

Flood Insurance

HOW DAILY BACKUPS AND OFFSITE STORAGE HELPED MINNESOTA COOP SURVIVE FLOOD

“Always do your backups. They are there for a reason,” says **Robin Paulson**. For Paulson and her colleagues, making computer file backups and taking them offsite helped keep their business afloat after 17 inches of rain the night of August 18, 2007 wreaked about \$3 million in damages to **Farmers Cooperative Elevator Co.**, in Rushford, MN.

On that Saturday night, rain began pouring on the southeastern Minnesota town of about 2,500 residents, pushing water over the banks of Rush Creek.

The coop’s Rushford elevator, established in 1903, was one of 70 businesses in the community to suffer flood damage. Paulson, office manager, recalls how she found seven of the company’s computer hard drives under two feet of water.

Borrowed IBM iSeries

The first thing Paulson did after the weekend of flooding, on Monday was drive to Rochester, MN to the office of **AgVantage Software**, which



Farmers Cooperative Elevator Co. Office Manager Robin Paulson.

sold the coop its software system 17 years ago. Paulson and AgVantage’s employees worked diligently to bring Rushford’s data on to the AgVantage IBM iSeries system in their office. “AgVantage let us piggyback off their system,” she says.

For the next couple of days, the company’s business ran off the AgVantage system, which enabled Rushford Farmers, which has four locations handling grain storage, feed and agronomy, to do its payroll and get billing out.

“We were able to keep our other locations open, quote prices, and still access (feed) recipes for our customers,” says Paulson.

According to Paulson, AgVantage also provided the elevator with seven discounted PCs.

Several of the elevator’s suppliers also helped during the flood. Land O’Lakes Inc., for example, provided a trailer, which served as a temporary office at Rushford.

The elevator’s grain tanks were flooded, and when soybeans in one of them absorbed the moisture and expanded, the tank exploded. A significant amount of the soybeans were damaged. Rushford’s fertilizer plant and most of its agronomy department’s vehicles also were damaged.

Business is about back to normal now. But without having the daily routine of saving its records and taking them offsite, the elevator would have been in much worse shape. “It costs a lot of money to keep records current,” says Paulson of the daily backups. “But in our case, it has paid off.”

Grain Company

Farmers Cooperative Elevator Co.

Rushford, MN • 507-864-7733

J.M. Schwanbeck, General Manager
Robin Paulson, Office Manager, Rushford, MN
Greg Boldt, Manager, Houston, MN
Gina Schroeder, Manager, Caledonia, MN
Mike Patterson, Spring Grove, MN

Founded: 1903

Annual volume: 2.5 million bushels (all locations)

Number of employees: 37

Crops handled: Corn, soybeans, oats

Services: Grain handling, feed, agronomy

Software Vendor

AgVantage[®] Software

Rochester, MN

877-282-6353 • www.agvantage.com

Michelle Blomberg, President
Chuck Bohanon, Senior Sales and Service Analyst
Paul Hawes, CFO

Accounting software: AgVantage software

Operating systems: Windows XP, i5/OS

Software options: Grain Accounting, Management Accounting, Point-of-Sale, Agronomy, Energy Management, eBusiness, and Patronage.