



**By Jan Rahn**

*Managing Editor*

Featured as Chamber Spotlight for July is Frenchman Valley Co-op, and three of its employees were honored at the regular monthly meeting of Chamber on Thursday, July 19 at Hastings Memorial Library.

Gary Talich, branch manager of Frenchman Valley Co-op (FVC) in Grant, gave a short presentation on the co-op's history in Perkins County.

Present at the Chamber meeting along with Talich were Brian Schmidt, agronomy manager and Tracy O'Connor, grain manager.

**About Frenchman Valley**

Managed by a 15-member board of directors, FVC employs 28 full time and five part time workers in Grant and Venango.

Talich explained FVC as being an agricultural cooperative currently coering most of southwest Nebraska, the panhandle, northeast Colorado and southeast Wyoming.

The company is a supplier of fertilizer, crop protection products, grain storage and marketing, petroleum and tire products, livestock feed, and all related services.

Frenchman Valley Co-op also procures corn for two ethanol plants. Talich said most recently FVC formed a division known as Plains Grain, which is responsible for procuring corn for the ethanol plant in Madrid.

As a cooperative owned by its patrons, FVC is in business for the sole purpose of improving the well being of its farmer-rancher members and the agriculture community by being a dependable and consistent source of agricultural inputs markets and services, said Talich.

**History of FVC**

Started as a grain company in 1912 under the name of Farmers Union Equity, Frenchman Valley Farmers Cooperative, Inc., known as Frenchman Valley Co-op is celebrating its 100th

birthday this year.

The name of Farmers Union Equity was changed to Imperial Equity Exchange in 1915. The oil company was first organized in 1927 as Imperial Co-op Oil.

The merger of Imperial Equity and Imperial Co-op Oil in 1968 formed Frenchman Valley Farmers Cooperative, Inc.

Expansion followed—1986 marked the beginning of expansion with the purchase of the McCook Equity Exchange and the trucking assets of Far Port Cooperative.

In 1990 the Farmers Co-op Exchange in Wauneta and Enders became part of Frenchman Valley Co-op, and in 1993 the Benkelman grain facility was added.

In 1998, the grain facilities at Perry and the Seaboard grain facilities at McCook were added.

In 2002, a merger with Grant Cooperative Exchange added the fertilizer, grain and petroleum facilities at Grant and the fertilizer and grain facilities at Venango.

Added in 2004 was its subsidiary, Southwest Grain, which acts as the exclusive grain buyer for Trenton Agri Products ethanol plant at Trenton.

In 2007, the Wright Lorenz facilities at Palisade, Hamlet, Beverly and Culbertson became part of FVC.

A year later a merger took place with Farmers Elevator Company which added locations in Chappell, Dalton, Dix, Kimball, Ledgepole, Potter and Sidney in western Nebraska, along with the Colorado facilities of Burns and Lindberg and that of Pinebluffs, Wyo.