

NORTHERN FARMERS CO-OP

CASE STUDY

 **BULK STORAGE
APPLICATIONS**



Being able to customize a structure for the needs of a building owner is one thing; the ability to customize it to the future needs of a customer is another matter altogether.

That's what Legacy did for Northern Farmers Co-op. The cooperative had a need for more fertilizer storage, but they also wanted one that could be expanded and modified based on future needs.

Brent Benike is the General Manager for Northern Farmers Co-op in Williams, MN, and their organization had been needing new storage for fertilizer for quite some time. The changing nature of the farming business was one of the drivers for expanding the co-op's fertilizer situation.

BUILDING NAME

Northern Farmers Co-Op

LOCATION

Williams, MN

MARKET SECTOR

Bulk Storage

APPLICATION

Fertilizer Storage

SIZE

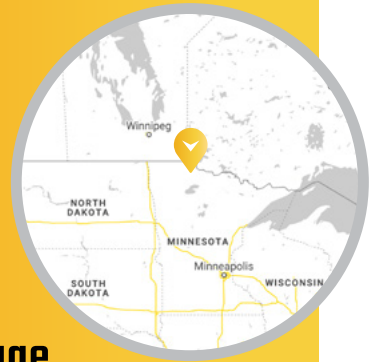
84 ft x 174 ft (14,616 sq ft)

SPECIAL FEATURES

Fully lined structure with a limited building footprint

INSTALLATION

Legacy in-house crews





Equipment, explains Benike, is getting bigger and more sophisticated, so farmers can get their crops in the ground faster than ever (weather permitting of course). Consequently, their fertilizer business has to be ready all the time. “You have to be at capacity to be able to handle that in today’s ag world,” he said, “Product has got to be on hand so you can get it out the door quickly.”

Northern Farmers Co-op had an old elevator that it tore down to expand its fertilizer capacity, and they came to Legacy to design a building that fit the space. A map of the site shows that the company’s land is hemmed in by a railroad on one side and a state highway on the other. The building had to fit in that space.

Legacy customizes every building it creates; fitting structures into existing spaces is what we do. Sometimes fertilizer storage structures include a mixing tower. Benike said they currently have a mixer for fertilizer, but it’s getting on in years. Eventually,

a volumetric floor blender will be added to the new building, and they created extra space for that. They also used precast concrete walls to create bins, something Legacy often recommends. While the company is limited on space by the railroad and the highway, they can expand in another direction. There’s an old quonset hut that is just about ready to be torn down, and Benike plans to expand the new building into that space. By communicating with Legacy up front that they wanted to expand, it gave our designers and engineers the opportunity to design end walls that will accommodate that growth in the fertilizer storage space.

CORROSION

Fertilizer storage can be hard on steel. As Benike puts it, “everything that fertilizer dust touches wants to corrode.” Our solid steel frames typically need some corrosion protection in fertilizer, salt and mining storage facilities. We offer a range of epoxy coatings. In the case of Northern Farmers Co-op, they opted for hot-dipped galvanized steel frames plus an interior liner. The liner seals the steel frames off and keeps them away from the fertilizer dust.

PRICE

Cost was a deciding factor for Northern Farmers Co-op’s choice of Legacy. Benike said the cost of their new fertilizer structure was about half of what a traditional stick building would be. “We needed reasonably priced storage,” he said. “We didn’t feel like a traditional building was going to fit our budget.”

LOOK + FEEL

The phrases “fertilizer storage” and “visually appealing” don’t always go together, but Benike says their new storage building is striking. Their community is in a very busy tourist area near the Lake of the Woods in northern Minnesota, and he says that he’s had a lot of comments about how attractive the new storage facility is. It’s very visible from the highway. Benike did a lot of research and even made a visit to Legacy’s headquarters in Central Minnesota to see the range of structures there—from the steel manufacturing plant to the paint shop to the main offices. Seeing all that “made us a believer pretty quick,” he said.

“Anybody that’s looking for a fertilizer system or storage system that doesn’t break the budget, they are going to want to look pretty hard at this,” Benike said.