

Leaving A Legacy Of Success

BY VAL FARMER
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As I leave this column in a few short months, I want to leave you with some of my best insights into why some family farms are loving, cohesive and continue to succeed generation after generation.

Being a psychologist in the Midwest working with farm and ranch families has given me an opportunity to observe and talk with many farm family operations. I have met some families who have captured an illusive ideal - having a combination of two or more families working together in a successful family business. Here are six attributes I believe they have in common.

1. A legacy of innovation and success. It has to start somewhere. It doesn't take long in climbing the family tree to spot a farmer who was ahead of his time and his neighbors in some particular management practice that brought a measure of success.

These farmers were open-minded and inquisitive. Their attitude about learning and trying things was out of the norm. They weren't foolish. Their innovations were based on highly calculated risks. There may have been a key idea in the beginning, but this attitude of innovation spread to many aspects of farming.

A successful farm reflects management that pays attention to detail and quality, marketing, sound financial decisions, self-discipline, solid work habits, and excellent reactions to problems.

Children growing up in this family absorb the innovative style. They are aggressive learners. They understand their parents' special qualities, management philosophy, and business orientation. They see the excitement and are caught up in the improvement of the farm. They feel they are a part of something special. They have tremendous respect for the experience of the older generation.

2. Children develop their own expertise and special talents. The parents support higher education, special training, and skill development that goes well beyond what they may have in a particular farming area. The business is successful enough to capture the love, imagination, and commitment of young adults who are highly focused about their future goals on the farm.

They apply themselves well during their time away from home and the farm. When



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relationships are respectful and patient. The interaction style is courteous and mannerly. There is no harshness or temper outbursts to spoil the working relationship.

4. The adults share management through effective communications and democratic decision-making. The best idea wins and people feel well treated in the process. The 'give-and-take' is energetic and challenging yet within proper bounds. There is clear delegation of authority and responsibility.

The family has meetings to solve problems. They have a good business structure and good communications. Some meetings are formal and deal with a whole range of family business concerns as well as long term strategy. All family members are part of the long-term strategy and decisions. Problems are reviewed, and family members can exchange constructive criticism and work through differences without hurt feelings.

Adding the next generation to the decision-making process can take a lot of trust and human relationship skill. This is probably just as big a factor in the continued success of the family farm as the actual farming ideas that brought success in the first place.

5. The succession process, the estate plan, and the commitments to the next generation of farmers are clear. There is no guess work about who the farming partners are and the goal of passing on the farm as a viable business to those who have shared in its development. The relationships between the siblings and their spouses are positive.

6. The families get along. Family members take pains to clear up difficulties quickly so that feelings don't get in the way of business and family relationships. The family

they come back to farm they are already powerhouse farmers who can immediately contribute. Each sibling has respect for the other's abilities. There are no weak links to work around.

3. The relationship of the children and parents has been respectful and loving. Love and mutual affection underscore family relationships.

Father/son work relationships are respectful and patient. The interaction style is courteous and mannerly. There is no harshness or temper outbursts to spoil the working relationship.

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develops strong loyalties to one another and has a united front toward the community. The in-laws are wholeheartedly accepted and incorporated into the family. Despite this loyalty and closeness, each family has its own identity and social life.

The work unifies them. Family gatherings and celebrations unify them. Despite all this closeness, there is room for each family member to be him or herself, have their own friends, and pursue their own agenda without feeling guilt or control from other family members. The women in the operation are keys to healthy relationships between families.

What are the common failings of family businesses that are not as successful?

- Failure to have systematic business communications.

- Unresolved conflicts that add stress and tension to daily living.

- Lack of clarity about goals and commitments, unclear roles.

- Failure to incorporate the younger generation into management decision-making.

- Intrusive and controlling management styles that cause hurt, resentment, and anger.

- The lack of inclusion of the in-laws in the long term planning and decision-making.

- Poor communications (anger, disrespect) and problem-solving skills.

What makes farm family businesses so successful? I believe it is a combination of aggressive business ideas and a family system based on love, commitment, and good communications skills. They walk the tightrope of business conflict and family harmony without falling off. A successful family business combines the resources of several families toward a unified goal. It's a tough act to beat.

For access to Dr. Farmer's archived writings or for his books on sale, you can visit his website at www.valfarmer.com. Those who wish to share how this column has impacted their lives can do so by sending him an email at val@valfarmer.com or writing him at P.O. Box 207, Grover, MO 63040.

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Visiting Hours

To Do Good, Makes You Feel Good

BY CARLA HUMMEL

Director of Volunteer Services, Avera Sacred Heart Hospital

Over the last couple weeks I have seen the happiest people. A couple visiting patients who didn't have family coming to visit for Christmas, a man changing a flat tire for an elderly couple, some treats being delivered to ones who otherwise wouldn't get that special Christmas sugar, a meal for a family that had lost someone, a ride for someone to the airport that otherwise wouldn't see family and a parent chaperoning a kid's event. All of these wonderful acts of kindness wouldn't be possible without the help of volunteers. When we all take care of each other, it's such a "feel good" situation.

Just think, everyone could have this "feel good" feeling on a regular basis by simply doing "good" and volunteering. Over one-third of South Dakota residents volunteer, making us the 5th highest volunteering state in the United States. That translates to a lot of happy people.

Volunteering is not only good for the happiness level but it can also be good exercise, good experience, great for making friends or developing references, acquiring skills and keeping the brain active and - best of all - you can charge up your energy both physically and mentally.

As a kid we used to play a game of truth or dare. I would like to dare you to volunteer. Then I would like to have you tell the truth on how you feel afterwards. Here are a few ways to make your volunteering experience the best it can be.

• Volunteer for something

about which you are passionate and interested. If you enjoy reading, then maybe reading to those who no longer have their sight would be a perfect opportunity for you.

• Designate a regular time that you have available in your schedule and match it with an opening at a place that has a need that fills your interest.

• Most importantly, be open to enjoy the experience. Give it a chance and reap the benefits of getting to know other good people doing good things for other good people.

It's a myth to say it's selfish to try to be happier. In fact, research and experience prove just the opposite. Happy people spend more time helping others and are more likely to volunteer and to give. They have stronger relationships with their families, friends and co-workers. They're healthier and they have healthier habits. Happiness gives people the emotional wherewithal to turn outward and to think about others. While the less happy are more likely to feel distrustful, isolated and distracted by their needs. So I challenge you - go out and find your "feel good" - you deserve to be happy!

If you are interested in finding your "feel good" by volunteering at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, please contact Carla Hummel, director of Volunteer Services, at (605) 668-8104 or chummel@avera.org.

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Keep Yankton Beautiful

KYB Is Dedicated To Making Yankton Cleaner And Greener

BY JENNIFER PELLATZ
KYB Board Member

Originally from Kansas (Rock Chalk Jayhawk, Go KU!) I returned back to the Midwest by way of marriage. My husband is originally from Northeast Nebraska and decided after 9 years in middle Tennessee he was ready to return home and get back into farming. Fortunately, me, a quasi-city slicker found a job with Art's Garbage Service/Waste Connections of NE, Inc. within a couple of days and have been with the company just over three years now.

I came to Keep Yankton Beautiful 2 years ago through the Leadership Yankton program offered by the Yankton Chamber of Commerce. This program allowed me to see all aspects of Yankton and hear firsthand from influential people what is and isn't working for the community. It gave me a better overall image of where Yankton is and the direction it wants to go in. When I heard the KYB presentation from then executive director, Carmen Schramm, I saw an opportunity for me and Art's Garbage Service to get involved.

It's a natural fit, a company whose primary function is to keep garbage off the streets and an organization that focuses on beautifying the community. When it comes to recycling, improving, expanding and educating, I am gung-ho. The more information people have the more empowered they are to make a difference. Part of my job is to do just that so teaming up with KYB has allowed me to share that knowledge and passion with a host of different folks.

Keep Yankton Beautiful is an organization dedicated to making Yankton a cleaner, greener and more beautiful place to live and work. Its projects involve the young and old, homes, parks and



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commercial sites, clean-ups, health fairs, collections and more. Its reach is expansive and its impact visible.

The Great America Cleanup is a wonderful example of an event that truly reaches all aspects of the community. Teams from commercial businesses, schools, churches, and civic organizations join city personnel and families to scour the streets of Yankton to pick up litter. This event has been held annually and has always had a huge turnout and continues to grow in its success.

I look forward to 2012 knowing this organization's presence and reach in the Yankton community will only strengthen and I challenge each and every one of you to come out and participate in just one KYB event. You'll experience first hand the contagious make-it-happen attitude these events generate. You'll leave knowing you've made a difference and you'll take that newly captured "green fever" and apply it to your daily lives. Just imagine what the world, what Yankton, would be like if everyone made just a little more effort.

Find more information about Keep Yankton Beautiful and its 2012 calendar of events, you can visit our website at www.keepyanktonbeautiful.org, contact us at (605) 838-0661 or visit us at 324 Walnut Street thanks to a generous gift from Kennedy, Pier & Knoff law firm. I look forward to seeing you out and about!

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S.D. Broadband Initiative Wants To Hear From Ag Producers

PIERRE — The state's Broadband Initiative, led by the Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT), recently partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Field Office in South Dakota to survey ag producers across the state, continuing the goal of increasing high-speed broadband Internet in rural areas.

"High-speed broadband Internet can expand educational opportunities, improve public safety, enhance health care activities and bring economic growth to the region," said Dom Bianco, BIT Commissioner. "By providing this highly effective, low cost tool, we are more efficiently allowing our state's farmers and ranchers to better market their livestock, reach new customers, and gain competitive advantages to grow our rural economy in the 21st century."

Earlier this month, 6,500 surveys were

mailed to South Dakota ag producers encouraging participation in an Internet usage survey. The survey requests information from ag producers on whether or not they have Internet, how they are utilizing it, and would they use it more if it was available, faster, and more affordable. The results of the survey will assist in the identification of where the state needs to build or improve broadband services and speeds in South Dakota.

The main purpose of the Broadband Initiative is to increase high-speed broadband Internet to all of South Dakota with an emphasis on rural areas to increase economic opportunities. Agriculture is the number one economic driver across the state and is extremely important to this project.

"South Dakota has a wide variety of tech savvy ag producers who are managing small to multi-million dollar operations over their slow data-capable cell phones and it is our goal to

fix that and to give them the competitive advantages to grow and continue their operations in the most rural areas of the state," said Walt Bones, Secretary for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. "We highly encourage farmers and ranchers to complete the survey; we want to hear from them."

If ag producers did not receive the survey or misplaced it, they can request a copy be mailed to them by calling 1-800-338-2557 or they can simply take the survey online by visiting <http://broadband.sd.gov/AgricultureSurvey.aspx>. Survey results will be available later this spring.

For more information on the Broadband Initiative, please connect with us on Twitter @broadbandsd, Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/BroadbandSD?ref=ts&v=wall> or on YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/user/broadbandsd>.

Former NFL Player Featured At Pioneer Memorial Foundation Gala

VIBORG — Brian Hansen, state director for South Dakota Fellowship of Christian Athletes and former NFL player for the New Orleans Saints, New England Patriots, Cleveland Browns and New York Jets, will be featured speaker at Pioneer Memorial Foundation's inaugural Gala on Saturday Jan. 21. The event will be held at the Bridges of Beresford Golf Club in Beresford, beginning with a 5 p.m. social hour.

Proceeds from the event which includes a dinner, special music by the University of Sioux Falls Jazz Ensemble, and live and silent auctions, will help fund special projects and programs of Pioneer Memorial Hospital & Health Services in Viborg.

Hansen was born and raised in Hawarden, Iowa, and attended West Sioux High School. He attended college at the University

of Sioux Falls from 1979-1983 where he played football as a tight end/punter and pole vaulted in track. He was a two-time all-American in football in 1982 and 1983, was drafted by the New Orleans Saints and played for them from 1984-1989. He was selected to the Pro Bowl as a rookie in 1984. Hansen signed as a free agent in 1990 with the New England Patriots, played for the Browns from 1991-1993 and for the Jets from 1994-1998.

Brian and his wife Laurie have three children and live in Sioux Falls.

The University of Sioux Falls Jazz Ensemble will play during the Gala and Erik Thorstenson, Sports Director, KSFY Television News, will serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Both a live and silent auction

will be held with Scott Moore, Centerville, serving as the auctioneer for the live auction. Area businesses are donating items for the auctions.

Tickets are on sale and can be purchased at the Pioneer Memorial Business Office, Centerville Community Pharmacy,

Centerville Medical Clinic, Parker Medical Clinic, Lewis Drug in Viborg and Beresford, and Merchants State Bank, Viborg.

Contact Brendyn Richards for more information (605) 326-5161. brendyn.richards@sanford-health.org

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