

# Vantage Point

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT “UNDERCOVER BOSS”

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### Holiday Schedule

We will be closed or have reduced hours on the following dates so our employees may enjoy the holidays with their families.

**Thanksgiving Day**  
Thursday, 11/24, Closed

**Day after Thanksgiving**  
Friday, 11/25, Open 8-3

**Day after Christmas**  
Monday, 12/26, Closed

**Day after New Year's**  
Monday, 1/2, Closed

*“Growth means change and change involves risk, stepping from the known to the unknown.” ~ George Shinn*

When is the last time you did something you’ve never done before? You know...living life on the edge, going out on a limb, going outside your comfort zone, or taking an unknown risk. This summer, I did something I have never done before. I went undercover on a customer install.

The AgVantage team was installing a new customer - New Vision Coop - and I decided to go on-site and help with the installation of the AgVantage System. In my old days, before I was in this chair, I sat in another chair in the company. That was one where I was out in the field, hands on with the installation of equipment and teaching customers how to use it. Now, as I spend my time steering the AgVantage ship, I have not been on-site during an installation in several years. In my tenure here, this “Undercover Boss” experience was one of the most important things I have done.

UNDERCOVER  
BOSS

At the first location we visited, Rick Prinsen (my boss for the two weeks) introduced me as the president of the company to the woman at the grain facility (whose name I will not reveal to protect the innocent). Rick then began teaching me how to install the system, me taking notes, asking questions, etc. Soon, the woman with a curious look on her face said, “If you are the president of the company, why don’t you already know how to do all this stuff?” From that point on, I asked my “boss” **not** to introduce me as the president and just call me Michelle, because I wasn’t quite sure how to answer the question.



Rick Prinsen, taking equipment to 25 locations.

After day one, I was able to install one of our newest products, AgVantagePC Grain Scale, all by myself. I think this feat sounds great on paper, but really, my people and the processes and documentation they sent with me were really good. I made mistakes, but they were in the form of wrong shoes and wrong clothes.

When we were loading PC’s into our vehicles and then carrying them into the dusty grain facilities, we got some funny looks - me in high heels and

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*“Undercover Boss,” continued from page one*



*Me, ready to take on the world by myself.*

Rick in his tennis shoes; me in black dress pants, Rick in jeans; me in a dress shirt sweating to death, Rick in his AgVantage tube top (not really, but we thought it would have been a really good idea). Needless to say, I had many offers to help me carry stuff – way more offers than Ricky got (if only he had worn his tube top). : )

At one grain facility, when I was getting ready to leave, the guy working there looked at me and just shook his head saying, “come on”. He brought me outside and sprayed me off with the air hose, because my fancy dress clothes were no longer black, but completely white from grain dust. And even though he didn’t know I was the president, but just some dumb blonde chick who doesn’t know how to dress to work in a grain mill, he still got a little nervous when he got to certain body parts, so he just left those white. By week two, I left the dress clothes and high heels at home. (For your AgVantage Tube Top, contact Lori Campbell...*just kidding!*)

The two weeks working undercover revealed many things. First, what I saw were the strengths of our company - commitment from our people never working an eight hour day, but rather 12-16 hours each day. We were eating a late dinner every night, meeting with the team, and then crashing hard before meeting for a team breakfast, and then proceeding to the customer site. It never failed that at dinner, someone had a challenge, but by breakfast, there was a good chance someone else had the solution. Sometimes sleep is the best problem solver.

I saw their pure talents coming out without them thinking about me watching, but rather, just doing their jobs and doing them well. I experienced their “customer comes first” attitude and their ways of communicating in ways that I didn’t even know existed. I saw Rick and Theresa spend seven straight weeks, juggling their personal lives, other customers, plus the customer they were working for, as perfectly as if they were two circus clowns juggling balls.

I also saw areas for improvement—ones that I would not have seen without being with them in the trenches. These are areas where we can bring our service up to an even higher level. We are now working on them together, as a company. I realized as our company is growing and changing, that there will always be new areas that need improvement. The key is to find new ways to excel, without losing pace on progress.

I was privileged to see what it takes to install our system from the customer’s eyes. The time and commitment, the long nights, the patience to make sure all is balanced, the stress that comes with learning all new procedures and letting go of other habits. This customer was great to work with because they knew what challenges we would faced, but we solved them together.

When I think back to the woman on my first day of “Undercover Boss”, the woman who asked me that innocent, but inquisitive question, I now want to answer her. *“No ma’am, I should not know how to do all this stuff already. But I should spend time every once in awhile with the people that do know how to do this stuff. Because they are AWESOME.”* When working together, the team can solve everything, but with only one person, the challenges are much greater.



Don’t be afraid to step into the unknown and take a risk. In the end, those around you will be very happy you did and you will reap rewards beyond your belief.

As we excitedly forge into our 36<sup>th</sup> year of business at AgVantage Software, I want to thank you all for your continued business. I realize you have many choices for software providers. I will do my best, each and every day, to assure your happiness in your choice of AgVantage® Software as your Agri-Business Accounting system.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE & USER EXCHANGE JUNE 13-15, 2012 HISTORY OF THE DEPOT RENAISSANCE MINNEAPOLIS HOTEL

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Our 2012 National Conference will be held June 13<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> in downtown Minneapolis. The home page of our website is now up for hotel reservations, so it's not too soon to book the rooms you will need for your staff. ( Phone reservations: 866-211-4611) If you have ideas or suggestions for our conference agenda, please give me a call or send me an e-mail. The conference agenda will be underway for the next four months and we will have a firm agenda by March 31st. The Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel was an actual train depot many years ago. In the lobby and areas nearby, there are many white fiberglass statues of people who were workers or railroad travelers.

### About The Depot Renaissance - History

#### History of the Old Milwaukee Road Depot

The last train left in 1971, but The Depot still stands as a monument to romantic, adventurous rail days gone by. For nearly seven decades, family members and loved ones stood at the atrium of the Depot and waved to passengers boarding the trains of the Milwaukee Road line. A prosperous hub of business and personal travel, this was the place where ambition set forth, destinies converged, and hearts became one.



Michelle Blomberg sizes up her companion at The Depot Renaissance Hotel during a recent tour.

#### 1864-1899: Minnesota Central Railroad

The rail line, first built in 1864, was originally known as the Minnesota Central Railroad. In 1867 the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad bought the Minnesota Central Railway, changing the name of the railroad to the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1874 before shortening the name to Milwaukee Road. The old Milwaukee Road Depot was constructed in 1899 and remains one of the last long-span, truss-roofed sheds surviving in the nation.

#### Renaissance Revival Style by Charles Frost

The Depot, a Renaissance Revival style building, was designed by Charles Frost. Considered conservative in style, the ground floors were paved in white marble with black borders and walls were built with cream and brown enamel brick. The ceiling of intricately paneled oak gave the rooms a large, spacious feel. The total cost of the Depot was about \$200,000. The Depot fluttered with activity during the late 1800s when Minneapolis was a rapidly growing city. At the peak of activity in 1920, the prosperous Depot was bustling with 29 trains departing daily. In 1971, the Milwaukee Road terminated rail service to Minneapolis and converted the building into office use. In 1978, the Minnesota Historical Society placed The Depot and the nearby freight house on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### The Depot Today

The Minneapolis Community Development Agency purchased The Depot and the seven-block surrounding areas from the Resolution Trust Corporation for \$2 million to preserve its historic significance. In recent years, there have been numerous development concepts for The Depot ranging from an agricultural museum to a casino. In 1998, the MCDA approved a land sale to CSM Corporation for the development proposal currently underway at The Depot. The finished complex includes The Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, the Residence Inn Minneapolis Downtown by Marriott, an indoor water park, an interpretive history center about the Depot, The Stone Arch Bar, Charley's Restaurant, banquet space, underground parking for 650 automobiles and an enclosed seasonal ice rink. The entire project was completed in July, 2001.



## **AgVantage Software Winter Trade Show Schedule**

### **December 11-12, 2011**

National Grain & Feed Association  
Marriott Downtown Magnificent Mile, Chicago, IL  
Booth #402

### **January 11-12, 2012**

Wisconsin Crop Management Conference  
Alliant Energy Center Exhibition Hall, Madison, WI  
Booth #330

### **February 1-2, 2012**

Minnesota Grain & Feed Association  
Verizon Wireless Center, Mankato, MN  
Booth #18

## ***Cream Danish***

*By Valerie Ahlers, Customer Services Representative*

**2 packages crescent rolls**

### **Filling**

**1 egg, separated**  
**2 8 oz. packages cream cheese, softened**  
**1 C. sugar**  
**1 tsp. vanilla**  
**Mix egg yolk, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla together until smooth.**

### **Topping**

**¼ c. sugar**  
**½ tsp. cinnamon**  
**½ c. chopped pecans (optional)**



**Spray 9 x 13 pan with Pam. Line bottom of pan with 1 package of crescent rolls and spread filling on top of it. Cover with second layer of crescent rolls. Beat egg white until frothy and brush over top of crescent rolls. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar mix. Sprinkle with pecans. (optional)**

**Bake at 350 for 30 min. Refrigerate 2-3 hours before cutting.**

## AGVANTAGE SOFTWARE— NEW & FUTURE RELEASES

**BONNIE FOHRMAN**  
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**NEW**

### Newly Released Enhancements

Please see our Message Board for many Product Enhancements continuously available.

#### Counter Invoicing

- Contracts
  - Add a terminal file for pickup information
  - Add a question: Is the customer picking up the project Y/N
  - Add storage fee information
  - Add budget payment information if an energy item was chosen
- Work Orders
  - Carry over price level when retrieving a work order

#### Grain

- Purchase Contract Maintenance—does not allow a delivery end-date before start-date

#### Payroll

- Now displays employee location on the lookup screen

#### Interface

- Enhance Interface to comply with new Passport Version 8
  - Ability to have Patronage transactions
- Put Grain bank out to A/R from FMS Finished feeds

### AgVantage Software—Coming Soon

#### AgVantagePC Agronomy

- Ability to do splits
- Ability to do prepay and bookings

#### Patronage

- Display/retain stock & equity history throughout entire program—now being tested

#### DTN Portal

- DTN Futures at End-of-Month—now being tested
- Ability to retrieve basis prices from DTN—now being tested

#### Credit Cards

- Support Verifone signature pads—PCI Compliant

#### AgVantagePC Time and Attendance (ETA)

- Ability to use an iPhone to access time clock software

#### Restricted Item License

- Ability to designate which items can be purchased with a restricted item license

## AgVantage Staff Volunteer at the Great Country Halloween Party

The Great Country Halloween Party is an annual event held at the Country Inn and Suites hotel next door to our office. The guests are about 350 disabled children and their families. It is a very popular activity as the children can trick or treat in a wheelchair-friendly environment. AgVantage Software has been sponsoring a room with candy and games for the past few years. This year, we had a Halloween tattoo parlor, which was a huge success! It is always a rewarding experience for all involved. AgVantage volunteers are pictured below.



*Jerome Sprecher with his wife Sara and daughter Grace (9 )*



*Customer Services Representative Dawn Nemecek (Winnie the Pooh) with her grandsons Wyatt (8) and Garrett (5)*



*Pirate Kate Emanuel with Simon (2) and Hailey (9)*