Bria, 5 year-old son Peyton, and six month-old daughter Collins.



Dick Pauly

Dick Pauly is Mid-County’s Chief Financial Officer and Credit Manager as well as serving as an in-house consultant for various departments and operations at Mid-County. Dick joined Mid-County in October 2006 as Mid-County’s first professional Controller.

Dick has a bachelor’s degree in business from the University of Minnesota and a master of business administration in finance from the University of St. Thomas. He has over forty years of experience in accounting, international finance, manufacturing, leasing, retail, marketing, banking, and general management.

Dick resides in Jordan and is married with two adult children and one granddaughter.

In his spare time, Dick plays bridge, reads, manages his rental properties, a small farm and a couple of family properties.



Alex Klaustermier

Alex Klaustermier is a custom applicator with Mid-County. He is the son of Mark and Nissa Klaustermier and he grew up on a dairy farm in Cologne. Alex graduated from Mayer Lutheran High School in 2011 and has a degree in farm operations/management from Ridgewater College in Willmar.

Alex started with Mid-County as an intern doing crop scouting and soil sampling, and then was promoted to custom applicator. His favorite part of being a custom applicator is getting to work with complex machinery.

In his free time, Alex enjoys hunting and being outdoors.

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