



News Release

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Date: Jan. 27, 2011

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United Cooperative celebrates 75 years

Jan. 27, 2011, BEAVER DAM – United Cooperative, based in Beaver Dam, Wis., is celebrating their 75th anniversary as an agricultural cooperative.

Beginning as an energy cooperative on Jan. 27, 1936, the company, then Western Dodge County Cooperative, expanded their services over the years, under the direction of Harry Gritzmacher as general manager.

“Less than 30 years after incorporation, the cooperative achieved \$1 million in sales, and about 10 years after that, James Bischoff took over as the second general manager in the cooperative’s history – my predecessor,” commented David A. Cramer, United Cooperative president and chief executive officer.

In 1977, Western Dodge County Cooperative merged with Mayville Co-op Association to form Dodge County Cooperative, and eight years later, Dodge County Cooperative acquired Iron Ridge Cooperative. In 1998, a merger between Dodge County Cooperative, River Valley Cooperative, and Deerfield Farmers Cooperative resulted in one last name change: United Cooperative.

United Cooperative merged with Pickett Cooperative in 2005 and most recently, in 2007, merged with Co-op County Partners, formerly based out of Baraboo.

“Since I was hired in 1984, my goal has been to move this cooperative forward with the times and to continuously update equipment and facilities so the needs of our patron members are always met in a cost effective manner,” noted Cramer.

“We’ve built state-of-the-art feed mills that serve farms of all size, started and expanded our grain division to more than 22 million bushels of storage, and added enough fertilizer capacity to make us the largest liquid and dry fertilizer storage facility in the state,” added Cramer. “We’ve also ventured into ethanol production to provide our grain producers with more marketing opportunities.”

Most recently, United Cooperative added 10,000 tons of liquid fertilizer storage at their South Beaver Dam location; two, 1-million bushel grain bins; and modern, precision-agriculture equipment in their agronomy custom-application department.

As part of their energy division, United Cooperative serves farmers, non-farm customers, and businesses with American-owned Cenex propane and fuel oil for heating, and Cenex bulk fuel and lubricants for all types of automobiles and equipment. They also own 10 convenience stores throughout rural Wisconsin, including eight Cenex convenience stores.

United Cooperative is somewhat unique among agricultural cooperatives in the fact that they also own two Ponderosa Steakhouse restaurants—one in Beaver Dam and the other in Hartford. These

establishments offer all-you-care-to-eat buffet items for all ages and tastes and banquet seating for 100-plus customers.

“With locations throughout rural south-central Wisconsin, United Cooperative believes in the rural lifestyle,” commented Cramer. “We are diligent about supporting youth in agriculture, because they are the future of our industry.”

United Cooperative employs about 500 full-time, part-time, and seasonal rural Wisconsin citizens. Locations include: Baraboo, Beaver Dam, Deerfield, Hartford, Horicon, Hustisford, Iron Ridge, Johnson Creek, Mayville, Pickett, Poynette, Prairie du Sac, Randolph, Reedsburg, Ripon, Rock Springs, Sauk City, South Beaver Dam, Watertown, and Wyocena.

“It’s interesting to look back at our growth and progress over the years; as we expanded and merged with other companies, we’ve always been one of the most stable and successful cooperative’s in Wisconsin,” noted Cramer. “This is not only attributed to our employees and management, but it’s also because we have quality patron members as customers.”

“United Cooperative will continue to deliver the necessary services and equipment our patron members rely on to produce quality crops and food. We look forward to serving Wisconsin farmers for another 75 years and beyond,” he added.

You can learn more about United Cooperative by watching their new video at www.unitedcooperative.com or on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/UnitedCooperative>.

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Photos:



1. Doug Schussman, Fond du Lac, left, and Dave Belter, Pickett, right, are both propane delivery specialists out United Cooperative’s Pickett agronomy and energy facility. This location was part of United Cooperative’s merger with Pickett Cooperative in 2005.



4. Danny Brisky, Columbus, an agronomist out of United Cooperative’s Deerfield agronomy and energy location, coordinates the computer on one of the cooperative’s newest pieces of precision agriculture equipment.



2. Joshua Pete, Reedsburg, works in United Cooperative’s Sauk City feed and grain location. During the previous few years, this location, formerly part of Co-op Country Partners, has seen a significant amount of improvements and building projects, including a new 1-million bushel grain bin.



5. Stacy Workowski, Ripon, left, and Bob Kovalaske, Ripon, right, fill rail cars with corn at United Cooperative’s Ripon grain location. This facility was purchased by the cooperative in 2006 and modernized shortly thereafter.



3. Ryan Engel, Loganville, who works out of United Cooperative’s Baraboo energy location, is the lead man at United Cooperative for their customers’ packaged or bulk lubricant needs.



6. David A. Cramer, Beaver Dam, has been the president and chief executive officer at United Cooperative since 1984. Under his watchful eye, sales increased from \$7 million when he first started, to \$325 million today.