



New C-Store, Bar and Casino Opens |

Mountain View Acquires Taylor Aviation |

New Seed Cleaning and Treating Plant Opens |

PERSPECTIVES



SPRING  
2023

# Together Equals Results That Matter.



A border collie puppy looks up at her owner expectantly on a nice spring day.

# PERSPECTIVES

A Mountain View Co-op Publication

## Contents

Letter from our CEO	4
Equity Checks Go Out	5
Mountain View Acquires Taylor Aviation, Inc.	7
New Black Eagle Bar and Casino Opens	11
WHEAT and Customer Service	13
Director Spotlight: Todd Dahl	15
Collins Seed Cleaning and Treatment Facility Opens	17
New Mountain View Co-op Foundation Donations	19
Fuel Tank Maintenance	22
MVC Employee Creates Driving Training Course	23

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# Planting the Seeds of Success

Spring is the season of growth for crops, and this spring is a season of growth for your co-op.

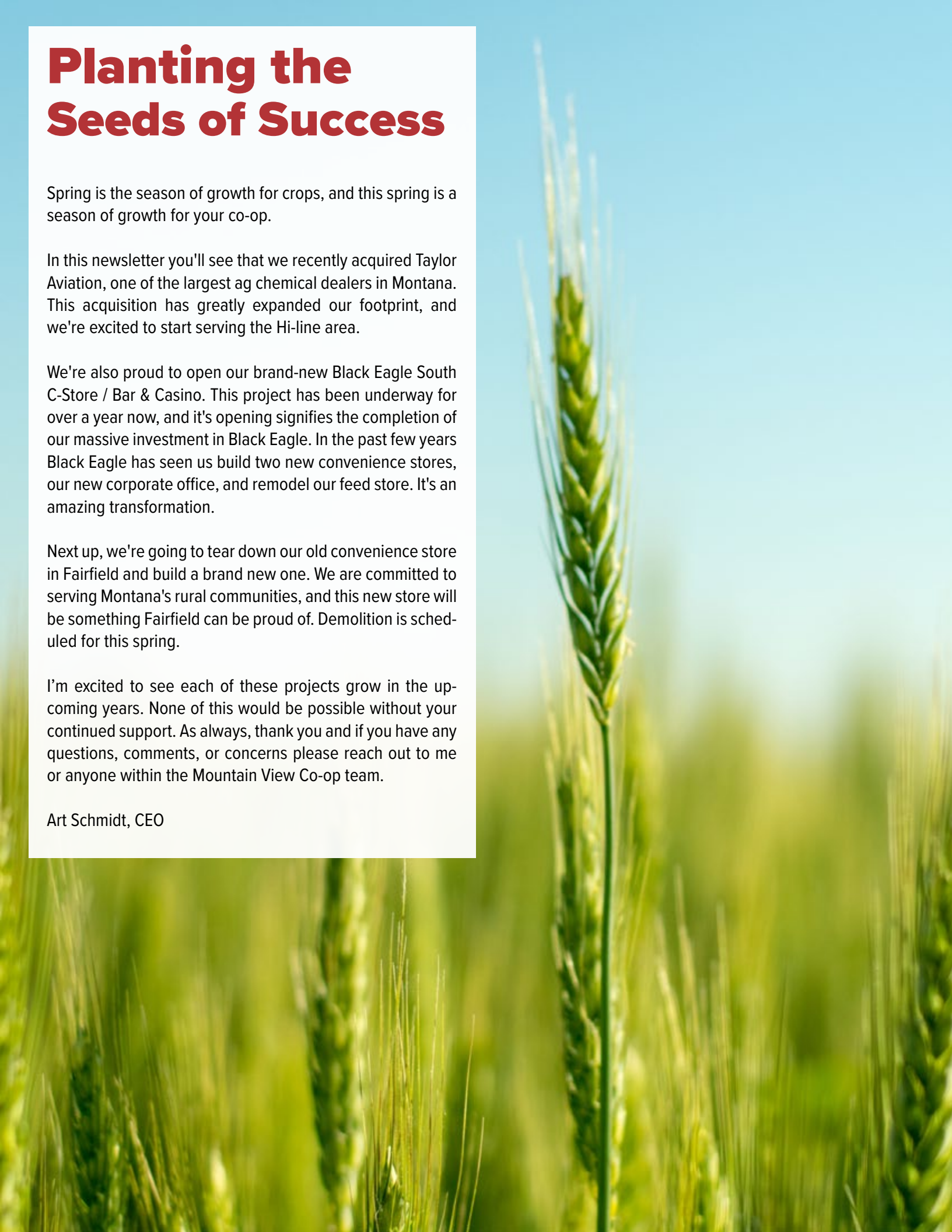
In this newsletter you'll see that we recently acquired Taylor Aviation, one of the largest ag chemical dealers in Montana. This acquisition has greatly expanded our footprint, and we're excited to start serving the Hi-line area.

We're also proud to open our brand-new Black Eagle South C-Store / Bar & Casino. This project has been underway for over a year now, and it's opening signifies the completion of our massive investment in Black Eagle. In the past few years Black Eagle has seen us build two new convenience stores, our new corporate office, and remodel our feed store. It's an amazing transformation.

Next up, we're going to tear down our old convenience store in Fairfield and build a brand new one. We are committed to serving Montana's rural communities, and this new store will be something Fairfield can be proud of. Demolition is scheduled for this spring.

I'm excited to see each of these projects grow in the upcoming years. None of this would be possible without your continued support. As always, thank you and if you have any questions, comments, or concerns please reach out to me or anyone within the Mountain View Co-op team.

Art Schmidt, CEO



# Mountain View Issues Equity Redemption

Exactly **3,051,822.39** more reasons to love the co-op.

Our Board of Directors recently announced the redemption of over three million dollars in members' regional equity.

These checks represent all regional equities up to, and including, 2008. This redemption is non-taxable income to you, as the equities were taxed in the year they were issued. If you have any questions, please direct them to the Mountain View Co-op administration office at 406-453-5900.

Our commitment is to provide strong cash returns to members, while recognizing the capital requirements necessary to pursue strategic growth and build the appropriate infrastructure for the future.

To this end, and with your support, we have returned \$27 million to our patrons in the form of cash patronage and equity redemptions over the past five years. We have also allocated over \$12 million in equity during this time.

Thank you for supporting your cooperative and for your commitment to our shared growth.



# What is equity?

A cooperative is different from a traditional business. We are member-owned, member-controlled, and everything we do is for the benefit of our patrons and our communities, not just for the bottom line. One of those benefits is “patronage”, which is where we return a portion of our profits back to our members.

Patronage is split into two categories, cash and equity. Cash is easy to understand- You simply get a check each year for your share of Mountain View’s profits. We typically pay about 40% of our profits back in cash each year. The remainder is distributed as equity. Your equity is the portion of patronage that we retain for investing in the business. Our goal is to return your equity within 10-12 years.

The best part is that members get this money back too! Equity is typically retired when a patron turns 70 years old, but it can be paid back sooner in “equity redemptions”, like the one we just did.

Cash patronage and equity are two strong reasons why the co-op system is so good for our members, and are just another example of us living up to our motto: Together equals results that matter.



# Mountain View Co-op Acquires Taylor Aviation, Inc.

This spring Mountain View finalized the purchase of Taylor Aviation's agronomy and ground application business. Based out of Fort Benton and Havre, Taylor Aviation has been a fixture for agronomy service and sales in Montana's Golden Triangle for almost 40 years.

The acquisition includes Taylor Aviation's agronomy sales and ground application business, as well as the Fort Benton and Turner warehouse locations. The deal also involves a new agronomy site location in Havre. Mountain View and Taylor Aviation will work together to transition the aerial application business in the near future.

Mountain View CEO Art Schmidt said, "Taylor Aviation is one of the largest ag chemical retailers in Montana. Their agronomic experience and support align well with our full-service business model. This acquisition strengthens Mountain View's position in the Golden Triangle and creates additional value for our owner-customers."

Andy Taylor, the former owner of Taylor Aviation, Inc., says "It was important to us at Taylor Aviation that we partner with a company like Mountain View Co-op, who shares the same business philosophy and commitment, so our customers will experience a seamless transition."

In this era of multi-national companies and massive foreign conglomerates, this acquisition will ensure that a leading Montana ag company stays Montana owned and Montana run. We are excited to welcome Taylor Aviation and their customers to the Mountain View family. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us.



# Meet the Havre team

## The best part of acquiring Taylor Aviation? The great people that came with!

An acquisition is usually all about assets. Most companies are purchased for their property, buildings, vehicles, inventory, and other tangible items. For Mountain View, though, this acquisition also came with something much more valuable than just the physical assets: The people.

The team at Havre is, simply put, outstanding. Leading the way is Arleen Rice, an industry veteran with decades of experience. Arleen was born and raised just north of Havre and her love of the area and agriculture are apparent when she speaks. “These Havre area farmers are my friends and my neighbors. I get emotional when I talk about farming. I go through all of their successes and challenges with them.”

Her track record speaks for itself. Arleen has been elected president of the Montana Agricultural Business Association twice, but more importantly, she has built an impeccable reputation for customer service. Paige Raty, a new Mountain View sales agronomist who has been working closely with Arleen for months now, says, “Arleen knows her stuff. You can literally drive around the area and see the difference between the fields she’s advised on and the ones she hasn’t. Also, she’s always available to everyone, and always answers her phone. It doesn’t matter if it’s 11:00 at night or 5:00 in the morning, she’ll answer, and she’ll help. I couldn’t ask for anyone better as a mentor.”

Arleen was quick to praise Paige as well. “I actually kind of recruited Paige to join me. She had been working for the US Department of Agriculture, and I could tell right away that she was special. In this business, you either love it or you don’t. You can’t train someone to have passion for agriculture, and Paige does. She cares about the farmers and wants them to succeed just like I do.”

Havre area farmers are in good hands with Arleen and Paige. They can be reached by phone (406.265.0918) or email (arice@mvc.ag and praty@mvc.ag), and are always happy to help.



Arleen Rice (foreground) and Paige Raty (background)



Daniel Gobin, warehouse guru



# Agronomy Update

## Challenges and Opportunities

by Nate Fairbanks  
Agronomy Division Manager

Every year the agronomy world presents a unique set of challenges, and this year is certainly no different. Here are four of my biggest concerns at the moment:

**Challenge One:** Finding enough people to get the job done. CDL (Commercial Driver's License) drivers are our biggest need at the moment. If you know someone with a CDL looking for a great job, send them our way!

**Challenge Two:** Getting the right product to the right location at the right time. Logistics is always an issue, but this year's acquisition of Taylor Aviation has greatly expanded our footprint and made logistics even more demanding. Our goal is to eliminate, or at least minimize, wait times for delivery.

**Challenge Three:** Possible product shortages. We expect suppliers to have limited stock of some items, but we are confident that we will be able to find you products with similar active ingredients and modes of action.

**Challenge Four:** Merging company cultures. Now that the Mountain View Co-op and Taylor Aviation teams are united we get to learn from each other and pick the best processes from both teams to provide the best possible service, support, financing, bookkeeping, and more.

It's a cliché, but every challenge is also an opportunity. As we work through these four challenges we'll learn what works, what doesn't, and come out of it a better company all around.

At Mountain View Co-op, we understand that farming isn't just your job, it's your way of life. It's your legacy, and a legacy that we are proud to be a part of. We're all part of a chain that has helped Montanans feed the world for over 100 years, and we can't thank you enough for letting us help.

**Nate Fairbanks** is the agronomy division manager for Mountain View Co-op. A graduate of Montana State University, he bleeds Bobcat blue.

Nate lives in Great Falls with his wife, three daughters, and one son.



## Where There's Smoke...

You may have noticed a few giant smoke plumes rising up into the air lately. We see them every spring, but do you know why? The smoke usually comes from farmers burning the fields they harvested the previous year. They do this for three main reasons:

1. It can help reduce weed growth and will eradicate some insect larvae and plant disease-causing pathogens.
2. It clears away old crop stubble, which reduces the need for tillage. It also clears the way for the next crop.
3. It reduces the risk of uncontrolled wildfires.

Montana farmers are required to obtain a permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality before starting any fire, and strict guidelines must be followed to help ensure a safe and effective burn.

# New Black Eagle Convenience Store, Bar and Casino Now Open!

After a year filled with demolition, construction, new fuel tanks, weather delays, and much hard work, the South Black Eagle C-store and Betting Bin Bar & Casino is up and running!

The fences came down and the “Open” sign clicked on at the new store for the first time on April 28th. Our HR Manager, Mallory Antovel, raced over to be the first one to pump gas.

A quick trip around the location shows many improvements from the previous store. This bigger store provides our customers with a much better experience, while allowing us to have a wider selection of items. The larger parking lot eases traffic concerns and makes getting in and out a breeze. And the bathrooms are, according to Dave Douglas, our retail division manager, the nicest in town.

The design celebrates the rich history of this location and Mountain View Co-op. We've placed two pictures, one from the 1930's and one from the 1950's, to remind us of where we've been.

[KRTV stopped by to pay us a visit and take a tour!](#)  
[Click here to see their story, and we hope you stop in soon!](#)



**“ Why would a co-op build a bar and casino? ”**

That's a fair question. The answer, of course, is because people love them, and visit them often.

Profits from our bars and casinos provide diversification to Mountain View Co-op's business when other sectors have challenges.

This is our third bar and casino. The other two are in Lincoln and Ulm, and they're all successful.



# Commercial Success

How do you spread the word about a new location? You advertise! A few weeks ago we invited the team from KFBB Television to come in and shoot a commercial that would introduce their viewers to our new bar & casino, The Betting Bin.

The KFBB team had one request before they started shooting: They needed people in the casino so the commercial would have energy and life. We knew the perfect team for the job- Our own employees! We gathered folks from our admin, marketing, retail, energy, and safety departments to come in and act like customers having fun at the bar and gaming machines. It turns out that Mountain View is filled with talent. Watch out, Hollywood!

[Click here to see our commercial on YouTube!](#)



# Be the WHEAT, Not the Weed

by Dave Douglas  
Retail Division Manager

A few years ago I was visiting one of our tire shops when a customer walked up to me and asked if he could talk to me for a minute. I've been around long enough to know that this probably wasn't going to be a fun conversation, and it wasn't. This customer, in the nicest way possible, told me that he had been greeted rudely by one of our employees. The employee said that they really didn't have time to help him, and pretty much ignored him. Not exactly the type of service we want to provide. I listened to the customer, and helped get him taken care of, but this really worried me. We didn't leave a good impression at all. I asked myself, "How do we make sure this isn't the level of service we consider acceptable?"

This negative experience became the driving force to design and implement a customer service training program that would become the foundation for every customer interaction within Mountain View Co-op: The WHEAT Program. We worked with local experts from the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce to create a program that teaches our employees what good customer service looks like, what we expect, and rewards the employees that go above and beyond.

WHEAT is an acronym for five of the main characteristics of great customer service. We want our employees to be **W**elcoming, **H**elpful, make a great **E**ffort, have a great **A**ttitude, and let our customers know we're **T**hankful they chose to do business with us.

This program has had a very real impact on our level of customer service, and we're proud of the progress we've made. Our goal is to provide the best service of any company in the world. That's a big goal, but we've got a great team. Of course, we're not perfect. If you see anything that we should improve on please let me know by calling our office (406.453.5900) or sending me an email at [dave@mvc.ag](mailto:dave@mvc.ag). Thank you for your business and your support.

**Dave Douglas** has been the retail division manager for Mountain View Co-op for over 14 years. He leads a team of over 150 people towards the goal of providing the best customer service in Montana.

Dave lives in Great Falls with his wife and two kids.



# With locations in 18 Central Montana towns, nobody is more local than Mountain View Co-op.

The map shows 18 location pins across Montana, each corresponding to a service list box. The Mountain View Co-op logo, featuring a stylized 'M' with wheat stalks, is positioned in the lower right of the map area.

Town	Services
<b>Big Sandy</b>	Agronomy Chemical Fertilizer Fuel
<b>Black Eagle</b>	Bar/Casino Two C-Stores Feed Fuel Headquarters Propane
<b>Brady</b>	Agronomy Chemical Farm Store Fertilizer
<b>Choteau</b>	Fuel
<b>Collins</b>	Agronomy Chemicals Fertilizer Grain Elevator Seed Cleaning and Treating
<b>Conrad</b>	Agronomy Chemical C-Store and Farm Store Fertilizer Propane Tire Shop
<b>White Sulphur Springs</b>	Agronomy Chemical Farm Store Fertilizer Propane
<b>Dutton</b>	Agronomy C-Store Chemical Fertilizer Fuel Propane Tire Shop
<b>Ulm</b>	Bar / Casino C-Store Propane
<b>Fairfield</b>	Agronomy C-Store Chemical Farm Store Fertilizer Fuel & Tire Shop Propane
<b>Turner</b>	Chemical Fertilizer
<b>Fort Benton</b>	Agronomy C-Store Chemical Farm Store Fertilizer Fuel Propane
<b>Raynesford</b>	Fuel
<b>Power</b>	Agronomy C-Store Chemical Farm Store Fertilizer Fuel & Tire Shop Propane
<b>Lincoln</b>	C-Store Fuel Propane
<b>Helena</b>	C-Store Fuel
<b>Havre</b>	Agronomy Chemical Fertilizer
<b>Great Falls</b>	Agronomy Fertilizer Chemical Propane

# Meet Todd Dahl, Board Member

*Why did you decide to run for the Mountain View Board?*

I guess I just wanted to be part of the process. I didn't really have an agenda. There wasn't anything I was unhappy about, or wanted to change. I had been on other boards, but nothing ag-related. I wanted to learn about the co-op, and to serve.

*Have you always been a "farm kid"?*

Not at all. Everyone on my mom's side of my family was a dentist, and that was my plan for a while, too. I didn't start farming until my sophomore year in college. Not a lot of people start farming the way I did.

*Are there times when it's hard to be on the board?*

When you're a board member you always have to vote with the best interests of the co-op and its members in mind, and sometimes that means voting against your own best interests. I'm proud that I've always done what's best for the co-op.

*What are a few of the more controversial issues that have come before the board?*

The really controversial decisions, I think, were the two mergers we did in 1997 and 2001, but I was elected just after the second merger. For me, a couple of the tough decisions were whether or not we should put a bar & casino in our new c-store, and if we should build a new office building to replace the renovated feed warehouse we were using.

*What decisions are you proudest of?*

I'm proud that we've kept up with the latest technology and the newest equipment, but I think I'm proudest of how we continue to reinvest in our smaller communities. We've kept all of our facilities open and that's great for our members there.

*Why should someone join the board?*

People should join the board to get involved. It's important to keep up with what's happening in agriculture. We need new directors because they bring fresh ideas from a different perspective and make sure we don't get stuck in a rut. We have associate director positions open right now. It's not a huge time commitment, and I encourage folks to give it a try. The main requirement to be a director is to be actively engaged in farming and/or ranching as your principle occupation. It's great experience, and you'll learn a lot.

## Todd in three pictures



**Family**



**Farming**



**Fishing**

# Grain Market Update

## Bumpy Road Ahead?

by Jake McFarlin

Grain Division Manager

The grain markets have been pretty volatile lately, and the large swings up and down are certainly keeping us on our toes. These fluctuations are being caused by two main issues, the Russia / Ukraine war and drought in the Southern US.

The Russia / Ukraine war is putting the entire world on edge. At the moment, though, there is grain moving through the Black Sea. In fact, we're seeing an average of four to six vessels a day leaving the area daily, and they have a backlog of over 80 ships to go. Grain shipping has almost returned to "normal", but the market reacts to every flicker of war action and news aggressively. I expect this to continue until the conflict is over.

Secondly, there is currently a drought in the Southern United States that will undoubtedly reduce their crop size. The Kansas / Oklahoma wheat growing areas have been in extreme drought conditions since the middle of last year, and we'll see the true effects of it in the next few months. This situation is giving the futures market life at the moment.

The last few years have done real damage to our export market. Our low production has forced countries that always used to be solid American customers to source their wheat elsewhere, and it may be difficult to win that business back.

It's always a good idea to keep an eye on the futures market and think about contracting a year or two ahead to lock in some nice prices. If you have any questions, or want to talk about the markets, give me a call at 406.753.2530.

**Jake McFarlin** leads a team that moves millions of bushels of Golden Triangle crops all across the world. He lives in Fairfield with his wife and their two kids.







## Top Five Reasons You Should Get Your Seed Cleaned (and Treated) at Mountain View Co-op



You can earn patronage on every bushel you purchase or have cleaned and treated. We can clean and treat wheat, barley, pulses, and more!



Stryker® Seed Treatment is custom-designed for Montana field conditions and is **ONLY AVAILABLE** at Mountain View.



Our seed facility is conveniently located right in the heart of Montana's Golden Triangle.



We know that time matters. Our new equipment is five times faster than before.



We have state of the art new seed cleaning and treating equipment, including a color sorter!



# Stryker

SEED TREATMENT

## Three levels of defense to overpower your crop's enemies.

### Level One SENTRY

A powerful fungicide package that protects your crop against Pythium, Fusarium, Root Rot, Rhizoctonia, and more.

### Level Two GUARDIAN

The SENTRY fungicide, plus a potent wireworm suppression package.

### Level Three ELIMINATOR

The SENTRY fungicide, plus wireworm control.  
The ultimate in seed treatment.

Get ready to attack with Stryker.  
Available at Mountain View Co-op.



Call 406.453.5900,  
or contact your local MVC  
sales agronomist.

## Now Available.

The moment a seed is planted it immediately comes under attack.

Plant diseases such as Pythium, Rhizoctonia, Fusarium, and common root rot look for any opening, and once they find a weakness, they pounce. The result is damaged crops, lower yields, and lower profit for our producers.

That's where our new seed treatment, Stryker, comes in. We custom blend our treatments to match the exact needs of each producer. For example, one farmer might be concerned about heavy grasshopper pressure while another isn't, so we only add the treatment that's required, and nothing that isn't.

Stryker is precise and accurate, using the right treatment in the right amount. Others work like hand grenades- Stryker is a sniper rifle.

# Mountain View Co-op Foundation

## Donates to the Power Volunteer Fire Department and Montana Farmers Union



As a Montana cooperative, we believe it is our *duty* and our *privilege* to give back to our local communities.

That's why we created the Mountain View Co-op Foundation. In the past two years we've donated well over \$100,000 to local projects, college scholarships, food bank donations, and more, and we're just getting started.

This spring we found two more very worthy causes to support. We donated \$20,000 to Montana Farmers Union Youth Education Fund that supports the youth camp they run in the Highwood Mountains. Every year hundreds of local kids spend time at Arrowpeak Lodge and learn about cooperatives, agriculture, and leadership. We're thankful for the work that Montana Farmers Union does for local kids, and it's a privilege to be able to help. A big part of our mission statement is to strengthen and support the communities that we live and work in, and this donation is one way we keep our promise to our customers.

We also donated \$6,000 to the Power Volunteer Fire Department to replace the water tank on one of their most important trucks. We can't thank these volunteer fire fighters enough. They perform a difficult, dangerous job not for money, but because they care about their communities.

Does your community have a project that we should take a look at? [Click here to see our Foundation web page](#) and download our application, then email it to [foundation@mvc.ag](mailto:foundation@mvc.ag).

# Hope You Like To Mow.



Now that spring has (finally!) arrived, it's time to take care of your lawn and make it the envy of the neighborhood.

Our recommendation? Mountain View Co-op's very own 25-10-10-5 fertilizer blend with added iron. Custom-made for Montana's soil, it's loaded with nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and sulfur to feed your lawn the nutrients it needs, and has a touch of iron to give a deep green, healthy color. Like we said, hope you like to mow.

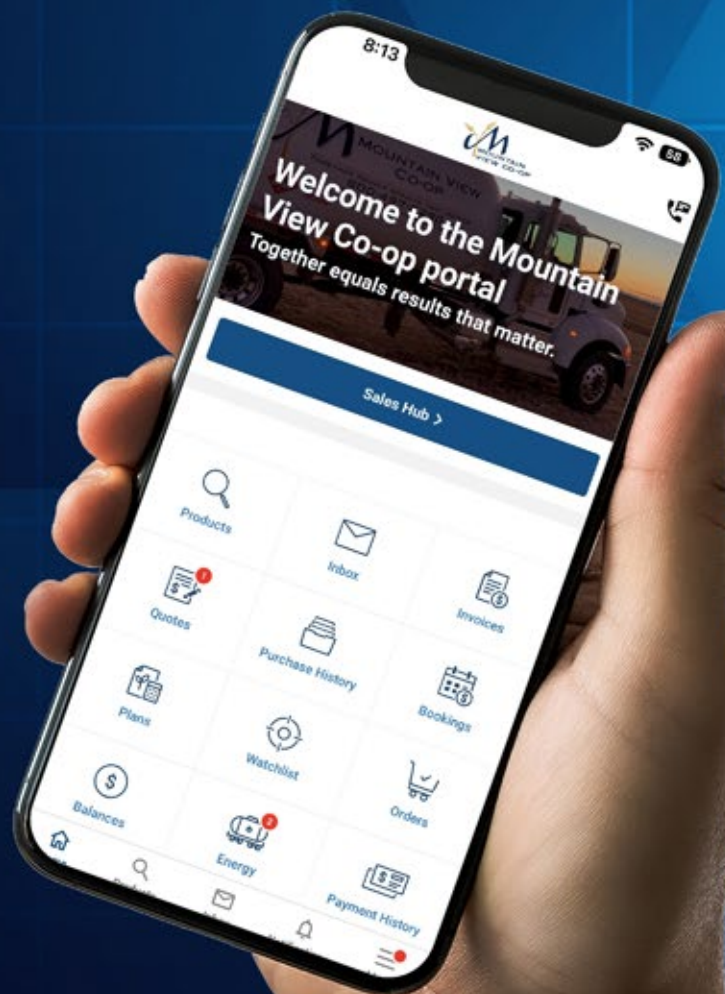
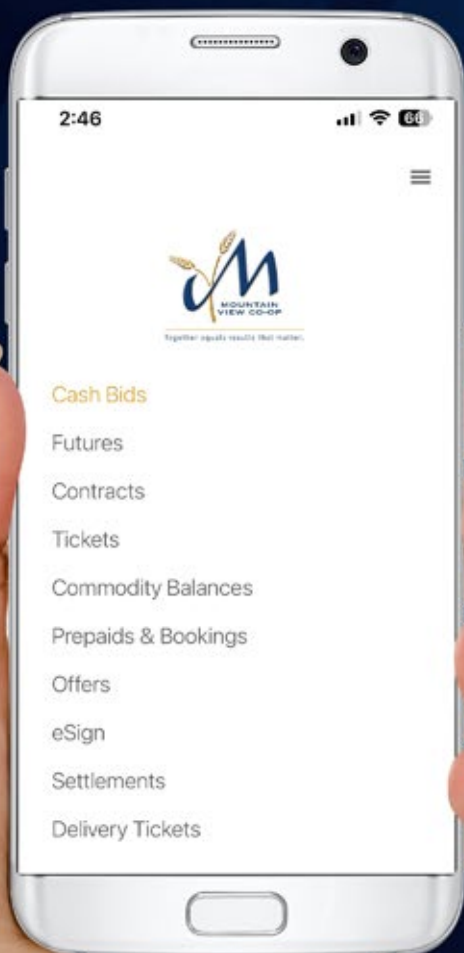
**Available at our farm and feed stores all across Central Montana.**

# How do you like to do business? In person? Phone calls? Email? Apps?

## Great, us too.

No matter how you want to get work done, Mountain View Co-op is here for you. Whether you stop by one of our locations, give us a call, send us an email, or contact us through one of our phone apps, we'll give you great service and great prices.

Interested in using our new apps? Just search for "Mountain View Co-op" on your phone's app store. They're free!



# Bulk Fuel Tank Maintenance

## It's time for a spring checkup!

by Dustin Jones

Energy Division Manager

Winter is tough on equipment, and your bulk fuel tank is no exception. All fuel tanks should be serviced and inspected at least yearly to ensure safe operation and maximum performance. Here are a few things to look out for:

**Check for water in your fuel.** Temperature swings can cause condensation to form inside your tank, which unfortunately leads to water in your fuel. The end result is poor performance and costly repairs. Inexpensive test kits are available online.

**Inspect the rubber hoses and o-rings.** Extreme cold can make rubber parts brittle, which may cause leaks. Check your hoses, joints, and fittings to make sure there are no crack or leaks.

**Look for tank damage.** Damage can be obvious, like a dent, or hard to find, like a pinhole leak from a rust spot. Check for any signs of wetness, or discolored grass under your tanks. Finding a small leak early could save you thousands of dollars in replacement fuel and cleanup expenses.

**Replace your fuel filter.** Your filter will eventually get clogged with debris, which will slow down the flow. It should be changed at least once a year, and more frequently when used heavily.

**Check your tank's supports.** Quite a few of our customers are using elevated fuel tanks, which sit high on a frame so the fuel can flow out via gravity. Make sure the frame supporting your tank is solid and is sitting on firm ground.

**Make sure your tanks are accessible.** If you're getting fuel delivered please check the surrounding area and make sure there's enough room for a fuel truck to get in and out.

If you have any questions or concerns about your fuel tanks, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. I can be reached at 406.453.5900 or [dustin@mvc.ag](mailto:dustin@mvc.ag). As always, thank you for your business, we sincerely appreciate it.

**Dustin Jones** has years of energy industry experience and leads the team that takes care of our customer's fuel, propane, and oil needs.

He lives in Great Falls with his giant saint bernard, Denali.



# Co-op Driver Builds CDL course in Power

Josh Gimbel, a driver at Mountain View's Power agronomy location, has taken on a new role lately: Driver Trainer. It's a role that fits him perfectly.

According to Josh, "New drivers all start out pretty rough. They don't have a lot of experience. Quite a few of our new folks have gone to driving school in Great Falls, but that's only two or three weeks. They come out of that with their Commercial Learner's Permit, and that allows them to drive a truck as long as someone with a full CDL rides with them. After that, they need seat time and miles."

Josh speaks from experience. He trained at the Swift Driving Academy years ago and became an Over The Road trucker. "I've been to every corner of the country, and 47 out of 50 states. For some reason I never made it into Delaware."

With years and hundreds of thousands of miles of experience, Josh knows what it takes to excel at driving, and what it takes to pass the CDL driving test. "My course is an exact replica of the official CDL test. We got the measurements from the college. I have them practice the course over and over so there are no surprises. If they can do it here, they'll be able to pass the test."



Josh's coworkers have nothing but good things to say about him. According to Mark Lehnerz, a 40 year veteran of Mountain View, "Josh has incredible patience. He's a good man to work with." Josh's boss, Kris Smelser, says "Josh is a good egg, and he's great with people. He's a great mentor for our newer drivers, and can drive trucks, spreaders, sprayers, and everything else. He's a great employee. I wish I had five more of him."

In turn, Josh speaks highly of the team at Mountain View. "You know, Mark and Neal [Lehnerz] took the time to teach me how to run the spreaders and sprayers, and I got the benefit of their years of experience. I get to pay that forward by teaching the next generation a few things."

Mountain View is fortunate to have employees like Josh who are willing and excited to share their skills and experience with new folks. If you're interested in becoming a driver, or looking for a great place to work, visit [www.mvc.ag/careers](http://www.mvc.ag/careers) to get started.



Here Josh shows how drivers have to back into a 12 foot wide lane and put the end of their trailer within three feet of the last cone.



The entire course is usually run in 10 to 15 minutes.



Josh stands next to his favorite truck. He likes this one because it has the biggest cab and most power.

