

Board Snapshot

Board President, Gary Ford

Years Service as a director

Total of 14 years

12 years at Utica Elevator Cooperative with 4 years as President

2 years as President of Northern Partners Cooperative

Personal and farming (career) information

Gary joined the family farm near Tonica as the fifth generation in 1974 after graduating from the University of Illinois. Presently, the farm partnership involves Gary, his brother Dennis, and his son Adam; and has practiced conservation tillage (no till/strip till) for the past 25 years. Gary and his wife Rita and have five children, Adam (Rosaura), Sara (Brian), Evan, Maria and Laura.

Thoughts/Vision of the current state and future of Agriculture

Volatility is the one word that describes the state of Agriculture today. It does not matter if I mention input cost, marketing price, land cost, or weather; this one word defines it all. My vision is that since this fast changing pace in Agriculture will continue, producers must acknowledge this volatility and must prepare for it in their own way. I believe the success of the producer depends on the actions that he takes.

Thoughts/Vision of the future of Northern Partners Coop

Northern Partners Coop has been formed by four remarkably similar Coops and therefore has seen the tremendous benefits to the size and structure of the merged Coop. I believe this trend must continue as new partnerships and opportunities present themselves. As Producers increase in size and scope, so must Northern Partners Coop. My vision is that Northern Partners can take the volatility that exists in the Agricultural world, identify it, and help member producers manage that volatility; especially in the areas of input costs and market fluctuations.