

New grain elevator holds less, safer

United Press International
HOUSTON — At 260 feet in height and a capacity of 6.4 million bushels, the new Goodpasture, Inc. elevator may be smaller than its predecessor which exploded more than two years ago — killing nine — but it is safer, company officials say. "I think it's as safe as an elevator can be made," said Truitt Kennedy, Goodpasture's executive vice president of the new structure with added safety features. Kennedy notes that although the elevator's storage capacity is 2 million bushels less, it can transfer grain from trucks and railroad cars 50 percent faster — 800,000 bushels per eight hours with greater safety. He decided to disclose how many millions of bushels that barring extended delays of grain ship-

ments, the new elevator should load its first ocean-going ship on or about next Monday.

After months of lawsuits, damage claims and a struggle to provide substitute service at other elevators, Kennedy said he is relieved to be moving into the new facility. "If you struggle and try to keep a business alive for two and a half years without having your main factory available and finally you get this place to where it will run again, you feel greatly relieved," he said.

"You can go back into business and not worry about how you're going to get your grain transferred." The elevator is fully automated and equipped with television cameras and sensing devices so that no personnel need be inside while it is operating. Control is remote, from a building 200 feet away.

"The fact that we have eliminated the human element inside the elevator adds substantially to the safety," said Kennedy, although whether Federal Grain Inspection Service will require inside personnel remains under negotiation.

Kennedy said seven television cameras inside provide a full view of the operation on control house monitors. Thirty-five dust collectors work against accumulation of volatile grain dust.

Sensing devices, measuring electrical load on wires and motors and conveyor belt pulley stress, can shut down the elevator automatically.

Wires and switches are antispark. Equipment inside is bolted together so no welders or torch cutters will be required for repairs. The elevator also has an interior

firefighting sprinkler system.

Still, Kennedy, hesitates at saying absolutely nothing can go wrong.

The facility began unloading trucks in mid-September and railroad cars this week. It now contains about 400,000 bushels of grain —

about one-fifteenth of its capacity.

Kennedy said the gradual start is due to the need to fine tune the facility. He said conveyor belts aligned and tuned while empty often need adjustments for full-load, fullspeed operation.

Grain elevator explosion topic of growing concern

Experts assembled by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service will discuss grain elevator safety at two courses scheduled Oct. 15-16 in College Station and Oct. 19-20 in Amarillo. The title of the two-day course is "Prevention of Grain Elevator Fires and Explosions."

Dr. Gary Nelson, who put together the programs, said they are aimed at closing a knowledge gap that has arisen in the past few years despite intensified research that followed several major explosions.

"Much of what we know about grain dust explosions has been gen-

erated in the last couple of years and there has been no communication vehicle to transfer this information down to the mill (or elevator) level," Nelson said.

"That's what we're here for. We are a go-between for the researchers and the general public," said Nelson.

Tracing center gains research importance

Despite a name that might indicate most people, the Center for Trace Characterization at Texas A&M University affects lives almost exclusively in a positive way.

One of the few laboratories in the world where elements can be measured in amounts less than one part per billion. Such day-to-day uses as plastic milk bottles and soft contact lenses have been tested to pass federal safety guidelines.

The center has also made significant contributions in development of pocket calculators and digital watches by measuring the purity of materials for major electronics manufacturers, says director Emile Schweikert.

We have collaborated with some of the large energy companies in comparing methods of converting coal to gas and liquid fuels and studying the efficiency of these processes," he adds.

One of the few laboratories in the world where elements can be measured in amounts of less than one part per billion, officials at the center say.

The center has even replaced the lawyer's office of the Old West. "The dramatic rise in the price of gold, individuals and corporations

have come with samples of ore to determine if mining is feasible." Trace characterization, the measurement of minute quantities of different elements in a given amount of material, has been a rapidly growing

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More than 70 research groups on the Texas A&M campus, representing most of its 11 academic colleges, make use of the center's facilities, unique in the Southwest and one of a handful in the United States.

In addition the labs have aided in public health research in ways such as measuring amounts of selenium in egg whites and quantities of carcino in mother's milk of animals.

One of the projects involves human hair as a means of telling a person's state of health.

The body deposits chemical traces in each hair as it grows, so the strand becomes a day-by-day ledger of the body's state, including deficiencies and excesses of chemicals.



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