

Hill Country Elevator

WISCONSIN GRAIN HANDLER BUILDS 1.6-MILLION-BUSHEL STEEL FACILITY



Olsen's Mill Inc.
Auroraville, WI • 920-233-2261

Founded: 1932
Storage capacity: 31 million bushels at 13 locations
Number of employees: 100-plus
Crops handled: Corn, soybeans, soft red winter wheat
Services: Grain handling and merchandising, ethanol production, agronomy, distillers dried grains

Key personnel at Viroqua:
• Jay Amenda, location manager
• Kim McGregor, office manager

Supplier List

Aeration fans Chief Agri/Industrial Division
Bin sweeps ... U.S. Grain Storage Systems, Hutchinson/Mayrath
Bucket elevators Chief Agri/Industrial Division
Catwalks U.S. Grain Storage Systems
Contractor U.S. Grain Storage Systems
Distributor Schlager Inc.
Elevator buckets ... Maxi-Lift Inc.
Engineering U.S. Grain Storage Systems
Grain dryer ... Mathews Company
Grain temperature system TSGC Inc.
Leg belting Goodyear/All-State Industries
Liner Nolin Milling
Millwright U.S. Grain Storage Systems
Motors Baldor
Speed reducers Dodge
Steel storage Chief Agri/Industrial Division
Tower support system U.S. Grain Storage Systems
Truck probe InterSystems



Olsen's Mill Inc.'s new 1.6-million-bushel grain elevator at Viroqua, WI on a foggy fall morning. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

People from the flatlands may have trouble conceiving of much agriculture taking place among the steep hills of western Wisconsin. But between the broad ridge tops and the bottomlands, there actually is a large amount of fertile land in the region, says Jay Amenda, manager of Olsen's Mill Inc.'s new 1.6-million-bushel grain elevator in Viroqua, WI (608-638-7392).

Amenda, who farmed for 26 years near Belmont, WI before entering the grain industry, knows his state's agriculture. "We've had a lot of farmers quitting the dairy business and switching over to all grain production," he says. The volume of grain was large enough that Olsen's Mill leased a grain elevator in Viroqua for three years, before building its own facility in the city's industrial park in 2008.

Olsen's Mill hired U.S. Grain Storage Systems, Dike, IA (319-989-9210), to build the \$5 million project, which includes three Chief Titan tanks, one of which is a huge Chief Titan 1.1-million bushel tank for dry corn storage.



Jay Amenda

Construction proceeded quickly, breaking ground April 9 and nearing completion when *Grain Journal* visited early in November. The elevator had been receiving and drying grain since Oct. 30.

Grain Storage

The Chief Titan 1.1 tank was more cost-effective than building smaller tanks, Amenda notes. The big tank stands roughly 156 feet in diameter, 53 feet tall at the eaves, and 95 feet tall at the peak, with a center tower to support the heavy roof in Wisconsin's snowy climate.

The tank also features a 24-inch sweep auger designed by U.S. Grain, its first ever manufactured. The auger features a 50-hp drive motor and twin tractor motors and can be operated by remote control from outside the tank. "We think it will get to the point where OSHA won't let you enter these bins," Amenda comments.

The tank also is equipped with outside stiffeners, 36-cable TSGC grain temperature monitoring system, and six 25-hp



Incoming grain is weighed on a Thurman pit-type scale while being sampled with an InterSystems truck probe. The same scale will be utilized later to determine tare weight.

Caldwell centrifugal fans capable of supplying 1/10 cfm per bushel worth of aeration. It empties onto a below-ground drag-conveyor that leads to a 15,000-bph Caldwell jump leg for truck loading.

The elevator also includes three additional Chief tanks – a 400,000-bushel tank for soybeans, a 100,000-bushel

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-Jay Amenda, Olsen’s Mill Inc.

tank for wet corn, and a 5,000-bushel overhead surge bin for truck loading.

The soybean tank stands roughly 93 feet in diameter, 60 feet tall at the eaves, and 86 feet tall at the peak. It has no grain temperature monitoring but does include a 12-inch Hutchinson sweep auger and a pair of 25-hp Caldwell centrifugal fans supplying 1/10 cfm through in-floor ducting in a double-H pattern.

The wet tank stands 43 feet in diameter, 78 feet tall at the eaves, and 90 feet tall at the peak. It also has a 12-inch Hutchinson sweep auger and two 25-hp Caldwell centrifugal fans. However,



Workers in November 2008 put the finishing touches on a 15,000-bph Chief jump leg serving a 1.1-million-bushel Chief Titan steel tank. The tank is already filled with dry corn.

these fans can supply 1/5 cfm per bushel by utilizing full-floor aeration. Most of the corn in this tank quickly moves to a 4,000-bph Mathews tower dryer. (For more information on the dryer, see page 34.)

Grain Handling

Incoming grain is weighed on a 70-foot Thurman truck scale adjacent to a steel-sided office building, while the truck is sampled using an InterSystems truck probe. The probe operator is located on the building’s second floor, providing a clear view of the truck’s contents.

From the scale, trucks are directed to one 1,000-bushel mechanical receiving pit, which feeds two 15,000-bph Chief receiving legs. The dual-leg arrangement allows for receipt of two commodities at once.

The leg is outfitted with 12x8 Maxi-Lift heavy-duty buckets mounted on a 14-inch Goodyear belt supplied by All-State Industries. The leg delivers grain to an eight-hole Schlager electronic swing-type double distributor, which can reach the three smaller tanks by gravity or the Chief Titan 1.1 tank via an overhead Caldwell 15,000-bph drag conveyor.

Ed Zdrojewski, editor