New Steel

BLANCHARD VALLEY FARMERS COOP EXPANDS STORAGE HANDLING AT TWO LOCATIONS

★ Fostoria
★ Findlay

OHIO

Blanchard Valley Farmers Coop
Findlay, OH • 800-283-2611

Founded: 1989
Storage capacity: 14.2 million bushels at eight locations
Annual volume: 36 million bushels
Number of members: 1,833
Number of employees: 130
Crops handled: Corn, soybeans, soft red winter wheat
Services: Grain handling and merchandising, feed, energy, agronomy

Key personnel:
• Joel Althouse, branch manager, Fostoria
• Chad Rosebrook, originations, Fostoria
• Megan Fredritz, originations, Fostoria
• Gale Berry, branch manager, Findlay
• Bryce Berry, originations, Findlay
• Mitch Welty, coop grain manager

Supplier List
Aeration fans............Rolfes@Boone
Bin sweeps ....The GSI Group
Bucket elevators.......The GSI Group
Contractor/millwright ...... Elevator Services & Storage Inc.
Conveyors ......Hi Roller Conveyors, The GSI Group
Elevator buckets ...... Maxi-Lift Inc.
Grain temperature system ....Rolfes@Boone
Leg belting ....Goodyear Conveyor Belting
Level indicators..... BinMaster Level Controls
Steel storage..........The GSI Group, Behlen Mfg. Co.

Blanchard Valley Coop upgraded its West Findlay, OH facility in 2012 with two 275,000-bushel Behlen steel tanks, a new GSI receiving leg, and a new receiving pit. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

With 36 million bushels of grain anticipated to move in and out of its eight locations in 2012, Blanchard Valley Farmers Coop was looking for a way to handle that throughput which would be up from 32 million bushels in 2010.

To meet higher demands, the coop added corrugated steel tanks at two of its locations – Fostoria, OH, and West Findlay. In Fostoria, Blanchard Valley added 730,000 bushels of storage capacity, while its facility in West Findlay added 550,000 bushels.

West Findlay

The two new 275,000-bushel tanks at West Findlay is the first phase of a three to five-year expansion plan, which eventually will include a 30,000 bph bulk weigh scale for rail loadout, says Branch Manager Gale Berry (419-422-5976). The bins replaced a 100,000-bushel flat storage building.

Construction on the tanks started in April 2012 and was completed by September.

"With the added storage and the eventual addition of a bulk weigh scale we will be able to move grain a lot faster," says Berry, "and this will make changing crops in the fall easier."

West Findlay Branch Manager Gale Berry, left, and Fostoria Branch Manger Joel Althouse.

West Findlay's new Behlen tanks are fed by 30,000-bph GSI drag conveyors.

While the West Findlay elevator can load a 75-car train in 10-1/2 to 11 hours, the bulk weigh scale will help cut down loading times, Berry adds.

The two new 275,000-bushel Behlen corrugated steel tanks at West Findlay are 63 feet in diameter, 98-1/2 feet tall at the eave. The flat-bottom tanks are equipped with outside stiffeners, 16-inch GSI Series II sweep augers, and 11-cable Rolfes@Boone grain temperature monitoring systems.

The tanks are fed by overhead 30,000-bph GSI drag conveyors equipped with Baldor motors and Browning speed reducers. Grain levels are monitored by one BinMaster SmartBob level indicator. A pair of 25-hp Rolfes@Boone centrifugal

Aeration at Blanchard Valley's new tank at Fostoria is provided by four 30-hp Rolfes@Boone aeration fans.

fans provide 1/10 cfm per bushel of aeration, with the help of four 2-hp exhausters and 12 roof vents.

The project also included the addition of a 350-bushel mechanical receiving pit that feeds a GSI 30,000-bph receiving leg outfitted with two rows of Maxi-Lift 16x8 CC-Max buckets mounted on a 35-inch Goodyear belt. The leg delivers grain to the facility's 45-foot-diameter concrete silos and to the new bins' fill conveyors.

Berry says the leg was put in to prepare for further planned expansion after the bulk weigh system is installed. The leg currently is being used to transfer grain into the new steel tanks for rail loadout, he adds.

Fostoria

The new tank at the Fostoria location was "outstanding through its first harvest," according to Branch Manager Joel Althouse (419-435-4763). "With business and grain volume up in the area, the added storage is necessary."

Construction on the tank was started in March 2012 and was completed in time for the soybean harvest in October.

"We needed to have the extra space just to get through harvest," Althouse says, "and the new tank was able to handle its first bean harvest in the fall of 2012."

The tank, erected on an 8-foot concrete stemwall, features a concrete ramp that was constructed on site by workers from Blanchard Valley, so front-end loaders can reach the 10-foot-x-10-foot Bobcat door for cleanout.

The new tank is a 105-foot-diameter GSI corrugated steel tank, 91 feet tall at the eave, with a 730,000-bushel capacity. The flat-bottom tank is equipped with outside stiffeners and a 24-cable Rolfes@Boone grain temperature monitoring system. The tank is fed by a 20,000-bph Hi Roller enclosed belt conveyor. The GSI tank is emptied onto another 20,000-bph Hi-Roller above-ground belt conveyor. Four 30-hp Rolfes@Boone centrifugal fans provide 1/10 cfm per bushel of aeration with the help of nine roof exhausters.

In addition to the new corrugated steel bin, the facility also has added a

New Rail King railcar mover at Blanchard Valley's Fostoria elevator.

Blanchard Valley's new 730,000 bushel GSI corrugated steel tank in Fostoria.

new Stewart & Stevenson Rail King railcar mover that replaces the facility's 30 year-old railcar mover.

The Rail King has a dual direction cab and two weight-transfer couplers that allow for up to 44,500 pounds of maximum tractive effort.

Contractor

When looking for a contractor, the two Blanchard Valley locations went with a long-time construction partner. Both projects were contracted by Elevator Services and Storage, Inc. (ESSI), Beaverdam, OH (419-643-5111).

"Using a major contractor like ESSI, when they are close to our location worked out well for us," says Berry at West Findlay. "We have worked with them a lot in the past."

Alex Lord, associate editor