



- ◀ Meet Our New CFO
- ◀ Lawn Fertilizer Basics
- ◀ MVC Foundation Grants
- ◀ High-Tech Fertilizing

PERSPECTIVES



Spring  
2024

# Together Equals Results That Matter.



# PERSPECTIVES

A Mountain View Co-op Publication

## Contents

Spring Is Here, Are You Ready?	4
Seed Booklet Now Available	5
Introducing Our New Chief Financial Officer	7
Lawn Fertilizer Basics	9
MVC Foundations Grant Winners Announced	10
High-Tech Spreading	13
Meet Our New Associate Director	15
Fairfield C-Store Grand Opening	16
Mountain View Events	19

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# Are You Ready For Spring?

As the snow begins to melt and the winter wheat comes out of dormancy, it's clear that spring is just around the corner. With its arrival comes a flurry of activity for those of us in the agricultural community. At Mountain View Co-op, **we're already in high gear** delivering fuel, feed, fertilizer, chemical, and more all across Central Montana. It's an exciting time of year.

As they say, this isn't our first rodeo. We've been proudly serving local farmers and ranchers for **well over one hundred years**. Our mission is simple: to provide our members with the tools, resources, and support they need to **thrive** in the ever-changing agricultural landscape.

As you prepare for the busy months ahead, we want to remind you that **Mountain View is here to assist you every step of the way**. Whether you're in need of high-quality seed, expert agronomic advice, fuels, or almost anything else, our team of dedicated professionals is committed to helping you achieve your goals.

So, are you ready for spring? Mountain View is ready to be your **trusted partner** as you begin another successful growing season. Together, we'll cultivate success and ensure a bountiful harvest for generations to come.

As always, thank you for your business and your continued support.

**Art Schmidt and Dan Schuler**  
**CEO and Board President**  
**Mountain View Co-op**



**Have you gotten your copy of our new seed guide?**

**It'll Grow On You.**

**With the latest info on our Westbred and Croplan seed varieties, and info on how we can clean and treat your seed, you won't be able to put it down.**

**Want to check it out? Download it by clicking on the picture below!**



# See Your Sales History With Our New App!

Are you interested in seeing prior purchases you've made with Mountain View Co-op? The easiest way is with our **cool new app!** Not only will it show you the products you've purchased, but it will show you how much you've spent on each product, and **even total it all up at the bottom of the page. It's great for tax season!**

Don't have our app yet? [Click here to get it!](#)



Brent Grassman

## Products

Filters Search

### Invoice Date Range

Start Date 1/1/2024 to End Date 4/26/2024

Field  
Field

Apply Filters

Clicking this blue **"Export"** button will instantly download your data to your computer in .csv format- Perfect for Excel!

Export

1 This is where you start checking your history- Log into our app and choose the **"Products"** option.

2 Clicking the dark **"Filters"** button will let you choose the date range you want. In this example it's showing the year to date, but you can set it for whatever range you want.

Product	Quantity	Cost	
Product Gasoline May Contain 10%	264.950 Gal	\$856.50	...
Product GASOLINE MAY CONTAIN 10% ETHANOL	16.280 Gal	\$52.88	...
Product GATOR TWITCH GLACFREEZE 12oz	1.000 Each	\$2.60	...
Product GHOST BLUE R 12/16	1.000 Each	\$2.24	...
Product GHOST STRAWBAN	1.000 Each	\$2.24	...
Product GOLDPEAK TEA SWEETENED	1.000 Each	\$2.60	...
Product GRANDMAS Peanut Butter Cookies 2	1.000 EACH	\$1.16	...

# Fresh Faces

## Introducing Bryan Hansen, Mountain View Co-op's New CFO

This February we added to our co-op's leadership team with Bryan Hansen joining us as **Chief Financial Officer**.

Bryan comes to us from the Boise, Idaho area, and has spent his entire career in the financial arena. He has been a controller for a number of companies for the past seven years, but most of that time was with Valley Wide Cooperative, where Bryan managed the accounting team for that \$500M+ local co-op. As such, Bryan is very familiar with the cooperative business model, the nuances of our business units, and all the accounting software systems we operate, which helped him get up to speed at Mountain View quickly.

In his "spare time", Bryan has taught courses in financial accounting and management accounting at several area Idaho colleges. He has his B.S. in Accounting and his Master of Accountancy degree. Bryan is also a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Management Accountant.

Art Schmidt, Mountain View Co-op's CEO, says, "Bryan has great experience in the cooperative system, and a very strong accounting background. He was already familiar with the software systems we use, which is a plus. We're looking forward to him using his expertise to help ensure our continued success. Please join me in welcoming Bryan and his family to the Great Falls area, and to the Mountain View family of employees."



**Great, but what does a chief financial officer do?** According to the financial website [investopedia.com](https://www.investopedia.com), a CFO is responsible for managing the financial actions of a company, and they have seven key tasks:

1. Financial Planning and Strategizing
2. Reporting and Analysis
3. Managing Risk
4. Capital Management
5. Ensure Compliance With Regulations
6. Patron Relations
7. Assist With Strategic Decision-Making

We sat down and chatted with Bryan to see if we described his job correctly, and to talk about all things financial.

# Seven Questions With Bryan Hansen

## ***Okay, What does a CFO do? Did investopedia.com get it right?***

Pretty much. In a nutshell, I deal with all of the financial aspects of the co-op all the way from monitoring and managing our day-to-day transactions and positions to helping the team with future financial planning.

## ***Does that mean you literally have control over all of Mountain View's money?***

Well, I'm part of the team that does, but it's not just me. There's a strong system of checks and balances that makes sure that everything is on the up-and-up. It's really a shared responsibility among the entire executive team, our accounting group, and our board of directors.

## ***How do you become a CFO?***

You have to start with a love of numbers. I've always enjoyed working with numbers and money, so I got my Bachelor's Degree in Accounting and then my Master of Accountancy degree. My first job out of college was doing business taxes for an accounting firm in Spokane. I learned so much about the financial field, and about people in general, at that job. Over the years I climbed the ladder, and eventually became the controller for Valley Wide Cooperative, which is a \$500+ million dollar co-op in Idaho. That experience led me to this opportunity with Mountain View.

## ***We're glad it did! What does your typical workday look like?***

There really isn't a "typical day". There are some things that I do daily, like check all of our accounts, and check in with my team to see if there's anything they need, but otherwise each day is different. Sometimes the hardest part is correctly setting your priorities and making sure they get done. One day I might be in meetings all day, the next I might be interviewing potential employees, or I could be helping with an inventory issue, or running the numbers on a potential acquisition. It never gets boring!

## ***The myth is that finance people are control freaks. Is this true?***

Probably, haha. After all, finance people have a huge responsibility to not only our bosses in the co-op, but to all of our patrons who trust the co-op to do the right thing. A co-op is more than just a regular business, it's a promise we make to all of our patrons every day that we're going to do right by them. I suppose that responsibility makes us "control freaks" on some level, but our hearts are in the right place!

## ***What's the number one quality a good CFO should have?***

Integrity. Like I said, this position is a huge responsibility, and if you're not 100% ethical at all times you shouldn't ever be in this position. Another good quality is to have an open mind. It's easy to just say no to every new project or idea that comes at you, but you always have to do what's best for your company, even if it means more work for you and your team.

## ***What would you tell a young person thinking about going into finance?***

If they enjoy working with numbers, I would encourage them to do it. It's a great career path with opportunities across all industries. I would also suggest that they try to keep a good work and life balance. It's easy to become overwhelmed, especially during the busy times of the year, like End of Month or End of Year, but you can't forget to take care of yourself and your family. Always do good work, but remember why you work. If you do that, you'll be successful at work and in life.





# Eight Steps to a Great Lawn

Lawn care tips from folks who have been growing in Montana for over 100 years.

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**Fertilize:** Choose a balanced fertilizer and apply it *at least* in the spring and fall.

**Overseeding:** Overseed thin or patchy areas with a quality grass seed to fill in the gaps.

**Mow it right:** Follow the 1/3 rule: Never cut off more than 1/3 of the grass blade length at a time.

**Water it properly:** Water deeply a couple of times a week to promote drought tolerance and deep roots.

**Watch for diseases and pests:** Keep an eye on your lawn, and take care of problems before they escalate!

**Let it breathe:** Core aerating annually will improve water and air penetration and promote root development.

**Dethatch:** Don't let old grass clippings or leaves choke your lawn. Dethatching improves water and nutrient uptake.

**Control those weeds:** Regularly check your lawn for weeds and apply a herbicide when required. Don't let them spread!

# Mountain View Co-op Foundation Awards Eight More Grants

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. We're committed to supporting and strengthening our local communities through charitable donations and scholarships.

Our MVC Foundation met in late February and awarded grants to eight very worthy teams and projects.



The Cutting Fences Foundation is a nonprofit organization that serves Montana's farmers, ranchers, and veterans who are living with a disability or illness. They supply agriculture specific adaptive equipment like the Action Trackchair that is pictured above. This equipment allows folks to go places a normal wheelchair could never go, and helps them to maintain their independence and sense of agency. **We granted their request for \$5,000 to help buy a wheelchair accessible side-by-side.**



Montana's rural communities simply don't have the budget to operate a full-time fire department, so residents step up and volunteer to protect their neighbor's lives and property.

There's no better example of this than the folks in Hogeland, Montana. Hogeland sits about 12 miles from the Canadian border and is roughly 180 miles northeast of Great Falls. **We donated \$7,000 to buy them new racks and shelves for their fire gear.**



The Fairfield Volunteer Fire Department needs to replace their SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus) gear, and it's expensive, to say the least. It's also important, though, as this gear protects the firefighters from smoke inhalation. **We donated \$10,000 to help them get new SCBA gear and stay safe in the smoke.**



Many of our rural areas around Central Montana don't have good, if any, cell phone signal, and this can make it impossible for first responders to contact hospitals or others who can help. The Geraldine Community Ambulance team came up with a solution- They're going to mount a mobile Starlink dish on top of their ambulance, which will provide them with a high-speed internet connection no matter where they go.

**Mountain View donated \$5,500 to make this project happen.**



Continuing with the theme of limited communications in rural areas, the Fort Benton Memorial Ambulance crew needed new portable radios to improve the reliability of their team's communications.

**Mountain View donated \$16,000 to purchase these folks all new radios.**



The Power Volunteer Fire Department applied for a grant to replace the rusty water tank on a water tender truck, as well as do some upgrades to other equipment. **We contributed \$10,000 to help get all this done.**



The Ulm Volunteer Fire Department is building a massive addition onto their fire hall, but it won't be just more storage for trucks and equipment- This new addition will be a beautiful new training room / community meeting center where area residents and clubs can meet. **We contributed \$50,000 to help push this project across the finish line.**



MSU-Northern is working on building a brand-new Ag Center. It will be built on the west end of Havre, and, when complete, will be a multi-purpose facility with an equestrian center and facilities for meetings and community events. **We contributed \$50,000 to help with phase one of this new construction.** Arleen Rice, our Havre area manager (left), presented our check to MSU-Northern Chancellor Greg Kegal and MSU-Northern Foundation Member Melanie Skoyen.

# Digital Spreading

With more computing power than the Apollo moon rockets, Mountain View's spreader trucks are out of this world. Here's what makes them special.

## 1. StarFire™ GPS Receiver

This connects to GPS satellites that allow the spreader to know exactly where it is. And when we say exactly, we mean within **one inch** of accuracy. This enables autosteer, precision mapping, and more!

## 2. Cell Signal Booster

Spreading fertilizer often takes our equipment to areas where cell signal is weak. This keeps it humming!

## 3. Multiple Video Cameras

This machine has cameras so the operator can see the product flowing smoothly, ensuring that nothing is plugged up and that the system is delivering the perfect amount of fertilizer uniformly across the field.

## 4. Giant Flotation Tires

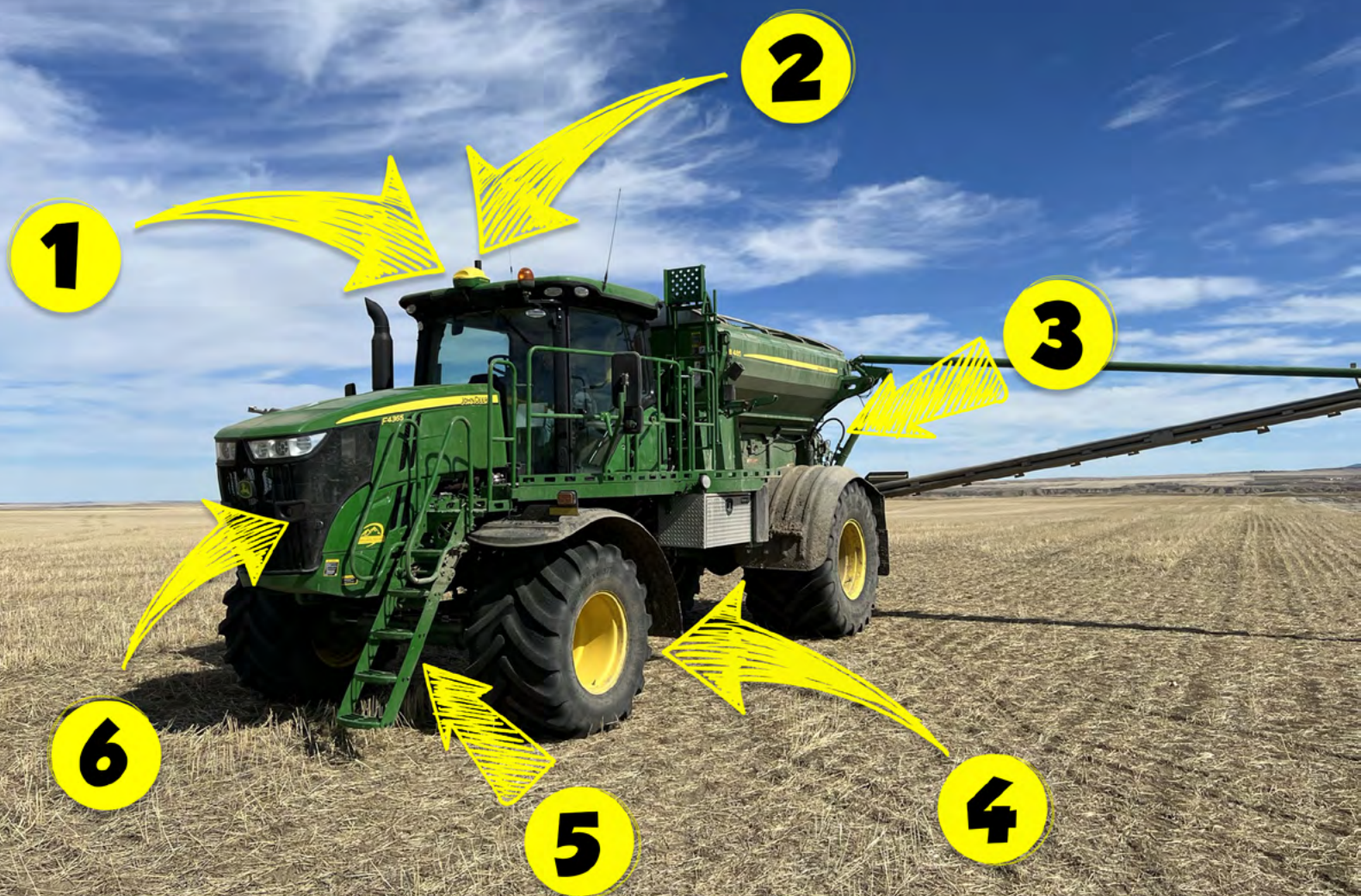
These massive tires provide great traction and let this 15+ ton machine gently float on top of the soil while working.

## 5. Automatic Ladder

The ladder automatically lowers when the vehicle is stopped, and raises when moving to stay out of harm's way.

## 6. Nine Liter Diesel Engine

The huge engine can push this machine down the road at over 45 mph and is fed by a 155 gallon fuel tank.



# Hey, What Does This Button Do?

These massive machines look complicated, but are they? We spoke with Neal and Mark Lehnerz, 40+ year veterans of MVC spreading, to learn which buttons to press, and more importantly, which *not* to.

## 1. On-Board Cameras

Multiple cameras are mounted inside the machine and let the operator see the fertilizer flowing smoothly.

## 2. Connection to John Deere Operations Center

These icons show that the spreader is communicating with its satellites and is linked to the John Deere Operations Center. The machine can now receive maps, spreading instructions, and more all wirelessly through this system.

## 3. Shift Track

These arrows will move the machine 12 inches left or right from the track the computer planned for the perfect spread.

## 4. The Bird's Eye View

The blue parts of this map show what HAS been fertilized, and the gray parts show what HASN'T been done yet. The white line shows where the spreader has been, and where it's going. Remember, **these machines drive themselves in the fields!**

## 5. Work!

When this button is on the machine is working and applying fertilizer.

## 6. Section Control

Occasionally, and especially on curvy fields, the spreader will have to drive over part of the field that it has already applied fertilizer to. Section control automatically shuts off the flow of fertilizer when it comes to these sections, and turns it back on when it's on fresh ground.

## 7. AutoTrac

This button turns on the autosteering functionality.

## 8. Operator Rehydration Unit

This portable 32 ounce fluid containment vessel is sold at most of Mountain View's retail stores, and ensures that the operator's thirst remains quenched for peak performance. Multiple flavor options available!



# New Kids on the Block

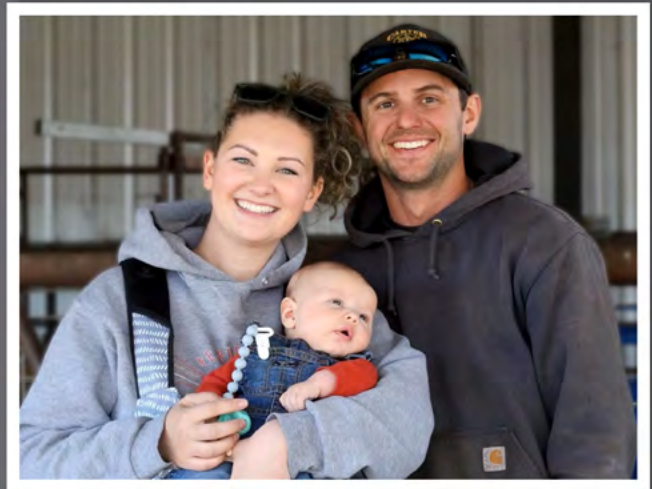
Introducing Riley DeBruycker and Zack Styren, our new Associate Directors

Mountain View Co-op has been a Montana cooperative since 1916, and that means we're **member-owned and member-controlled**. In a nutshell, our members elect a board of directors who oversee the co-op's strategic direction, hire a CEO, and ensure that the co-op best serves its members. It's a system that has worked well for over 100 years.

This system relies on people who are willing to step up and donate their time and efforts to making sure the co-op is headed in the right direction. Being a board member is a big commitment, and, as you can imagine, there's a lot to learn about how the co-op operates. After all, we have locations in 18 Central Montana communities, employ about 250 people, and have tens of thousands of customers. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle.

Luckily, two new young farmers have **stepped up to the challenge** of leading the co-op. Riley DeBruycker and Zach Styren have been appointed as Associate Directors, joining our nine full board members. They'll attend our board meetings, the training sessions, and do everything else the full board members do, all while learning about all things Mountain View. Welcome aboard!

**Meet our new  
associate  
director,  
Riley  
DeBruycker,  
and his family.**



***Riley, thanks for taking the time to chat, and thanks especially for becoming an associate board member. We'll start with the hard question first; the question that everyone hates: Tell us about yourself!***

I grew up on a farm in the Carter area with my family, so I guess you could say it's in my blood. I've learned pretty much everything I know about farming from my dad and grandpa, and it's great to get to work with them. My grandpa is 86 years old and he still helps with the farm. I got married a few years ago to my beautiful wife Hannah, and we just had our first son, Riggs, about six months ago.

***That's great, congratulations on the new baby! You've been farming your entire life. What's your favorite thing about it?***

I really enjoy the lifestyle and the work. For me it was a great way to grow up, and I'm excited to raise my son the same way I was brought up.

***What made you want to be on the co-op's board? Was there something specific you wanted to accomplish?***

We've always done a lot of business with the co-op, and I really enjoy learning how things work, so I thought that this would be a good opportunity to see how the decisions are made and learn more. I don't really have a specific agenda or pet projects to push, I just want to do what's best for Mountain View, and for the local farmers.

***So how has it been so far?***

I've only been to three or four meetings so far, but it's really been an eye-opening experience. I didn't know how much Mountain View did before I joined the board. I'm getting up to speed, though, and the rest of the board has been great explaining everything. It's really impressive, and I can't thank them enough.

# Fairfield C-Store Opening Day

We opened the doors to our newest store on March 14th, 2023, and Fairfield and the surrounding areas came to check it out! We can't thank everyone who helped make this project happen enough for their hard work and dedication. Also, **thank you to the incredible Fairfield community** who patiently waited while we built this new store, and for your support over the years. We hope you love it!

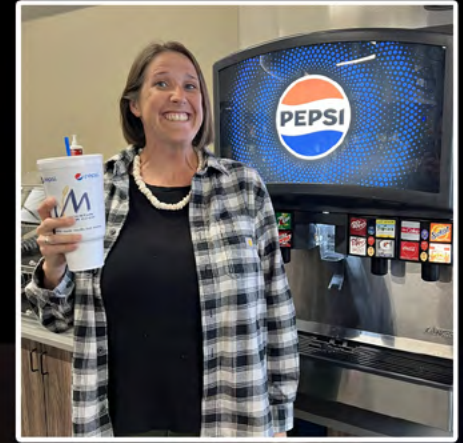
Dave Douglas, our retail division manager, rang up the first customer of the day.



Dan Schuler, our board president, shows Art Schmidt, our CEO, how to make sure the logo shows while enjoying a fountain drink.



The fountain drink machine has been busy ever since opening day. Rachel Hatch won our "free drink every day for a year" contest!





# Clucking Amazing

**Need help convincing your spouse that you should get chickens? Here you go!**

Looking for a simple yet rewarding addition to your family? Consider the humble chicken! Imagine waking up to the cheerful clucking of your own flock, ready to provide you with **fresh eggs every morning**. Whether you're a seasoned homesteader or a city dweller longing for a taste of the countryside, chickens offer a delightful way to connect with nature and enjoy the benefits of sustainable living.

With their charming personalities and low-maintenance care, chickens are the perfect companions for any backyard or small farm. Not only do they provide a constant supply of nutritious eggs, but they also help **keep pests at bay and enrich your garden soil** with their natural fertilizer. Plus, watching your feathered friends scratch and peck in the sunshine is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

Join the growing community of chicken enthusiasts and discover the joys of poultry keeping today! Whether you're seeking farm-fresh eggs, a closer connection to the land, or simply a new hobby to enjoy with your family, **chickens offer endless possibilities**. Embrace the simple pleasures of rural living and make your backyard come alive with the delightful presence of these feathered companions. Buy chickens now and experience the timeless appeal of country life firsthand!

Chicks, feed, and everything else you need to make your dreams of being a chicken rancher come true are available at our Black Eagle Feed Store, just across from the refinery. See you there!

## TOP SIX REASONS TO BUY A TEENAGE CHICKEN FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW CO-OP:

6. LESS CARE REQUIRED, EASIER FOR BEGINNING CHICKEN TENDERS
5. MUCH HIGHER SURVIVAL RATE THAN FRESHLY-HATCHED CHICKS
4. LOWER RISK OF DISEASE- THESE ARE STRONG CHICKENS!
3. CLOSER TO MATURITY AND THEIR PRIME EGG-LAYING YEARS
2. ALREADY HOUSEBROKEN\*
1. THEY'RE ON SALE!

\*ABSOLUTELY NOT TRUE!



# Baseball Opening Day Approaches

The team at Centene Stadium is back at work getting their field and facilities ready for baseball season, and Mountain View is once again proud to help. Last Spring they completely replaced all of the turf in the ballpark, which hadn't been done in over 60 years, and was incredibly expensive. To protect this investment, **they called on Mountain View Co-op to do soil sampling.** But what does soil sampling mean, and what does it do?

**Soil sampling** is the process of extracting a small amount of dirt, usually about a pint, and sending it to a lab to be analyzed. The results tell us all about the soil: the pH, the levels of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, organic material, and more. Our agronomists can then recommend a fertilizer that will best promote plant health and growth. If you don't have a soil sample, picking a fertilizer is just a guess.

When the results came back for the ballpark our agronomists determined that the a blend of 25-10-10-5 with iron will work well and provide good results. Soil sampling certainly isn't necessary for every lawn, but if you're having trouble growing the thick, luxurious lawn you're hoping for it can provide the answers you need.



# Mountain View Co-op Out and About

## DUTTON GROWER MEETING



Our Dutton grower meeting covered topics that matter most to farmers- Input costs, grain prices, and how to increase profitability. Art Schmidt, Jake McFarlin, and Jayce McCurry (all pictured above) from Mountain View all spoke.

## FORT BENTON GROWER MEETING



The Fort Benton grower meeting was incredibly well-attended. Nate Fairbanks from MVC introduced the speakers.

## MONTANA STATE FFA CONVENTION



As always, Mountain View Co-op attended the annual Montana FFA State Convention, which was held in Billings this year. Our sunglasses were a hit with the kids, the adults, and even this four-day-old goat!

## ULM C-STORE OPEN HOUSE



Our amazing Ulm team held their annual open house in early April. They had a petting zoo with cows, goats, and rabbits, a sale on propane and fertilizer, and a DJ playing music that kept the place rocking all day long.



After standing strong for well over 100 Montana winters, this homestead house is finally starting to give in to the elements.

Past issues of Perspectives can be found at <https://mvc.ag/perspectives/>