HASTINGS
EXPANDED CRUSH PLANT OPENS
Throughout this holiday season, we are reminded often of how many things for which we are thankful. Among these, I know that most are thankful that the 2016 election is behind us and that we can focus on the opportunities and challenges of the future. Agriculture is highly impacted by decisions made in Washington, and we look forward to working with the officials elected to serve the people on these issues.

In this issue of AGP News, we will hopefully provide more reasons for you to be thankful that a determined group of individuals and leaders came together and formed this cooperative more than thirty years ago. The cover and pages of this edition include stories and images of construction projects underway at AGP, as well as stories about the next generation of leaders at AGP.

AGP is busy preparing for our Annual Meeting in January in Omaha. It is a key member/owner event for AGP and we look forward to seeing many of you there to celebrate fiscal 2016 and learn more about the many accomplishments your Company achieved last year and our plans for the future. Also at this meeting, the member/owners elect directors to serve on the AGP Board. You will see the candidates for Board listed inside.

Lastly, I want to welcome Matt Bendler, our new Vice President for Human Resources, to our Management Team. Our people make the difference at the AGP, and we are very excited to have Matt on the team to help us retain, train, and find new talent - now and in the future.

I hope you have a wonderful season and I look forward to seeing many of you soon!

Best regards,

J. Keith Spackler
Progress on AGP’s Aberdeen, SD Soybean Processing Plant
Anticipated Spring 2017 Groundbreaking

AGP announced that the Company is continuing to achieve progress on the construction of a state-of-the-art soybean processing facility in Aberdeen, SD and anticipates a 2017 groundbreaking at the site. The new facility will be the tenth soybean processing plant for the Company and its first in South Dakota.

“We are pleased to report that the engineering design and regulatory approval phase for the new facility in Aberdeen has gone extremely well to date, and that we will break ground on the construction phase of the project in the spring of 2017,” said Keith Spackler, Chief Executive Officer. “State and local officials have been excellent partners throughout this process and we look forward to continued good relationships on this project as we move to the next phase. Feedback from our members and farmers in South Dakota has likewise been extremely positive and encouraging. The new facility will begin processing soybeans in 2019 as originally planned.”

“AGP moved forward on this project in large part due to the unique combination of attributes for the Aberdeen location – plentiful soybean supplies, a great community for our workforce, strategic infrastructure considerations, and favorable transportation capabilities,” said Cal Meyer, Chief Operating Officer and Group Vice President. “In fact, management received Board approval for final project plans that included design improvements for expanded capacity in July 2016.” Meyer added that once operational, the plant will create approximately 50 jobs with excellent compensation and benefits and have a tremendously positive impact on local and regional economic development opportunities.

AGP Management

Matt Bendler has joined AGP’s Management Team as Vice President Human Resources. Matt most recently served as Human Resources Director for the North American Region of the Danfoss Corporation. He has previous management and human resources experience at other industrial manufacturing companies in the United States and abroad. Matt received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Illinois.

AGP Board and Management Tour CLAAS Omaha

The AGP Board of Directors and Management toured the CLAAS Omaha combine manufacturing plant this summer. The tour provided the group a first-hand look at a global leader in agricultural machinery manufacturing. CLAAS assembles the LEXION combine at the Omaha facility.
AGP Board
Tours Hastings Operations

The AGP Board of Directors toured AGP’s operations at Hastings, NE this fall during their traditional Board meeting at an operating facility.

The tour included AGP’s vegetable oil refinery, AminoPlus® production facility, and the recently expanded soybean processing operations. The expansion project was completed within budget and on schedule for this year’s soybean harvest.

The soybean processing plant expansion project at Hastings, NE included a new dryer, extraction (left), desolventizer toaster/dryer cooler (lower left), prep building, truck staging area, and material handling upgrades. The expansion project also included a new double probe system (above) to enhance truck unloading.
Participants in the plant tour included (left to right): Mark Craigmile, Senior Vice President Operations; Dean Isaacson, Manager, Holloway, MN; Bruce Granquist, Producer, Milbank, SD; Keith Spackler, AGP CEO; Chuck Schafer, Manager, Thornton, IA; Jay Sunderman, Producer, Clarinda, IA; Lowell Wilson, Producer, Cherokee, IA; David Leiting, Manager, Arcadia, IA; Cal Meyer, AGP COO; Brad Davis, Manager, Goldfield, IA; Larry Oltjen, Producer, Hiawatha, KS; and Randy Robeson, Manager, Brainard, NE.
Major upgrades to AGP’s soybean processing plant in Mason City, IA have been completed over the past six months. These upgrades include a new bean conditioner (pictured at right prior to installation, with Joe Logue, Plant Engineer) and a new desolventizer toaster/dryer cooler. Additional improvements include a new AminoPlus® storage leg, a new Hi-Pro storage tank feed conveyor, and upgrades to the elevator and meal storage tanks.
Marty Reagan, former AGP CEO, was inducted into the Iowa Co-op Hall of Fame at the Annual Meeting of the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives in Ames, IA. Numerous family members, friends, and former colleagues were on hand to congratulate Marty on the prestigious honor.

The Iowa Institute for Cooperatives had this to say about Marty: “Seizing opportunities, a commitment to the cooperative business model, and transparency are all key phrases and words used by numerous peers to describe the career and leadership of the former CEO at AGP and this year’s Iowa Co-op Hall of Fame Inductee, Marty Reagan.”

Current AGP Board Chairman and former colleague, Brad Davis, best explained Marty’s abilities: “His outstanding performance during his tenure as CEO helped shape AGP into a very transparent, connected, and high performance cooperative for its members, employees, and the communities in which they operate. Marty led the cooperative in a way that carefully balanced the interests of the members in terms of value created and value returned.”

Marty led AGP to historic growth in earnings, patronage, and member-owner equity during his time as CEO. He spearheaded record capital investment programs in soybean processing, refining, biodiesel production, and the development of an export facility in the Pacific Northwest.

“It is truly an honor to be recognized by your peers for contributions that have added value to our Iowa agriculture cooperatives and their producers,” said Marty.
Annual Meeting
Schedule of Events

Embassy Suites - La Vista Conference Center
12520 Westport Parkway
La Vista, Nebraska 68128
402-331-7400

Thursday, January 19, 2017
2:00 p.m. ................... Registration Opens
5:00 p.m. ................... Opening Reception

Friday, January 20, 2017
7:00 a.m. ................... Breakfast - Sponsored by CoBank
8:00 a.m. ................... Spouses Breakfast & Program with Jolene Brown
8:00 a.m. ................... Registration Opens
9:00 - 9:50 a.m. .......... Breakout Speakers - Ted Seifried and John Roach
10:15 a.m. ................. Opening Music by Skutt High School - “Vivace”
   Welcome
   Call to Order
   Election of Directors
   CEO Report
   CFO Report
   Special Announcements
   Election Results
10:30 - 3:30 p.m. ......... Spouses Shopping Excursion
12:15 p.m. ................. Lunch
1:15 p.m. ................. Meeting Reconvenes
   COO Report
   Operating Reports
   Proagro Report
   Chairman’s Report
   Questions & Answers
   Adjourn Meeting
2:30 p.m. ................... Andrew Busch, Guest Speaker
   “2017 Economic & Political Outlook”
5:30 p.m. ................. Reception
6:30 p.m. ................. Closing Banquet - Entertainment Featuring Blackhawk

Registration packets for the Annual Meeting have been mailed to all Member cooperatives with complete details of the meeting. Please contact Member & Corporate Relations, 800-247-1345 ext 5017, with any questions you may have regarding the Annual Meeting. Name badges required for all events.
Guest Speakers

Andrew Busch  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

As seen on CNBC, FOX Business, and BNN, Andy is a trusted expert for millions of viewers. His views are highly sought after, both in the press and by policymakers.

He electrifies audiences globally, speaking on the core of economics, politics, and markets. His upbeat and humorous style has been crafted over five years of weekly appearances which include talking politics with Maria Bartiromo on CNBC, as an analyst on CNBC’s “Money in Motion”, and as a twice-weekly BNN contributor. Andy breaks down complex economic issues and makes them relevant to people's lives, families, and careers.

His iTunes podcast, “Engage with Andy Busch”, brings top minds together for lively discussions on economics, politics, and culture.

Ted Seifried  
John Roach  
BREAKOUT SPEAKERS

Ted Seifried is Vice President and Chief Market Strategist for the Zaner Ag Hedge Group. He believes it is paramount to be able to use different strategies to adapt to market conditions. Ted has spent years working with grain and livestock producers and end users throughout the world. He is a regular guest analyst on Ag Day, US Farm Report, Market to Market, and Market Rally Radio with Chip Flory.

John Roach grew up on a grain and livestock farm in South Central Iowa. He founded Roach Ag Marketing in 1978 in Perry, Iowa to better help farmers sell their grain and livestock.

John is best known as the Senior Market Analyst for the nationally syndicated Public Broadcasting program Market to Market where he has appeared since 1978.

Jolene Brown  
GUEST SPEAKER

Jolene Brown is a walking, talking spokesperson and champion for the people of agriculture. She is a farmer, author, and professional speaker. She is from West Branch, Iowa and her worldwide audiences appreciate her fun-filled spirit and valuable information. Jolene is on a mission to share best practices, appreciation, laughter, and celebration to increase productivity, profitability, and peace of mind.

www.JoleneBrown.com

Featured Entertainment

Blackhawk

Multi-platinum-selling country artist Blackhawk is Henry Paul (guitar, mandolin, and vocals) and Dave Robbins (keyboards and vocals). They, along with third founding member Van Stephenson, exploded on to the country music landscape in 1993 with their debut smash “Goodbye Says It All.” They have to their credit a dozen top ten hits including two number ones. They continue to write and record new music, and with their incredible band, continue to spread Blackhawk’s unique musical message.

There is a sincerity and originality in what they do that rings true with audiences everywhere. Great songs are the cornerstones of their career and these songs have touched people of all ages. Their unique musical character has been a catalyst in bringing non-country music fans to the genre. Blackhawk’s faithful followers have continued to grow in numbers over the years based on the consistency of quality in their live show. Night after night Blackhawk puts on an inspired performance that resonates in the hearts and minds of music enthusiasts everywhere.
Candidates
For AGP Board

AREA 1 - MANAGER
IOWA

Chuck Schafer
Thornton, IA
Incumbent

Ken Smith
New Hampton, IA

Chuck has served as General Manager of North Iowa Cooperative, Thornton, Iowa for 27 years. Chuck started his cooperative career at Farmers Cooperative, Manly, Iowa after graduating from NIACC, Mason City, Iowa with an Ag Business degree. He worked in Manly for 12 years, including 9 years as Assistant Manager.

Chuck has served on the AGP Board of Directors for 7 years. He is on the Risk Committee of Golden Grain Energy in Mason City. His previous cooperative service includes Ag Leadership Council for Land O’Lakes and Director with Cooperative Mutual Insurance. He also served on the Board of Directors for the Iowa Institute of Cooperatives for six years.

Chuck’s community service includes Director on the NIACC Foundation. He previously served as a Director on the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development and Director for First State Bank in Thornton. He has served as President of the St. Paul Lutheran Church Council in Thornton. Chuck and his wife, Sherri, have three daughters, all married, and three grandchildren.

Ken is CEO/General Manager at Five Star Cooperative, New Hampton, Iowa. He brought 25 years of agriculture experience when appointed to the top position at the company in April 2016. Ken most recently served as Iowa Area Manager for The Andersons the past 4 years. He also managed sales and merchandising efforts for the company’s ethanol and grain facilities in central Indiana. Ken was Commercial Manager for Bunge’s soy processing plant and dry corn mill in Danville, Illinois. He currently serves as a Director of Control Systems Software. Ken earned his Bachelor and Master degrees in Agricultural Economics from Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Ken’s community service includes past Director and Treasurer of the Cass County Chamber of Commerce in Logansport, Indiana and Chairman of the Logansport Ag Council.

Ken and his wife, Sarah, have two children, Morgan and Sophie. They are members of United Methodist Church in Spirit Lake, Iowa.

All Board positions are for three-year terms
Candidates Nominated For AGP Board of Directors

AREA 1 - PRODUCER

IOWA (UNOPPOSED)

Jay Sunderman
Clarinda, IA
Incumbent

Jay farms 7,000 acres near New Market, Iowa, growing corn and soybeans. His farming business also includes a 900 head beef feedlot and a 400 head cow/calf operation. Jay has served on the Clarinda Co-op Company Board of Directors for the past 14 years including Board President since 2008.

Jay attended Iowa Western Community College, Clarinda campus, while beginning his full-time farming operation. He is a member of the Taylor County Cattlemen, Iowa Cattlemen's Association, and serves as President of the Taylor County FSA Committee. He previously served on the Iowa State Extension Council and also was Chairman of the Nominating Committee for AGP in 2011.

Jay is active in his community, serving as a Director of the New Market Foundation and Treasurer of the New Market Celebration Committee. He is a former New Market school board member and has held numerous leadership positions for his church, New Market Methodist.

Jay and his wife, Mary Ellen, have one son, Fletcher.

Randy Robeson
Brainard, NE
Incumbent

Randy has served as President and General Manager of Frontier Cooperative Company, Brainard, Nebraska for 21 years. He has spent his entire career in cooperatives, starting as Fertilizer Manager at Nehawka Farmers Co-op, Nehawka, Nebraska. He also served as Branch Manager, Central Cooperative, Pleasant Hill, Missouri, and General Manager/Grain Merchandiser at Haxtun Co-op Association, Haxtun, Colorado.

Randy attended the University of Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture, Curtis, Nebraska, and has completed several Farmland Agribusiness and General Manager training programs.

Randy has served on the AGP Board of Directors for 9 years and previously served on the AGP Grain Cooperative Board of Directors for three terms. He is a Director on the Nebraska Cooperative Council and a former member of Nebraska Petroleum Marketing LLC. Randy’s family includes his two children, Seth and Skyler.

AREA 3 - MANAGER

ILLINOIS, KANSAS,
MISSOURI, NEBRASKA (UNOPPOSED)

All Board positions are for three-year terms
2016 SUMMER INTERNS
Growing the Next Generation of Ag Leaders

AGP employed an exceptional group of student interns for the summer of 2016. The energetic and diverse group of individuals added strong value in their respective roles at the various plants and offices. The team of 10 interns is the largest group of interns AGP has employed, and the Company’s Human Resources Department looks forward to growing the program even more.

During the Intern Wrap Up event at the corporate office in Omaha, each intern gave a presentation on the projects they worked on during the summer, their overall experience with AGP, and their goals for the future. The interns received presentations from various AGP leaders including Mark Sandeen, Vice President Processing Marketing, Tony Stepanek, Director of Engineering, and Ed Woll, Senior Director Corporate Relations. Presenters discussed their responsibilities at AGP and the opportunities available for future employees.

Mark Craigmile, Senior Vice President of Operations, Ernie Kiley, Director of Soy Operations, Lou Rickers, Director of Biodiesel Operations, and Joselyn Salter, Assistant Controller, were in attendance during the student presentations and asked each of the interns informative questions to learn more about their experiences.

The feedback from the interns is very valuable to AGP regarding internships and full-time opportunities. All the interns agreed that working for a company with a positive work environment is a must and they are looking to work for a company with advancement opportunities.

AGP has already hired two interns for the summer of 2017 and is looking forward to adding more to the team.

Ben Rickers
Algona Operations intern
Iowa State University
Graduation: Fall 2017
Major: Mechanical Engineering
Samantha Pratt
Hastings Merchandising intern
South Dakota State University
Graduation: Spring 2017
Major: Ag Business

Matt Kunerth
Eagle Grove Merchandising intern
South Dakota State University
Graduation: Fall 2017
Major: Ag Business

Jacob Peters
Hastings Operations intern
Kansas State University
Graduation: Spring 2018
Major: Biological Systems Engineering

Grant Silliman
Sergeant Bluff Operations intern
Iowa State University
Graduation: Spring 2018
Major: Chemical Engineering

Andrew Krause
Eagle Grove E & I intern
Iowa State University
Graduation: Spring 2018
Major: Ag Systems Technology

Nicole Japp
Eagle Grove Operations intern
Iowa State University
Graduation: Spring 2018
Major: Chemical Engineering

Ben Link
Eagle Grove Operations intern
Iowa State University
Graduation: Fall 2017
Major: Ag Systems Technology

David Meisner
Mason City Operations intern
University of Missouri - Columbia
Graduation: Fall 2017
Major: Mechanical Engineering

Jamie Nelson
Omaha Accounting intern
Doane University
Graduation: Spring 2017
Major: Accounting & Business Administration
AGP Hosts Young Cooperators

Ag Partners Cooperative, Inc.

AGP hosted a group of young cooperators from Ag Partners Cooperative, Inc., Hiawatha, KS this summer at the Company’s corporate office in Omaha, NE. The group consisted of producer-members and employees of the cooperative.

“This was a great opportunity for our younger members and employees to get to know AGP better,” said Lincoln Hillyer, Vice President, Grain, Ag Partners Cooperative. “AGP’s soybean processing plant in St. Joseph, MO has always been a primary market for our soybeans and our soybean meal purchases. Our relationship continues to strengthen with new partnerships with AGP such as the Kansas Sustainability Program. We appreciate your hospitality and the opportunity to learn more about AGP.”

Participants from Ag Partners Cooperative, Inc. included: Darin Georg, Producer; Nick Aberle, Producer; Austin Heiniger, Producer; Brett Covert, Producer; Luke Moore, Producer; Brett Neibling, Producer; Todd Neibling, Producer; Max Graves, Producer; Jonathan Bottiger, Producer; Chance Steele, Agronomist; Ben Swinger, Agronomist; Matt McRell, Agronomist; Ethan Noll, Agronomist; Craig Gilbert, Vice President, Operations; and Lincoln Hillyer, Vice President, Grain.

Among the AGP presenters were: Troy Alberts (left), Vice President, Refined Oils Group; Katie Freese (right), Project Manager, Engineering (Katie is a native of Hiawatha and her father, Bob Freese, is former Vice President of Grain at Ag Partners Cooperative); and Chris Schaffer (top right), Vice President, Export Marketing. Also on the program were Terry McClatchey, Marketing Manager, AGP St. Joseph, MO and Jim Rodenburg, Corporate Communications Manager.
**Member News**

Doug Archer is serving as General Manager of Colton Farmers Elevator, Colton, SD. Doug is from the Sioux Falls area and most recently worked at a cooperative in North Dakota.

Alan Zumpfe was been named the CEO/General Manager of CPI in Hastings, NE on August 1. Alan’s previous position was Grain Manager at Central Valley Ag in O’Neill, NE.

Beattie Farmers Union Coop, Beattie, KS merged into Farmers Cooperative, Dorchester, NE effective September 1. Ron Velder is the CEO/General Manager of Dorchester.

Farmers Cooperative Company, Paullina, IA merged with First Cooperative Association, Cherokee, IA on September 1. Jim Carlson is the General Manager at First Cooperative.

Sam Scofield is serving as General Manager at Producers Ag Marketing in Kensington, KS.

Farmers Union Cooperative Association in Cedar Bluffs, NE purchased Bruno Coop Association, Bruno, NE, on August 28. Randall Schwartz is the General Manager at Farmers Union.

Matt Ashton is Senior Vice President of Grain for Central Valley Ag in York, NE. Matt was most recently the CEO/General Manager at Central Farmers Cooperative in Marion, SD.

Cooperative Farmers, Inc., Scotland, SD merged with Central Farmers Cooperative in Marion, SD on August 1.

On November 30, FCA Co-op in Jackson, MN voted to merge with Crystal Valley Cooperative, Lake Crystal, MN effective March 1. Roger Kienholz is the General Manager at Crystal Valley.

Harvey Van Eps, General Manager at Prinsburg Farmers Cooperative, has announced his plans to retire February 8, 2017. That will be 53 years to the day since he started at the co-op in 1963.

Greg Gerrads succeeded Randy Daugherty as General Manager at 21st Century Cooperative, Cumberland, IA effective July 1. Randy retired after 36 years at the cooperative including the last 23 years as General Manager. Greg is also a long-time employee serving in various management roles after starting his career at the cooperative in 1984.

**Co-op News**

Ag Producers Co-op, Sunray, TX, purchased Robinson Grain, a privately held grain company located in the Panhandle of Texas. Robinson Grain has locations in Abel, Conway, Culer, and Panhandle, TX, with total grain storage of 5,500,000 bushels. Dave Reinders is the CEO of Ag Producers Co-op.

Dalhart Consumers Fuel Association, Dalhart, TX and Ag Producers Co-op, Sunray, TX overwhelmingly approved a unification of both cooperatives effective August 1, 2016. The name of the merged cooperative will be Ag Producers Co-op, with a total grain storage of 72,000,000 bushels. Jim Turner from Dalhart will be the CEO of the merged cooperative. Dave Reinders, current CEO of Ag Producers, has announced plans to retire.
AGP hosts Iowa’s U.S. Senators

AGP hosted Iowa’s U.S. Senators in separate visits at locations in Sergeant Bluff, IA and Sheldon, IA.

U.S. Senator Charles Grassley met with AGP employees at Sergeant Bluff to learn more about the Company’s expansion projects. Following that visit, Senator Grassley issued the following report in his “News Alert” letter to constituents:

“To today I met with employees at AGP’s soy biodiesel plant in Sergeant Bluff, the first of its kind in the United States in 1996. AGP is building a new soybean refinery, and expanding its biodiesel production to 60 million gallons of capacity annually. These improvements will add more than 30 jobs at this facility alone. Iowa leads the nation in producing renewable fuels including ethanol and biodiesel. The industry supports more than 43,000 jobs throughout the state’s economy. The 12 biodiesel facilities in Iowa contribute to almost 48,000 biodiesel jobs nationwide.

“As the industry evolves, I’m working to make sure tax policy evolves with it. I’m the co-author of bipartisan legislation to reform the biodiesel tax credit to promote domestic production rather than the current policy of a mixture credit available to the fuel blender. The reforms would support domestic biodiesel producers, like those in Sergeant Bluff, and stop subsidizing foreign biodiesel producers. My amendment passed out of committee unanimously last year. I hope for final enactment later this year. I also have helped to make sure biodiesel contributes to the nation’s fuel supply through the congressionally approved Renewable Fuel Standard.”

U.S. Senator Joni Ernst conducted a visit at AGP’s soybean processing plant in Sheldon during her 99-county tour of the state. Ernst said a primary goal of her tour was to learn more about agriculture in Iowa by listening to the people in the industry. During the meeting, she expressed her strong support of domestic renewable fuels production and her support for a new farm bill.

Accompanying Senator Ernst on the visit was Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. Secretary Northey enjoyed learning more about AGP’s soybean processing operations and discussed various state policy issues with the AGP team.
President-Elect Trump and Forecasting 2017

The returns are in and America has a new President: Donald Trump. So now what?

First, let’s begin by congratulating our new President. President-Elect Trump won a long and difficult election through perseverance, timing, strategy, and a bit of luck. To separate himself from the 16 other primary contenders in his own party and then defeat a seasoned and tough opponent for the general election was remarkable.

If we take a look at the numbers behind the victory, it’s clear that rural America played an enormous role in the election of Trump. Trump captured and capitalized on a message that was distinctly appealing to rural America, and rural America delivered for the new President. Given the outcome, it is clear that agriculture stands to benefit from the remarkable and historically high support rural America threw behind Trump. Rural America is quite simply in a much better position politically today than it was on November 7th, the day before the election.

Getting down to business in 2017, perhaps the most important issue facing agriculture has been the pressure and deluge of regulations coming at agriculture and agribusiness. Regulations mandating unnecessary and burdensome production practices have been at the forefront at the Trump rallies across rural America. To paraphrase one agricultural industry leader, agriculture has felt like it is under siege over the last several years. Like President Obama, Trump will have a phone and pen and we hope he uses it to deal with this issue.

We also expect President-Elect Trump and Congress to work on a new Farm Bill in 2017. This broad bill is the backbone of the farm safety net and overall farm policy and programs. Unified control of Congress and the White House should be a net positive, provided the bill reflects mainstream agriculture priorities, which it usually does. The current downturn in farm income and commodity prices should elevate this legislation as well from a timing perspective.

“Trump captured and capitalized on a message that was distinctly appealing to rural America.”

Trade policy is one area of uncertainty, if the President-Elect follows through on some of his campaign rhetoric. Agriculture is highly dependent on trade. Trump knows this and advisors close to him have been stressing the need to renegotiate trade deals and create new opportunities, not walk away from trade entirely. Even though he is a proven skilled negotiator, we hope this effort does not go sideways on the new President.

Renewable fuels policy and progress will be critical to maintain, and we have seen strong bipartisan support from the previous two Administrations (Bush and Obama) for these programs. Trump has been supportive of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) throughout his campaign, and no doubt his support for biodiesel and ethanol helped secure large election victories in rural districts. New and larger influences from the oil and gas sector among his top advisors give cause for concern, but again, the President will know agriculture’s role in electing him.

Other large issues facing agriculture in 2017 include tax and immigration reform. These issues are massively complicated and have the potential to impact the entire U.S. economy. In both cases, we will need to ensure agriculture and the cooperative system is not negatively impacted.

Forecasting 2017 and beyond is somewhat difficult given the uncertainty surrounding the transition from one President to another. In all instances, AGP will work hard to ensure our voice is heard on these issues and many others with the new President and members of his team. We congratulate President-Elect Trump once again and look forward to working with him and the new Congress to ensure a positive 2017 and beyond for agriculture.
Beware the Boom: Diversify Your Portfolio to Protect From The Bust

There’s always a “next big thing” in investing. Outlandish returns from high-performing sectors can lead investors to pour most of their capital into a narrow segment of the economy. This hasn’t worked well in the past.

The most important protection you can provide for your portfolio is a diverse range of assets. Here are four ways to diversify your holdings.

1) A whole-market fund
A popular investment is the whole-market exchange traded fund. Rather than picking individual securities, you invest in a mutual fund that balances its holdings to capture the performance of an entire listing, like the Dow Jones Industrial Index.

These funds are insulated from the gains and losses of specific companies; if one company in a sector goes down, there’s more market share left for its competitors. While investors can’t reap all the rewards of an outlier security that’s performing well, this insulation protects investors from catastrophic loss of value. After all, only a disaster would destroy the world’s 500 largest companies.

Whole-market funds are an easy way to diversify a portfolio and average a 6% growth a year.

2) Diversify kinds of holdings
Investing in a blend of asset classes, including bonds, protects against the tumultuous stock market. Bonds are generally safer than stocks; when stocks suffer, bonds usually increase in value.

What percentage of your assets should be in bonds? It depends upon your age, how close you are to retirement, and your individual risk tolerance. As a rough guideline, 100 minus your age is a good starting point.

It’s safer to invest in funds that buy many little pieces of bonds than to buy individual bonds yourself. Individual bonds can depreciate because investors doubt the bondholder’s ability to pay it off. Diversifying your bond holdings provides maximum security.

3) Diversify your income
If you lost your job because of an industry-wide contraction, it would be extra hard. This doesn’t mean you should moonlight in an unrelated industry. Rather, don’t rely on stock in only one company. If that company experiences tough times, its stock price could fall. If most of your assets are in a single stock, that situation could be difficult for you.

Take advantage of matching funds and employee purchase plans but be cautious; keep your overall portfolio in line with your individual risk tolerance. Don’t trust a single company with everything.

4) Diversify your accounts
Even the perfect blend of stocks and bonds is susceptible to the fluctuations of the market. Suppose you suddenly need the money you’re saving for retirement. If all your holdings are in an investment account, you’d be forced to sell at a loss.

Save in a variety of places. This way, you can always access some of your savings. Putting your money in one place is risky; it’s best to diversify your assets.
Supporting Our Communities

Eagle Grove

AGP supports several first responders in the communities where it does business, recognizing their contributions to the entire community. Recently, the Company expressed its thanks and appreciation to volunteer firefighters in Eagle Grove, IA by presenting a donation to support the fire department. The donation went toward renovation of the fire station which was in need of infrastructure support and operational upgrades.

“The work and efforts of the local firefighters are critical to the needs of Eagle Grove, its businesses, and its citizens,” said Adam Piper, Merchandising Manager. “We appreciate all they do for the Eagle Grove community.”

Sheldon

AGP recently presented a check to the Sheldon Fire Company in Sheldon, IA in support and recognition of the outstanding community service provided by the volunteer firefighters. Several members of the local fire department were on hand during the presentation of the donation by Wayne Johnson, Regional Marketing Manager and Monte Kramme, Sheldon Plant Manager. A number of employees from the AGP plant in Sheldon were also in attendance.

“AGP has a strong commitment to the communities in which we operate plants,” said Johnson. “These facilities serve our local cooperative owners and their farmer-members. Our employees also live in the towns we operate in and contribute in many ways to these communities. AGP recognizes the importance for local emergency services to be properly equipped and trained.”

From left to right: Mike Boyd, Eagle Grove City Administrator; Dave Poncin, AGP; Pat Russell, AGP; Travis Woodbeck, Eagle Grove Fire Dept.; Jeff Grandgeorge, Eagle Grove Fire Dept.; Tom Peterson, Chief of the Eagle Grove Fire Dept.; Adam Piper, AGP; Jeff Lampman, AGP; and Alan Linn, AGP.

Photo courtesy of Kim Demory, “Eagle Grove Eagle”

Photo courtesy of Iowa Information
Happy Holidays