

Vantage Point

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What a “Sonny” Day! President’s Update



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*“Something happens when two people look at each other and shake hands.
There is a bond that impacts the mind, body and soul.”*

-Don Cole, speech writer and author of book on Sonny Perdue

This past month, we had the AgVantage Executive Conference in Washington D.C. where 75 customers and business partners joined the AgVantage team for our leadership event. The only way I can portray how good this event was is to tell you the emotion I was feeling while kicking off the conference. I had the honor of first, welcoming our customers and business partners, and secondly, introducing the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, someone who has become, not only someone I admire and respect, but a friend.

I was flooded with a feeling that rarely happens to me – lumps in my throat, hiccups in my voice, tears in my eyes. I had this enormous overwhelming feeling that my mom and dad were standing on each side of me as I introduced our special guest. You see, I wouldn’t be even close to where I am today without the two most amazing parents that raised me and had enough faith in me and my leadership skills, to sell me their ag-

software business 25 years ago. And now, standing there in the nation’s capital looking in the eyes of 100 customers, business partners, employees and friends, so proud of the fact that they all came to this event on our behalf. And finally, the honor of introducing Sonny Perdue, the Secretary of Agriculture of the United States of America. It was too surreal for my emotions to absorb.



As part of my introduction of Secretary Perdue, I read from the book written about him back in 2002 by Don Cole titled, “Grassroots: Leading Others to Accomplish the Impossible”. The excerpt I chose was *“Sonny Perdue has a gift of connecting with People. The reason Sonny is so effective is that he is not ‘working the crowd.’ He is genuinely interested in the person he meets. Sonny connects.”* I saw this first hand as he entered the hotel where the event was being held. He remembered people from my team that he had only met once – by first name! He cared about each person with each handshake. And what’s so crazy is that, even though Sonny and I have now created this unusual friendship that really did happen over a handshake 4 years ago, he never did buy our computer system and never became an AgVantage customer. :) We

continue to like and respect each other for no other reason than just two human beings that met over a handshake and a bond was created in a single moment.

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I’d like to back you up to the months leading up to our event. We chose Washington D.C. because of the off chance we could get Sonny to come speak. However, we were not able to invite the Secretary of Ag to come to our event until exactly a month ahead of the date. As you can imagine, there is a lot of prep work in the months leading up to an

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event like this – in particular, logistics of the agenda, a brochure, sessions of interest and then making sure our customers can attend. It takes a lot for you, our customers, to take 3-4 days out of your busy schedules to come to a conference, so it was exceptional when we got such a great response. And all of those “yes’s” at this point, came without anyone knowing the Secretary would be attending. Exactly one month before the event, we sent the invitation to Secretary Perdue’s admin team on a Friday and sat and waited for a response. We didn’t get one right away and kept waiting through the weekend and into the next week. On the following Tuesday, I happened to be in Ohio at a training seminar for our customers and one of them asked me, “So is your friend Sonny coming to your event?” I took a picture with this said customer and text it to Sonny with a nudge of “So, you coming to see me and <said customer’s name here> in D.C. in a month?” Within 3 minutes, I had the email response from his team that said, “YES!”

Through the next month, several things happened related to Sonny coming to speak. First, I met with his speech writer, Don Cole. This man was so awesome. He and I talked for an hour and never really got too deep into what I wanted Sonny to talk about in his speech. Rather, we just talked about all kinds of things related to life. With the ending of the hour, Don saying, “OK, I’ll work on this for him.” And that was it.

Finally, it’s the day of the conference and a half hour before he is to arrive. His security team has already arrived and swept the hotel space. Sonny (who is 72 years old) came jogging into the hotel from his caravan of SUV’s and gave me a giant hug right at the front door. We were escorted to a small room to talk for 15 minutes and catch up. He started by asking me, first about my business and how things were going.

Sonny then said: “So, what am I talking about today?”

Inside Michelle’s head: “OK, we’re doing off the cuff. I’m good with that.”

Michelle out loud to Sonny: “Our theme is **Great Leaders – Great Teams** and you have a team of over 100,000 people. How do you create a culture that matches your leadership style within a four-year term? And really, you’ve done it already in two years.”

Secretary Perdue (like I said, off the cuff) launched into an amazing philosophy about creating and building a circle of trust with the people around you. And then those people carrying that same circle of trust to their teams. And onward and outward. He used words such as honesty, loyalty, compassion, integrity. And in those 10 minutes, I was in pure awe. Not sure, but I may have cried it was so good. And secretly in my head, I was smiling because I had the daunting task of speaking right after Sonny. Intimidating to say the least. And unlike him, I had written and practiced mine over the 3 weeks prior and had words in my presentation like “trust, integrity, loyalty, etc” so I was happy that he was using the same language so I could not make a fool of myself following the master.

Now it was time and they came and retrieved us and escorted us to the room where everyone was waiting. I went in first, and like I said at the beginning of this story, it was overwhelming. I was completely honored to introduce him and while I did that, had this slide (on right) up on the screen. I also read the quote from Don Cole at the beginning of this article. As he came out, the crowd stood and cheered so loudly, again, it brought tears to my eyes. I could feel my parents’ arms around my shoulders with pride.

Here’s where the story gets fun! Secretary Perdue didn’t need any script. He didn’t need notes. He didn’t need a presentation or prep work. He launched into, not what he “off the cuff” said to me in the other room, but rather 20 minutes of taking pride in agriculture and how we, as the people responsible for the facts related to agriculture, need to stay strong.

Secretary of Agriculture - Sonny Perdue

“They” say everyone, based on people they know, is only four relationships from the President of the United States.

Knowing Sonny, you are one relationship from the president. You do have a voice. You can make a difference.



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He talked about the farmers that were affected by the romaine lettuce social media scare and how it was in fact, only a very small percentage of lettuce that was actually affected, but social media turned it into a nation-wide ban and killed several farmers livelihood. And that was only one example of how the 2% of us that are related to agriculture need to stay strong with facts and not let the 98% of people not versed in agriculture turn things into false news. He was amazing! Everyone was listening so intently that a piece of straw could have been heard dropping to the floor.

Then, selfish Michelle, was to allow for 10 minutes of questions, but nowhere in his 20 minutes had he used MY words – the words he used in the pre-speech, speech. So how was I going to follow this man? Ding... idea!! Because I held the microphone, I decided I could ask the first question and steer him to help make me look good. "Sonny – you lead a team of 100,000 people and in 2 years, have seemingly created a culture that is working for and with you. You mentioned in the other room to me about the circle of trust. Can you expand on that?" So he did. And yes, he said all my words. So yes, I actually did **not** make a fool of myself. :)

And to top it off, we also got to hear a couple of other great leaders - George Secor (Sunrise Cooperative) and Frank McDowell (New Vision Coop) - speak and they were equally amazing. As were the other AgVantage employees and business partners that rounded out the agenda of this incredible event. If you happened to attend the conference in D.C., thank you. If not, hopefully you'll catch our upcoming summer conference in Minneapolis June 18-21. Watch for the brochure and information coming soon.



I want to thank you all for your continued business. April 1 we'll be kicking off our 43rd year of 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.

AgVantage
Software



An Employee Owned Company

Secretary Perdue Gave the Opening Keynote at AgVantage Software's 2019 Executive Conference in Washington, D.C.



Secretary Perdue's crowd listened intently.

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Frank McDowell, CEO of New Vision Co-op in Brewster, MN gave an inspiring presentation on Building Your Team and included team comparisons on the race to the South Pole.

(insert above right) George Secor, President/CEO of Sunrise Cooperative presented Leadership Techniques for Building High-Performing Teams. He covered info on Customer Service and a favorite quote from his presentation is "We each have 24 hours a day. It's up to each of us what we want to do with it."



Pre-conference Sunday Monuments and Memorials Tour Group took a few minutes out of their busy schedule for a photo. After the four hour tour, the group headed to The Hamilton Restaurant for a Sunday Brunch.



Roggen Farmers Elevator Assoc. Corey & Sarah Hodge, and Lori & Keith DeVoe. Lora & David Fruh of Pomeroy Grain Growers are at right.



Landmark Services Cooperative's Don & Darcy Schlising, Karen Durni, and Stefanie Pauls, and Kent Schultz of BIG Consulting, LLC



Monday night's view from Top of the Town was quite impressive. The moon managed to show itself a few times during the evening. PBS broadcasts the July 4th fireworks each year from this very same spot!



Heather Halvorson of Black River Falls, WI "blinds" the magician!



Olivia & Bruce Mlsna and Marty & Dawn Goss of River Country Co-op, Chippewa Falls, WI at the Top of the Town Dinner.

Brian the Magician/Mentalist entertained the crowd with a series of tricks we're all still trying to figure out!

AgVantage 34th National Conference Updates Keynote Speakers Announced

**Hilton Minneapolis St. Paul Airport Mall of America
June 19-21, 2019**



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Thank you to everyone who completed the pre-conference survey I sent out last week. We had a record number of responses, which is fantastic! The more we know from you what you want—the better we can design the agenda. Our software groups are busy working out a planned set of sessions to highlight their areas. They are excited to show you the many new Edge enhancements at the conference. We plan to have the schedule on-line in a few weeks with the brochure mailing shortly after.

We hired our keynote speakers for Wednesday and Thursday mornings and I think you'll really like both of them. They've both agreed to do a session immediately after their keynotes, so if you really like their keynote, you may want to drop in their session too.



Stop Acting Your Age —An entertaining keynote to help you avoid generational warfare!

WED., JUNE 19TH—Matt Havens, Keynote & Session

If you've listened to any other discussion about generational issues at work, then you've undoubtedly been told there are four distinct generations operating side-by-side in today's working world. You've then been told the differences between those four generations, and then you've been told (although probably not in these exact words) that you need to just deal with all these different people, because they're not going away and they're not going to change how they operate. If that advice suites you, fantastic. However, if you've ever been frustrated by how impossible it seems to employ four different strategies to manage four distinct generations, and if you've ever felt like you're the only one who's being asked to make any changes, then Stop Acting Your Age! Is exactly what you need.

Matt Haven's Session: You're Not An Acronym—A Practical Approach To Leadership

If you've been a leader for a while or are being groomed to become one, then you've probably taken your fair share of personality tests. Perhaps you know your Woo strength, or maybe you've recently discovered that you're a purple triangle when you're stressed. If this kind of information is all you need in order to be the kind of leader your people are excited to follow, then you probably don't need to keep reading this. But if you've ever suspected that leadership may be about more than just you, then You're Not an Acronym is the kind of leadership presentation you'll truly appreciate.



Transitions: Lessons from a Lima Bean

THURS., JUNE 20TH—Roxane Battle, Keynote & Session

The only thing constant in life is change, yet as human beings we resist change, and often suffer our way through transition and loss. But what if we could learn to deal with change in a way that also allows us to find joy? In this candid, visual and inspirational talk, former KARE 11-TV journalist and award-winning author Roxane Battle shares how she transitioned out of a high-profile television career into a new life, how she found joy in the process, and what we can all learn about change from a lima bean. Yes, a lima bean! You won't want to miss this highly-engaging keynote.

Roxane Battle's recently published memoir, *Pockets of Joy: Deciding to Be Happy, Choosing to Be Free* (Whitaker House 2017), became an Amazon best seller in multiple categories. As a contributing writer, Roxane was named an Architect of Change on *mariashriver.com*, has been featured on the cover of *Working Mother* and profiled in *Ebony* national magazines, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* and *St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

Roxane Battle's Session: This session will be a continuation of the keynote, with an emphasis on transitions and dealing with change in your life. Audience participation is encouraged in both the session and the keynote.

We will again offer a pre-conference **Advanced DB2Web Query Lab** on the day before the conference begins (Tues., 6/18). Check in and a deli sandwich bagged lunch served from 11:30-Noon. Password verification that you can access your office computer files will also take place during this half hour.

Class/lab will be held from Noon - 4:00pm. Pre-registration required as space is limited. (\$249 fee includes lunch) AgVantage Dollars may be used. Contact loric@agvantage.com to register.

Updates on New Releases & Software Releases Coming Soon



Bonnie Fohrman
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Newly Released Software:

New Version 8 Releases—

Agronomy Edge

- Allow all crop years as default in Scheduled Orders & Dispatch (441052)
- Add VRT check box and paper clip for attached Scheduled Orders (446816)
- Add next day temp and precipitation and chance to U6FRMxa (450859)
- Add state/county code selection to work order (451806)
- Add pick # and po # fields to work order, print on all documents (394317)
- Agronomy Automated Blender interface (451677)
- Application Report – Add options, tomorrow's weather forecast (453395)
- Ability to change batch size or batch method to partial (454836)
- Change the Agronomy Constants file to be more consistent (454886)

Accounts Payable Edge

- Add option to Correct Errors in a Crossover Batch (435170)
- When changing quantity/unit price calculate extended amount (435399)
- Bank Rec option to reconcile all deposits (443451)
- Miscellaneous Check the ability to change payee name (445530)
- Invoice Entry total the quantity column (446896)
- Change the location box to allow user to key into field (447927)
- Update AP invoice entry screen (448959)
- If 1099 field is blank in the U2XOVER load from the vendor master U2VMSTR (450475)



Accounts Receivable

- Increase item description fields on Item Listing and Price Listing (447136)
- Allow batch 0 in correct errors in a batch and change a batch # (447342)

Accounts Receivable Edge

- Item portal changes for inventory view (435031)
- Customer Balances – add discount amounts and dates (440284)
- Email for invoices/statement change heading (447092)
- Customer Portal – Restricted License File (430839)
- Index search and authorization (454589)
- Edge balances – add the check number and the paid off date (437328)
- Customer Portal – Activity lookup by customer (439524)

Accounts Receivable - Invoicing PC

- Option to override the rollup of seed discounts (422408)
- Ability to add dealer price to an item on the fly (447451)
- Cash drawer doesn't open when making a payment (451305)
- CDD16 Bring comment from anhydrous header file over to PCINV (374783)
- Payment coming from PCINV – crossover (451018)

*Please see our
Message Board for
many product enhancements
continuously available.*

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- Hauler/driver/truck on invoices with lots (451311)
- Add Customer budget payment amount when loading customer balances (445147)
- Split customers to different terms (419730)
- Discounts on payment incorrect when invoice has multiple term codes (445300)
- Ability to see Pick Number when selecting an order (417634)

Energy

- Create Delivery List – default % on keep fulls (425338)
- WesRoc – Need second iteration of the program (453597)



Energy Dispatch Mapping Edge

- Add dispatching to its own option so we can release as Beta (417252)

Energy Edge

- Add percent field to history drop down in energy customer portal (427569)
- Add tank search to call screen (443008)

Energy PC

- Item Portal – Fuel Tax Exemptions only for over 100 gallons (413235)
- Load pay type from call (454317)
- Display warning for customer credit limit (402614)
- Underground Check Date added to tank check (403666)
- Add driver selection to all reports (437766)
- CDD18 Add last delivery date to the driver's grid (441867)
- Save the odometer and time tracking to the driver shift file -U7DRVSHFT (395496)
- Do not allow an item code 9 to be received (436675)
- Allow note back to LPCALLS file (388306)

Feed

- Changes to information exported to WEM (447045)
- Repete interface – new flag to update ration in Repete (449218)
- Print comments from the project in the instructions on the order (439514)

Feed Edge

- List Feed Additives (343736)

Feed PC Scale

- Weight Variance from Feed constant file warning (413722)

GL Edge

- Enhancement add the option to inactive all GL's in a location (451218)

Grain

- Sales/purchase contracts – Add flag to force entry of future month/year on contracts (424836)
- WI Indemnity Fee – Auto override at settlement by purchase class (429567)
- Parameter to set up Oklahoma liens (449577)

*For pricing
info, please contact
Michelle Bloomberg at
michelleb@agvantage.com
or 877-282-6353.*

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Grain Edge

- Document Numbers (381665)
- Bin Maintenance (381667)
- Open Trades Report (386466)
- Activate the purchase adjustment amount field (405239)
- Move "Send" Button and change to say "Print Settlements" (443752)
- Generate Settlement Check listing by check date instead of settle date (444834)
- Grain Constants (443713)
- Changes on Grain Index Added Grain Administrator Header (448532)
- Lot Maintenance (381671)
- Maintain Crop Conversion File (381672)
- Laser Shipment Invoice Setup (381659)
- Constant Information – Create tabs when creating new location (378362)



AgVantagePC Grain Scale

- Change weigh only loads report to have starting/ending date range (449638)

Inventory Edge

- Enhancement location transfers and miscellaneous adjustments (440557)
- Maintain adjustment invoice area (440559)
- Assign Users to invoice area (440563)
- Add option to merge invoice adjustment batch (448963)
- Merge Physical Inventory Batch correct Error (448482)

Admin Edge

- Added authority for Edge Inventory (441004)

Security Edge

- Ability to change user password through Edge (416040)

Seed Edge

- Dispatching Module – Phase 1 (410315)

Seed PC

- Add fine line code lookup to Agronomy/Seed Contract screen (415774)

Employee Time & Attendance (ETA)

- Allow to select dates for semimonthly pay periods. (450451)
- Changing of work codes through Edit rather than reallocate. (451136)
- Allow time card changes without having to hit save on each employee (451110)
- Print allocations on time card (433228)
- Change calculations between viewed and printed time cards (439803)
- Change of work codes through edit rather than reallocate (451135)
- Flag to limit admin access user for activate/inactivate employees (445245)
- Track computer where employee punches in (454761)

*AgVantage EDGE
saves you time!*

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AgVantage Software Releases Coming Soon

eAgVantage

- Allow longer password (455254)



Energy Edge

- Short cut to dispatching, add tank search to all screen (435884)

Grain

- Grain Hauling – create G/L entries for company trucks and not customer pay (407163)
- Transfer Loads to different control numbers (343192)
- Grain Storage Methods – change to M=Monthly function (454298)
- Discount by Lot – Add flag to not change storage start date to last load date (455060)
- Change EOD to post G/L for inactive adjustments (455097)

Grain Edge

- Transfer Loads to a different control numbers (343192)
- Print Sales Contract Document (380277)
- Today's loads by load number & customer name (393828)
- Advances Maintenance for Sales (344512)
- Sales Contract Pricing Maintenance (380278)
- Gain/Loss on Closed Trades Report (386470)

HR Edge

- Job classification file set up (438114)
- Employee Performance Review (438511)
- Employee History (438557)
- Pension Type Setup File (438325)
- HR Work Comp Info (438537)

Payroll Edge

- Constant Master Maintenance (438632)
- Federal Tax Maintenance (439033)
- State Tax Maintenance (439132)
- Maintenance for Payroll deductions (438872)
- Payroll work code maintenance (438902)
- Federal Tax Code lookup and drop down (444316)
- Employee Information Report (454174)
- Employee Wage History Report (454179)
- Vacation and Sick Time Report (454180)
- Employee Earnings Report (454181)

Reports Edge

- Commodity DPR Hedging (400346)

*We hope to see you
In Minneapolis,
June 19-21!*