



# In-Grain

*Grain Elevator and Processing Society*

*The Knowledge Resource for the Grain Handling and Processing Industry*

March/April 2022

Volume 42, No. 2

[www.geaps.com](http://www.geaps.com)

## HEADING TO THE HEARTLAND

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*Photo by David Arbogast*

# NEW Coop Navigates Labor Shortage

by Jessica Foster



**NEW Cooperative operates a fleet of 150 trucks.**

We've all heard the headlines. We have all felt the pain. The labor shortage is here; it is impacting the agriculture industry and challenges won't stop anytime soon.

But, with careful planning, strategic approaches and creative thinking, there is a way to not only survive, but thrive.

You may know Chris Blair's name from his service on GEAPS International Board of Directors. In his day job, he works as Region 4 Manager at NEW Cooperative, overseeing operations for Grain and Agronomy in a half-dozen locations. He communicates with and supports managers when needed and oversees NEW's Regional Facility P&L, including trucking P&L. NEW operates a fleet of 150 trucks companywide. He works with his region's location managers and NEW's Grain Logistics Department in Fort Dodge, IA to dispatch and utilize 21 fleet trucks in Region 4 to haul grain, fertilizer, crop protection productions and feed ingredients. He also collaborates with managers to hire, train and mentor employees when needed. He has a lot on his plate; however, he is quick to say he is just one person of a great team who work to keep the cooperative going. He has been in the business since he started as part-time harvest help in 1998.

He's seen a lot of roles and, like many of you, understands the value of each person and relies on a team to get his job done every day.

"What keeps me up at night the most is how are we going to accomplish everything we need to accomplish every single day when there is a shortage of people not only in this industry, but in this country to fulfill our member and customer needs," he said. "Our people are what makes us who we are, and without every individual we have, as a NEW COOP TEAM, we wouldn't be able to do what we need and want to do for our member customers."

**LABOR SHORTAGE** continued on page 3

## In-Grain

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GEAPS' vision is to be  
*The Knowledge Resource* by  
providing key information in  
these "core competencies:"

- Grain Quality
- Facility Maintenance and Design
- General Operations
- Risk Management
- Human Resources

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## **LABOR SHORTAGE** *continued from page 2*

There are nearly 800 full-time employees at NEW Coop. During peak season, the number climbs to about 1,000 with the addition of part-time and seasonal workers.

Josh Coughlin manages the human resources department at NEW. He leads the HR department including recruiting, talent development, payroll, HR policies, programs, processes and systems, succession planning and benefit administration.

The labor market has challenged folks in HR across the industry to try new things. Coughlin is no different.

"We have to be flexible and nimble," Coughlin said. "The market changes fast. Social media and other technology has changed the way we interact with candidates, so we have to adapt quickly."

In order to attract quality employees, NEW Coop advertises aggressively and is in the process of implementing an employee referral program. While expanding their territories has increased their geographic labor pool, it has also increased staff needed.

"We're constantly reviewing additional sources—internally and externally," Coughlin said. "We are ramping up our presence in educational institutions at all levels, high schools, trade schools, community colleges, universities and also partnering with ag-related groups like GEAPS, the Iowa Institute and Future Farmers of America (FFA)."

Coughlin said they first started seeing the labor shortage a couple of years ago. Back then, the shortage was isolated to specific roles and locations. Like many of you, NEW Cooperative started feeling the pain more in recent months.



*From offices, to fields to trucks, there are a variety of roles NEW Coop's HR works to fill in order to keep things rolling.*

labor shortage is really forcing some change. Some of that change is uncomfortable, and some things won't or can't change—but we I think it will force some modernization at a pace faster than what we may have historically seen."



*Harvest time is peak season at NEW Coop. Then, NEW relies on about 1,000 full-time, part-time and seasonal workers to get the job done.*

*"The labor shortage can have a major impact on agriculture. We are a seasonal, labor-intensive industry. We need people to make things work."*

– Chris Blair, NEW Cooperative

Increased retirements, the competitive landscape, shrinking rural populations and less people with knowledge of agriculture and among the factors adding to stress in our industry.

"Our business doesn't have the ability to automate everything, or work from home, or outsource. It is critical to have knowledgeable people to ensure we can meet the demands and do it in a safe and efficient way," Blair said.

While these are challenging times to attract talent, there are some silver linings.

"It forced everyone to really think about being efficient and creative, looking at ways we can streamline things, how we can decrease miles driven, for example. That can be beneficial from a business standpoint, but also a safety standpoint," Blair said. "Not sure I'm quite too hopeful yet, but there are some silver linings. It has created opportunities for people to grow and learn, whether that's working in a new area, location or learning a new process. I also think with new people stepping up, we'll see more and more ideas come from that. Change can be hard, but this





## *The Labor Long Game*

# Plant Seeds Early, Care For the Team You've Got

by Jessica Foster

As president of Agri-Search, Dave Allen's full-time job is to help agricultural businesses find great employees. For the last 23 years, the longtime GEAPS member has specialized in placing people in the grain industry and working with agricultural companies and boards in management and leadership.

As you might imagine, his job has gotten tougher lately.

"There's a labor shortage at all spectrums," Allen said. While all industries are impacted by the labor shortage, those in the ag industry are being hit in multiple ways. "There is a shortage of talent in our industry at all levels."

As people in our industry are starting to retire, there aren't as many younger people ready to be promoted to their positions. Allen said

this is because—for a long time—people quit encouraging their kids to enter the agriculture industry. The ripples of that change continue today. There just aren't as many farm kids looking for jobs. To add to that, Allen said there are more and more companies outside of our industry showing up at ag job fairs. Young people in our industry are known as good workers and many companies want them.

"I do believe, at all levels, this is something as an industry we have to address," he said. "If you're an ag company you're going to have to get creative."

### **The long game**

"As an industry, we need to start recruiting much harder and a much younger level," Allen said.

**LABOR LONG GAME** continued on page 5





## LABOR LONG GAME *continued from page 4*

While students start considering their career path as early as junior high, Allen suggests reaching out to students in your community when they're even younger. Don't wait for kids to put on the blue corduroy jackets in FFA. Introduce students to the industry when they're still kids.

Plant a seed of interest.

"Adopt a class in your community. Give them a tour; get these kids exposed to the business. Develop a relationship to a local teacher," Allen said.

Sometimes one of your employees might be married to a teacher. Maybe someone's daughter is a guidance counselor. Think about who you know. Having an annual meeting serving a meal? Invite school staff to that meal so they can learn more about the future opportunities available to their students.

### The short game

No matter how many raises you offer existing employees there will always be a competitor who would pay even more. The key to keeping good employees, Allen said, is to offer flexibility and the time to enjoy their life.

"Value those who are already coming to work every day. Make your facility a place where a few extra dollars will not buy their loyalty," Allen said. "There are non-cash ways to make the culture better."

A key to improving culture, Allen said, is asking employees what matters to them. Find out what they have going on in their lives. Maybe someone's child is in band and they would love the flexibility to go see them perform during a school day. Maybe someone has a son on the high school football team but because of harvest, they never can make a game.

"Let's figure out how we can help them do the things that are so important," Allen said. "If they know you are covering for them, they will be more than willing to cover for you. That is worth more than money. Let your people have a life. Develop a culture people want to be a part of."

Teamwork, creativity and loyalty will go far to keep a solid team and a solid business.

*"The future of agriculture belongs to the companies who do the best job attracting the keeping the best talent."*

– Dave Allen, Agri-Search

## Did you know?

GEAPS provides scholarships to students interested in pursuing careers in agriculture?

Visit [geaps.com/scholarships](https://geaps.com/scholarships) for more information or check your local chapter page for opportunities in your area!



# GEAPS, Country Journal Publishing Join Forces

Last month, we reached out to all members to let them know GEAPS is purchasing Country Journal Publishing. If you missed the emails, social posts and headlines, let us catch you up.

GEAPS has entered into an agreement to purchase Country Journal Publishing, the publisher of Grain Journal, Milling Journal and Seed Today magazines, among other publications. This deal will give GEAPS a significantly expanded reach in the industry and adds resources for members.

Country Journal Publishing will operate within a newly-formed GEAPS for-profit subsidiary, GEAPS Media Group.

GEAPS Media Group will keep Country Journal Publishing's office in Decatur, IL along with its 11 employees. Country Journal Publishing Owner Mark Avery will remain with the company and become president of GEAPS Media Group.

"Our mission and vision both speak of GEAPS being a hub for industry knowledge and information," said GEAPS Executive Director Steve Records. "With Grain Journal and the other publications, this acquisition will immediately bolster our ability to meet our mission, provide additional member value and grow GEAPS sustainably in the future."

GEAPS and Country Journal Publishing have a history of working together for the greater good of the grain industry. This acquisition will enhance collaboration.

"It is an honor for our company to join GEAPS," Avery said. "It is two great brands in the grain industry coming together to better serve both the GEAPS membership and the grain, milling and seed industries. We are excited about all the print, digital and in-person opportunities this will give our team."

Avery is no stranger to GEAPS or the grain industry. Avery has been a part of GEAPS since he joined in 1981.

Talking about his career in an interview last summer, Avery reflected on how Grain Journal and GEAPS naturally fit together.

"I graduated college on a Sunday and got to work on Monday. Back then, in 1978, it was called Country Journal. I joined GEAPS shortly after," he said. "I always saw the importance of GEAPS to the magazine and to the industry. It's the networking, the education, the information and those chapter meetings allow people to get together."



***These publications will be part of GEAPS Media Group, a subsidiary of GEAPS.***

Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week is April 4-8

# "Honey, I'm Home!"

If you're one of the lucky ones, you get to say those words every day when you come home. The folks planning Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week are working to make sure you keep on saying those words at the end of each workday.



**Billboards promoting Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week can be seen across the country.**

You and your teams are encouraged to take some time out for safety during the annual event April 4-8. The weeks kicks off at the Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center. While a few folks will be meeting in person, this

is largely a virtual event. Anyone can virtually participate—and it is free! Just register on their website. For more information, be sure to check out their social channels on Facebook and LinkedIn.

In its fifth year, Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week is planned and funded by the Alliance, a collaboration of agricultural industry groups. The Alliance, an OSHA Cooperative Program, is comprised of GEAPS, Grain Handling Safety Council and National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA).

GEAPS International President Barb Grove, Central Valley Ag., will moderate the English language sessions.

New this year, GEAPS, GHSC, Central Valley Ag Cooperative and CS-CAASH are teaming up to offer bonus virtual sessions during three afternoons of Stand Up week. These sessions include Spanish language training. Spanish sessions will be presented by Carlos Campabadal, PhD, Kansas State University and moderated by Rico Lopez, Central Valley Ag Coop. Another new feature is Ask the Expert, an open dialogue after each daily education session.

This intensive week of safety topics focuses on safety, not scare tactics. Organizers believe a commitment to safety is about more than a pamphlet or a rushed training. It is about a culture committing to the value of oneself, coworkers and the worksite.

In these times of labor shortages, safety is not only the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do.

## SCHEDULE

### Monday, April 4 Kickoff

10 a.m.- 12:15 p.m. CST

This session will feature live safety demonstrations on bin safety by Dr. Carol Jones, PhD, Oklahoma State University and Dr. Aaron Yoder, PhD - CS-CASH (Central States Center for Agricultural Safety & Health) at UNMC (University of Nebraska Medical Center) Stand Up resources and more.



### Tuesday, April 5

10 a.m.-Noon CST

Jason Moore, CESC - Thompson Electric will present a two part session on electrical safety. The morning will start with a focus on arc flash; best practices will follow.

#### 2 p.m. CST (offered in both English and Spanish language)

A session on infectious disease awareness will be offered in two separate sessions on Tuesday and Thursday in both English and Spanish with days TBA. Beyond COVID-19, workers may be regularly exposed to several infectious agents. This session focuses on how to prevent and reduce transmission.

### Wednesday, April 6

10 a.m.- noon CST

Aaron Yoder and Gretchen Mosher, PhD - Iowa State University will present a two-part session on weather hazards such as extreme cold and heat and weather events.

#### 2 p.m. CST (offered in Spanish)

A session on heat stress and other weather-related hazards, and the best way to protect workers.

### Thursday, April 7

10 – 11:30 a.m. CST

Ellen Duysen, MPH, COHC, CS-CASH (Central States Center for Agricultural Safety & Health) at UNMC (University of Nebraska Medical Center) and Steve Wangler, CVA Coop, will explore the hows and whys of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from head to toe, including innovations in PPE design, wearable technology and personal fall protection.

#### 2 p.m. CST (offered in both English and Spanish language)

A session on infectious disease awareness will be offered in two separate sessions on Tuesday and Thursday in English and Spanish with days TBA. Beyond COVID-19, workers may be regularly exposed to several infectious agents. This session focuses on how to prevent and reduce transmission.

### Friday, April 8

10. a.m. —11:15 p.m. CST

Finish off the week with a one-hour session on loading and unloading grain, presented by John Lee, Grain and Feed Association of Illinois and Butch Hendrix, Kokomo Grain.

**More information: [StandUp4GrainSafety.org](https://StandUp4GrainSafety.org)**



LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER

## Pack Your Bags; GEAPS Exchange is almost here!



If you breathe in extra deep, you can almost smell the Kansas City Barbecue. If you turn your head just right, you can almost hear the jazz trombones and the tinkling of piano keys.

GEAPS Exchange is *that* close.

Do not miss out on this opportunity to come together with thousands of colleagues for the biggest and best show in the grain industry! With more than 45 hours of education and more than 350 exhibitors, GEAPS Exchange has something for everyone.

Looking to make some changes and wonder what your options are? Need new equipment? Want to add some new skills to your bag of tricks? Want to find out how others are approaching similar issues?

Whether you have a problem to solve or an innovation to celebrate, GEAPS Exchange is the place to be. We are so glad to be back in the heart of America to gather with you all. The last time we were in Kansas City, GEAPS Exchange saw some of its largest crowds—and we are on track to meet or exceed our old records.

Don't be left out. Join us in Kansas City March 26-29. It just won't be the same without you!

**More information: [GEAPSEXCHANGE.COM](https://geapsexchange.com)**



## EXCHANGE 2022 SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM



**DID YOU LOOK THROUGH THE SPONSORSHIP LISTS ON PAGE 15 AND FEEL LEFT OUT? WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR NAME ON THAT LIST? IT'S NOT TOO LATE.**

Expose your brand at GEAPS Exchange and get a great deal. As special for our readers, use the code *InGrainAdDiscount* for \$100 off any sponsorship!

[Geapsexchange.com/sponsor](https://geapsexchange.com/sponsor)



# Grain Industry Professionals to be Honored at Exchange

When you come to GEAPS Exchange in Kansas City, you'll see your peers honored for their achievements. The awards will be presented following Shawn Ellis' keynote presentation.

Awards will be presented for multiple years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carol Jones and Randy Gordon will be presented the 2021 Industry Leader award. David Krejci will be recognized as the 2019 winner. The Industry Leader award gives special recognition to grain industry professionals who have made extraordinary contributions to the advancement of operations safety, health, environmental responsibility, efficiency and stored grain quality preservation excellence in our industry.

Wes O'Bannon, Dave Marr and Steve Myers will be recognized as 2021 International Members of Distinction. Mark Fedje is the 2019 winner. This award celebrates members who have advanced GEAPS through their leadership and commitment to excellence and innovation in operations, safety, stored-grain quality preservation, health, efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Perry Nettles and Colin McClure will be honored with the 2021 Corbett Award. The Corbett Award is in honor of Lifetime GEAPS member John Corbett of the Kansas City Chapter. It recognizes extraordinary volunteer leadership in pursuit of GEAPS' mission and achievement of its general objectives.

Eric Roth earned this year's Top Recruiter award—he even went outside of his company to recruit new GEAPS members!

As you attend the awards ceremony, think about who you could nominate for 2022 honors!

## ***Kansas City Convention Center***

*Nicole Bissey Photography*



## SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

# Get the Most Out of Your Time at Exchange

*Your time at GEAPS Exchange just might be among the most productive days of your year. Chances are, they'll also be pretty dang fun!*

## Saturday, March 26

If you're arriving for the first day of Exchange to take in some committee meetings or set up your booth space, you will be rewarded at the end of the day with the Get Acquainted Party. It's not just a party; it's a reunion with your GEAPS friends and colleagues. This year the event is casino-themed with blackjack, roulette, Texas hold 'em and other fun interactive games. Special musical guest from longtime industry member, Glen Hofbauer.

Admission to the party includes food and two drink tickets. If you have a full registration to Exchange, then your ticket is included. If not, it's not too late to sign up to party and network.

## Sunday, March 27

Sunday promises to be a full day for all attendees as it is the first official day of Exchange. There is the FunRun/Walk planned for our early risers and fitness junkies. (If you'd like to save your steps for the expo floor, we understand.)

Activities at Kansas City Convention Center start out with GEAPS Exchange's first-ever keynote speaker, Shawn Ellis. Watch your industry colleagues accept well-deserved awards as part of the event.



Shawn Ellis, Keynote Speaker, 2022 GEAPS Exchange

The Keynote is followed by our most popular event, the Idea Exchange. Spend the morning learning about what's new in our industry and find out how making small changes has resulted in big impact for your industry colleagues. Contact [brittany@geaps.com](mailto:brittany@geaps.com) to sponsor either the Idea Exchange or the Keynote!

After Idea Exchange we will open the doors to the Expo! This is your chance to feast your eyes on some shiny new equipment, speak directly to suppliers and take in the Grain Entrapment Rescue Demo.

You likely will see a number of young folks on the floor; Sunday is also Student Day at Exchange! Student Day is a free event for college students interested in exploring a career in agriculture!

Cap the day off with the Welcome Reception. It's your opportunity to network and enjoy a few drinks in the Expo Hall.

## Monday, March 28

Monday starts out with the final meeting of GEAPS Associate Board of Directors. This is open to all GEAPS members who would like to participate.

Pick your track and attend education sessions. Eight sessions will be offered in the morning and eight more in the afternoon.

You'll also have a chance to check out the Expo Hall on Monday. It's open 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Remember Education Pods? This year we're bringing you something better. Be sure to visit the Innovation Stations while you're in the Expo Hall. Be sure to make time to attend the Grain Entrapment Rescue Demo at least once.



**SCHEDULE OVERVIEW** continued on page 11





**SCHEDULE OVERVIEW** continued from page 10

## Tuesday, March 29

Your last day of GEAPS Exchange is full of last chances and final visits. Start your Tuesday with a variety of educational opportunities from 8-10 a.m. Take one last walk through the Expo Hall, get to the Grain Entrapment Rescue Demo if you haven't yet and learn something new at the Innovation Stations. Contact [brittany@geaps.com](mailto:brittany@geaps.com) to sponsor innovation stations!

Finally, Peterson Farm Brothers have agreed to join us for the Closing Session. It promises to be an entertaining, inspirational, educational and motivational program for people of all ages and backgrounds. Contact [brittany@geaps.com](mailto:brittany@geaps.com) to Sponsor this event for only \$2000!

Toast your time at Exchange and say your "see you soon's" and "nice to meet you's" at the Closing Reception right after the Closing Session. Have a drink, a bite to eat and think about how you will convince your boss to let you join us all again at GEAPS Exchange 2023!

**More information:** [geapsexchange.com/schedule](https://geapsexchange.com/schedule)



*Be sure to make time to attend the Grain Entrapment Rescue Demo at least once.*



*The Peterson Farm Brothers will help us end on a high note as they present at the Closing Session.*



## EDUCATION AT EXCHANGE

### Stay on Track With GEAPS Exchange Education

Your colleagues in the GEAPS Exchange Education Programming Committee have been busy creating a robust slate of educational offerings.

When you join us at Exchange later this month, you will be able to learn from industry experts, interact with the new Innovation Stations (formerly known as Expo Pods), ask questions and truly learn from these sessions. This education lineup was designed to help keep workers safe, improve efficiency and product quality and inspire innovation.

"The Education Committee is excited about offering excellent educational opportunities for Exchange 2022 attendees," said Randy Bowman, EPC vice chair. "Each year we look to bring in new and relevant topics with speakers that are experts in their area. And this year's program is very strong."

In response to the needs of GEAPS members, the EPC focused education this year on important topics in our industry. They have planned more than 45 hours of educational offerings in five relevant education tracks.

Are you dedicated to keeping you and your team safe? Be sure to follow the blue signage for the Safety track.

Want to know more about our changing times and technological advancements in our industry? Look for orange signs for the Technology track and be better prepared to keep up with the pace of change.



Are you, like many, struggling to attract and keep good employees? Look for the yellow signs as the Human Resources track will provide insight into professional development and human resources issues.

New to Exchange this year, and of interest to our Associate members, we are bringing in a professor from the Center for Food and Agricultural Business at Purdue University to speak on Agri Selling. Not only will he present at Exchange, you'll be able to hear from him again in future webinars.

If you're looking for Agri Selling or the Grain Operations tracks, follow the green signs.

No matter what you come to learn, you surely will leave Exchange with actionable ideas to make your work days better, safer, more innovative and fulfilling.





# Student Day at GEAPS Exchange

Sunday is also Student Day at GEAPS Exchange! Student Day is a special day of Exchange programming tailored for folks interested in careers in the grain handling and processing industry. We encourage attendees, exhibitors and sponsors to invite young people to this event.

Whether you work with students interested in our field, you have an intern at your facility eager to learn or you have a family member interested in learning more about career opportunities, we encourage you to invite them along!

**More information: [geapsexchange.com/studentday](http://geapsexchange.com/studentday)**

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## Explore, See, Taste! Kansas City Has So Much to Offer!

As you're visiting Kansas City for GEAPS Exchange later this month you might want to do a bit of exploring or take some clients out to dinner. Maybe you even have another day before or after Exchange to have a bit of fun in the self-proclaimed Barbecue Capital of the World.

Who better to give intel on what to see and do while in Kansas City than our colleagues from the Host Advisory Council.

If you can't get to all of these great recommendations this year, it's one more reason to come back to Kansas City for Exchange in 2023 and 2024!

### **Favorite restaurant in downtown Kansas City?**

- Garozzo's
- McCormick and Schmick's
- Q39 Midtown
- Bristol Seafood + Steak + Social
- Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbecue – Freight House
- Golden Ox – KC Stockyards History

### **Great place to kick back with a cocktail?**

- The Quaff
- Harry's
- J. Rieger & Company
- Green Lady Lounge
- Drum Room, Hilton President Hotel

### **Best low-budget meal?**

- Town Topic
- Guy Fieri's Dive & Tacos
- BRGR
- Pigwich
- Joe's KC BBQ
- Z Man Sandwich
- Drunken Fish
- Yard House

### **Best restaurant to impress or treat a customer?**

- McCormick and Schmick's
- Eddie V's
- Gram and Dun
- Café Trio
- Majestic Steakhouse and Jazz Club
- Pierpont's Restaurant

### **Hidden gems to recommend?**

- The Jazz on 39th
- Grinders
- Arthur Bryant's on 19th
- Majestic
- Grunauer (Austrian Food)
- City Market
- Lidia's (Italian)
- Carmen's
- Slap's BBQ

### **If you had an extra day to spend in Kansas City, where would you go?**

- WWI Museum
- Union Station
- Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
- Steamboat Arabia
- Country Club Plaza
- College Basketball Experience
- PS Speakeasy at Hotel Phillips (ask an employee to let you in the secret door.)

Photo by Jonathan Tasler



*"Most of the 130 BBQ restaurants are very good. Go to one."*

— Cory Booz



# Thank You Sponsors!

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*We are incredibly thankful to our sponsors who help make GEAPS Exchange possible! It's not too late to sign up.  
If your company would like to sponsor GEAPS Exchange, please contact [Brittany@geaps.com](mailto:Brittany@geaps.com)*



## online resources

### Wednesday Webinars

By now, we hope you have given yourself some time to watch and participate in our slate of webinars. If you haven't, it's a great time to start.

GEAPS offers webinars throughout the year. The webinars are free for everyone at the time scheduled. As a member, you may go watch recordings of past webinars at any time in the GEAPS Knowledge Resource Center.

#### Schedule *(times listed in Central time)*

##### **10 a.m. Wednesday, March 9**

These sessions will focus on operational standards and sales topics, touching on Best Practices for Dust Collection and Developing Relationships for Sales.

Tracy Janssen; Best Practices for Dust Collection

Dr. Scott Downey; Developing Relationships for Sales

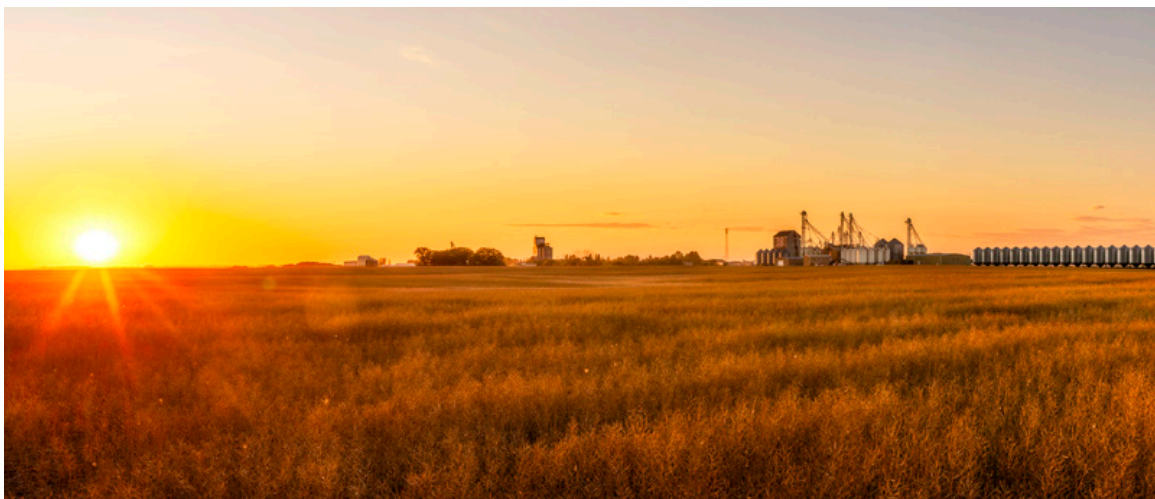
##### **10 a.m. Wednesday, April 13**

Dr. Scott Downey from Purdue University will speak about agri selling. (If you're attending Exchange you'll see him speak on other aspects of agri selling there.)

##### **10 a.m. Wednesday, May 18**

Joe Mlynec from Safety Made Simple will present on spring and summer safety preparation.

**For more information:** [geaps.com/webinars](http://geaps.com/webinars)





# GEAPS Professional Development Program Enters New Era

GEAPS is known for its robust, comprehensive Professional Development program—but it's about to get a whole lot better.

"I'm really excited about what these new courses are going to be," said Jay Bergland, GEAPS' director of Professional Development.

This spring, GEAPS will release a dynamic, multimedia version of GEAPS 500, Introduction to Grain Handling Operations. The course features professionally produced graphics, video examples, relevant photographs, 2D and 3D illustrations, animations and interactive exercises.

"The new GEAPS 500 is going to be a great example of what cutting edge training and education should look and feel like," Bergland said. "Modern training and education cannot be boring. It has to engage the learner and entice them to keep coming back for more. This is where GEAPS new Distance Education courses are as cutting edge as when they were first offered to the industry."

GEAPS International President Barb Grove was among the first to see a preview of what the new classes will offer. She has a good understanding of GEAPS Professional Development courses, having earned her CGOM Credential through our program.

"I am very excited about the direction the GEAPS Distance Education upgrades are taking," Grove said. "Aside from having a user-friendly LMS platform and on-demand learning, the change in the format gives the user a more engaged learning session. Being able to capture our learners' attention and provide different visual and verbal aspects to aid in material retention is important to both the learner and their employer."

It has been several years since GEAPS courses were updated. This is not a small enhancement, but a reimagining. While the same principles and key educational elements remain, this is an evolution of GEAPS 500, not a facelift.

The overall course provides real life information regarding the day-to-day operations of a grain elevator facility. It is geared for employees newer to the industry that need a complete review of the operations of a facility.

Overhauling GEAPS 500 came first, but it certainly is not the last.

Later this spring we will be releasing a revamped GEAPS 501, Management Basics for Facility Supervisors and GEAPS 520 Grain Quality. These are core courses from the GEAPS library and have been prioritized for the first round of overhauls.

Pending funding, GEAPS plans to revamp three additional courses by the end of 2022 and another three by the following spring.

"I think GEAPS has consistently had good content to offer the industry and a wide range of subject-matter-experts to work with," Bergland said. "Where we have fallen short is the cutting-edge delivery of modern online training and education."

"A PowerPoint with a voiceover is just not good enough to compete in the market today," Bergland said.

As we detailed on pages 2-5 of this issue, companies in our industry and beyond are being hit hard by the labor shortage. Offering quality training opportunities to employees helps to attract and keep quality employees, improves efficiency and strengthens safety practices.

"There are few better ways to engage, develop and retain a workforce than to invest training and resources into them," Bergland said.

**For more information: [geaps.com/education](https://geaps.com/education)**



*Characters in the new series will be more reflective of employees in our industry.*



## GEAPS Welcomes Lonestar Chapter

For the first time in nearly 20 years, GEAPS has a new chapter

The Lonestar chapter, based in the Fort Worth, Texas area was approved by GEAPS International Board in January. It will begin meeting in April—and you just might see them competing for corn hole glory at GEAPS Exchange later this month.

The chapter will be led by Casey Abel, who has served on GEAPS International Board since last year. Chapter leadership is comprised of both Regular and Associate members. Scottie Buerger will be the chapter's vice president and Alma Sue Haiduk will be secretary/treasurer. Dean Wedekind, Mike Morgan, Dale Locke and Jeremy Spivey will be chapter directors. Several other GEAPS members signed the petition for chapter formation.

"My hope is this will be one of the biggest chapters. We have a lot of people here and a lot of folks in the industry in the state of Texas," Abel said. "I'm excited. There's a lot of excitement around it for sure."

While Texas wasn't without a chapter, there just wasn't anything nearby. For Abel and many others, getting to meetings with an existing chapter just wasn't feasible.

"When I moved to Texas—if you're in the Fort Worth area—you've never really been able to be involved in a chapter unless you went to Amarillo or down to Houston," he said.

GEAPS has seen tremendous membership growth in the last year, and Abel predicts Lonestar will expand on that, in addition to getting existing members more involved. The formation of the chapter has already brought about 10 new folks to GEAPS.

"We have a ton of GEAPS members around here, but we don't really know each other because we never had a chapter," he said. "Being a part of the International board, I love to grow GEAPS. It's been an awesome year for GEAPS; I think this will bring a lot more members in."

Introducing a new chapter at Exchange is a bit of a full-circle moment for Abel. He once was a college student majoring in education. He took one class in grain and in 2010 that professor took him along to GEAPS Exchange for student day in Wichita, KS.

"It kind of sparked my interest in the grain industry, honestly," he said.

Abel and other founding members of Lonestar are working to provide that spark for the next generation of grain industry professionals. Among other plans, they hope to offer a scholarship for agriculture students in their area.

If you're interested in changing your chapter affiliation to the Lonestar Chapter, please contact Deb Most at the GEAPS office.



*Lonestar Chapter*

## IN MEMORIAM

GEAPS was saddened to hear of the recent passing of two members. We will miss William (Bill) Jefferson, Mid Atlantic and Bill Koontz, Siouxland. Jefferson was a former chairman of GEAPS' Membership Committee and was an early proponent of the Student Day at GEAPS Exchange. Koontz joined GEAPS more than 40 years ago and was recognized as a Siouxland Chapter Member of Distinction in 2005.





# Do you want to meet more people? Are you looking for ways to learn more about the industry? Are you ready to try something a little new or even a new challenge?

## Chapter Involvement

Chapters are an important part of the GEAPS experience and the way GEAPS members connect with what is happening in their area. Each chapter has chapter leaders that develop meetings based on the needs and interests in their own area. Soon, many chapters will be hosting their chapter elections. We encourage you to look at these elections as your chance to get more involved in your chapter and GEAPS as a whole.

*You never know  
how a random  
conversation with  
another GEAPS  
member can lead  
to a solution to  
a problem or a  
resource for the  
future.*

As a chapter leader, you can build your professional network. You never know how a random conversation with another GEAPS member can lead to a solution to a problem or a resource for the future. GEAPS long-term members have many stories of these seemingly random connections leading to business solutions.

## Develop Leadership Skills

Being a chapter leader can help develop leadership skills. Chapter leaders collaborate with other chapter leaders and GEAPS staff to develop the meetings throughout the year. Effective leaders are able to listen to interests of the members in their area and creatively plan meetings and events to address those interests. Need a way to show your boss you have leadership potential? Being a chapter leader can help you build the skills that you'll be able to use every day at work (and impress your boss along the way).

## We Will Support You

Chapter leaders also receive support. Not only from fellow chapter leaders, but GEAPS staff is here to help. GEAPS staff can help you find speakers through the GEAPS Speakers Bureau, manage the registration for the events, host any virtual or hybrid (virtual and in-person) meetings you plan, promote your event through GEAPS marketing channels, manage the membership lists and the business administration aspects of your chapter business. This allows you to focus on developing topics at meeting that interest members in your area and connecting with members in your Chapter—the fun stuff!

If you are interested in being a chapter leader, please contact your chapters current leadership or Julia Kloehn at [julia@geaps.com](mailto:julia@geaps.com) or Deb Most at [deb@geaps.com](mailto:deb@geaps.com).





## MEMBER PROFILE

*Casey Abel*

President, *Lonestar Chapter*

**Chapter and committees:**

*Lonestar Chapter* President, Director (International Board)

**Family:**

Wife - Lauren, two daughters- Hudson (4) Hollis (2)

**Position and Company:**

Regional Safety Manager - Gavilon

**Years with company:**

10

**Years in Industry:**

11

**Interesting or unique fact about your facility/company:**

Last summer, we rolled out a safety campaign titled "Destination Home." Its focus was highlighting the true meaning of why we prioritize safety over anything else—so each and every one of our employees—our number one asset, return home safe and healthy to their families every night.

**Past positions:**

Operations Superintendent - Wichita Falls, TX & Saginaw, TX

**Education:**

University of Missouri-Columbia, Major in Ag Systems Management, minor in Ag Business

**Biggest influence on your career:**

When it comes to safety, Todd Conklin. A lot of his literature/podcast around human and organizational performance, incident investigations and system building have helped shape a safety culture in our organization that we can all be proud of.

**How has GEAPS helped your leadership skills?**

GEAPS is full of tremendous leaders I have learned from throughout the years. Although fairly new to the IBD, it has given me some great perspective on how the organization operates and how/why decisions are made for the betterment of GEAPS and its members.

**What is your favorite memory from GEAPS?**

2010 GEAPS Exchange, Wichita KS. I was a junior at Mizzou and one of my professors took a few of us on a day trip to Exchange. I knew absolutely nothing about the grain industry at the time. By the time I left Wichita that day, I knew it was the career I wanted to pursue. 10 years later, here we are!

**What is the best advice you have received from another GEAPS member?**

Anything my fellow board member, Chuck Kunisch says.

**What is one industry-wide trend affecting your company right now? How are you reacting to it?**

Simply put, we work in an industry that can be dangerous. Day-to-day, employees take part in high-risk operations that have the potential to result in a serious injury or fatality. Maybe not so much



a “trend,” but we unfortunately still hear about people being seriously hurt or killed on the job, whether in be on the farm or commercially. This is especially true when it comes to grain bin entries. The numbers don’t lie. We must get away from relying on our people to be perfect in their decision making. For numerous reasons—judgement, lack of knowledge, pressure, fatigue, lack of concentration, etc.—people will make mistakes. The focus cannot be on the human, but building systems that allow people to make mistakes and come out of it alive and well. As crazy as it sounds, when it comes to bin entries, we are striving to figure out a way to eliminate the hazard altogether and keep people out of those spaces. We must continue to think outside of the box, innovate and apply these systems for different results.



*“The focus cannot be on the human, but building systems that allow people to make mistakes and come out of it alive and well.”*

– Casey Abel, Gavilon

## CHAPTER NEWS

**Minneapolis** hosted a hybrid meeting at Masonic Heritage Center in Bloomington, Minnesota with 10 in person, four online. The topic, "Understanding and Managing Generations" was presented by Carlie Crouch, Senior Learning and Development Manager, Perdue Farms. She provided good insights to managing generations. Chapter pins were also handed out to members who had 5+ year anniversaries.

Nearly 60 **Gulf South** members and guests enjoyed a social hour and a delicious seafood dinner at the Louisiana State University Foundation building on campus, directly across from World Famous LSU Tiger Stadium. Sponsored by LDC, the meeting was centered on a powerful talk by Kina Hart titled "Don't Give Your Safety Away." Hart's honest, humorous and powerful discussion about the events leading up to and following her own industrial accident had a profound positive impact on the assembled group.

**Great Plains** hosted Maintenance Day on January 12 at Vortex at Salina, KS. Nearly 100 people attended the day sponsored by Ecolab, IBT, MKC, Maxi Lift and Feedyard Industrial. Ecolab, IBT, MKC, Maxi Lift

and Feedyard Industrial were guest presenters. There were breakout sessions conducted on Haz-Mon Maintenance and Care by Feedyard Industrial, Belt Splicing by IBT, Bucket Elevator Maintenance and Troubleshooting by Maxi Lift, and Bearing Maintenance, Removal and Installation by MKC. The event finished with a large group presentation by EcoLab on fumigation and grain preservation with the changing weather.

The **Minneapolis** chapter hosted their first cornhole tournament in conjunction with their annual product show on January 12. The winners of the tournament, Todd Olson and Jeff Malek of Rahr Malting, will go onto the GEAPS Exchange in Kansas City to represent the Minneapolis chapter in the national cornhole tournament. If they cannot attend, the second place team will step up to play. A great time was had by all!

**Greater Nebraska** members gathered on January 19. Scott Voda presented a virtual meeting about how a rotary airlock works and the maintenance involved with them.

## Upcoming Board and Committee Meetings

DATE	TITLE
March 26, 2022	GEAPS Chapter Resource Committee Meeting
March 26, 2022	Membership Committee Meeting
March 26, 2022	GEAPS International Board of Directors Meeting
March 26, 2022	GEAPS Continuing Education Programs Oversight Committee
March 26, 2022	Exchange Education Programming Committee Meeting
March 28, 2022	Associates Board of Directors Meeting
April 29, 2022	GEAPS International Board of Directors Meeting
June 22, 2022	GEAPS International Board of Directors Meeting
August 25, 2022	GEAPS Continuing Education Programs Oversight Committee





# New Members

*Please welcome these new members who recently joined GEAPS. Italics denote student members.*

## **Canadian Prairies**

Shawn Murfitt

## **Columbia River**

Annalise Bischel

## **Cornbelt**

Steve Bolton

Benny Larson

## **Great Plains**

Brandon Gibbs

Jake Stark

Dakota Clymer

## **Greater Iowa**

Daryl Forbes

Matt Larson

## **Greater Nebraska**

Scott Bonine

Samantha Coffey

## **Inland Empire**

Dustin DeFord, *recruited by*

*Lincoln Short*

Kenny Cowden

Shea Crowley

Andrew Keenan

Jon Dickson

## **Intermountain**

Tyler Witmer

## **Kansas City**

Brian Bickford, *recruited by*

*Marcus Neal*

Colin McQuillan

Camden Chiles

Kaleb McQuillan

Nicholas Scott

Bruce McLelland

Gilberto Retamoza-Ramirez,  
*recruited by Patrick DeLong*

## **Lonestar**

Scott Buerger, *recruited by*

*Casey Abel*

Cesar Ramirez

Dale Lock

David McKinley

George Gurganus

Tanner Ryan

Jeremy Spivey

Melvin Smith

Brad Rynkowski

Brian McCuistion

Tyler Rossi

Adriana Gomez

Dan Dickenson

Phil Parsons

## **Michigan/South Ontario**

Paul Broekema

Davin Lalman, *recruited by*

*Les Perrault*

## **Mid-America**

Blake Rasmussen, *recruited by*

*Godfrey Friedt*

Austin Brown

Brandon Lauer

Jason Colby

## **Mid-Atlantic**

Dave Snavelly

## **Mid-South**

John Kirby

## **Minneapolis**

James Chandler, *recruited by*

*Jason Boyles*

Hani Almoghrabi

Kim Wellman, *recruited by*

*Karilyn Smith*

Corey Askin

Nathan White

Arlo Heyney

Aaron Hansen

Kristen Ireland

Patrick Stumpf

## **North Iowa**

Tyler Teslow

Jesse Shearer

## **Siouxland**

Josh Climer

Jason Schiebout

Bob Frank

Dave Muilenburg

Mike Lund

Nick Galm

Benjamin Verkilen

Armel Fotso Tsema

Luan Phau

## **Tri-State**

Rodney Hunter

Tony Treadwell

Fritz Friemel

Michael Morgan, *recruited by*

*Marty Stipe*

Kavan Killian

Cruz Rivero

Dean Allingg, *recruited by Dale Lock*

Robin Studney

Britt Boozer

Ben Castruita

Corkey Hickey

Daryl Pohlmeier

Frank Calixto

Isreal Guido

Mike McDonald

Mindi Friemel

Rich Poor

Tucker Williams

## **New Lifetime Members**

### **Gulf South**

Kevin Fry

### **Thunder Bay**

Pritam S. Lamba



GEAPS *In-Grain* is printed on paper stock sourced through eco-friendly paper manufacturers.

# CALENDAR

*An extensive and up-to-date calendar can be found on the GEAPS website.*

## C H A P T E R S

### **COLUMBIA RIVER**

**March 22, 2022**

TBD  
Vancouver, WA  
12:00 p.m. PST

**May 18, 2022**

TBD  
Vancouver, WA  
12:00 p.m. PST

### **GREAT RIVER**

**March 17, 2022**

Tour of Lock and Dam 15  
Lock 15  
Rock Island, IL  
11:00 a.m.

### **GREATER IOWA**

**March 16, 2022**

Safety Day  
Northwest Iowa Public  
Training Center  
Spencer, IA  
8:30 a.m.

**May 17, 2022**

Cranes  
Ag Information Center  
Nevada, IA  
10:30 a.m.

**June 7, 2022**

2nd Annual Kevin Miles Golf  
Tournament  
Cedar Pointe Golf Course  
Boone, IA  
9:30 a.m.

### **GREATER NEBRASKA**

**May 20, 2022**

Cairo, NE

### **HOOSIER**

**May 24, 2022**

Golf & Elections  
Chippendale Golf Course  
Kokomo, IN  
11:00 a.m.

### **INLAND EMPIRE**

**March 3, 2022**

TBA  
State Grading Office  
Pasco, WA  
3:00 p.m.

**September 7, 2022**

TBA  
Applebee's  
Kennewick, WA  
3:00 p.m.

### **INTERMOUNTAIN**

**March 11, 2022**

Top Golf Annual  
Elections Meeting  
Top Golf  
Midvale, UT  
3:00 p.m. MST

### **KANSAS CITY**

**May 5, 2022**

Gasisch Classic Golf Tournament  
and Cinco de Mayo Dinner  
Shoal Creek  
Kansas City

### **LONESTAR**

**April 7, 2022**

Introduction social  
Location TBD  
7:00 p.m.

### **MID-ATLANTIC**

**March 10, 2022**

Dust Control Adam's Grille  
Fruitland, MD  
6:00 p.m.

**April 14, 2022**

Tour  
Evolution Craft Brewing  
Salisbury, MD  
6:00 p.m.

**May 12, 2022**

Tour  
Evolution Craft Brewing  
Salisbury, MD  
6:00 p.m.

**May 19, 2022**

Tour  
Heritage Shores  
Bridgeville, DE  
11:30 a.m.

**August 11, 2022**

Crab Feast  
Suicide Bridge Restaurant  
Hurlock, MD  
6:00 p.m.

### **MINNEAPOLIS**

**March 2, 2022**

Pest Control and Fumigation  
Masonic Heritage Center  
Bloomington, MN  
Noon

**April 13, 2022**

Second Harvest Heartland -  
Volunteer Event/Meeting  
Second Harvest Heartland

**May 4, 2022**

Facility Tour of Rahr Malting  
Rahr Malting  
Shakopee, MN

**June 6, 2022**

Spring Golf Event  
Keller Golf Club  
St. Paul, MN  
Noon

### **TWIN PORTS**

**March 16, 2022**

5:00 p.m. Social Time  
5:30 p.m. Meeting Time  
Hammond Steak House  
Superior, WI  
5:00 p.m.

**April 20, 2022**

5:00 p.m. Social Time  
5:30 p.m. Meeting Time  
Hammond Steak House  
Superior, WI  
5:00 p.m.