

## History of Pioneer Co-operative Association Ltd. 1936-1996

### 1936

It was early 1936 in Swift Current. The Swift Current Oil and Gas Co. Ltd. was in existence, with R.E. West as Chairman of the Board, N.E. (Cy) Cowan as Secretary, and J.O. Grinder as Manager. The company was in the gas and oil business at a location on Fourth Ave. N.W. between Chaplin and Cheadle Streets. There was also a branch of the company at Stewart Valley. At a meeting on April 11, 1936, the Board of the Swift Current Oil and Gas Co. Ltd. passed a motion to call an extraordinary meeting of its shareholders to consider reorganizing the company as a co-operative.



This meeting of shareholders was held on April 25, 1936, and a motion was passed to form a co-operative and sell the assets to the co-operative. On the same day, the Directors of Swift Current Oil and Gas met and passed a motion to form the co-operative with capitalization of \$20,000 (800 shares at \$25.00 per share). Also that day, a meeting of said co-operative named Lars Hendrickson, Ingman Nelson, Ben Cropper, Walter Krinke, and Ben Howden as the group to deal with Swift Current Oil and

Gas. The Charter for Pioneer Co-operative Association was taken out over the signatures of Hendrickson, Nelson, Cropper, Krinke, and Howden. On July 6, 1936, a meeting of Swift Current Oil and-Gas shareholders officially proclaimed the company a co-operative.

### 1937

The first Annual Meeting of Pioneer Co-operative Association was held on February 27, 1937. The first Board of Directors elected included A.M. Thistlethwaite, W.A. Dafoe, Lars Hendrickson, W.A. Carefoot, J.O. Grinder, and Roy Trumble. W.A. Dafoe was selected chairman of the board, and A.M. Thistlethwaite was vice-president, with N.E. (Cy) Cowan hired as secretary/treasurer. The Co-operative was to advertise



for a manager. Decision was made to print (and sell) \$5.00 share applications. (The earlier decision to transfer \$25.00 shares from Oil and Gas Co. and this decision to sell \$5.00 shares were to cause considerable discussion over subsequent years.) N.E. (Cy) Cowan was named manager April 1, 1937, replacing J.O. Grinder. Mr. Grinder resigned from the board at this point, and A.J. Dyck was appointed to replace him. Mr. Dyck resigned in October, and

J.G. Laycock was then appointed. In June 1937, a deal was made with a Mr. Jahnke of Main Centre to sell fuel through him on a commission basis. Coal and wood were added to the co-operative's product line, and in August the board approved building a coal building at Main Centre, the beginning of the Main Centre branch.

In September 1937, the board decided to rent the bottom of the Rollefson Building (Beverly Apartment building) so that Pioneer could get into the grocery business.

## 1938

The grocery business opened in 1938. The Annual Meeting in February 1938 changed the capitalization (\$20,000) of Co-operatives from 800 shares at \$25.00 to 4000 shares at \$5.00. In April the board approved a per meeting payment to the directors of \$1.00. Binder-twine was added to product line in June, and an enlarged warehouse was okayed at the Fourth West property.

## 1939

First dividends declared February 1939 were:

4 percent.... groceries  
2 cents/gal... fuel  
10 cents/gal....oil  
1 cent/lb ..... grease  
4 percent.... accessories



A decision was made in March 1939 to add on to the building at Fourth West -- a secretary/manager's office and a washroom. The board decided to purchase property in Swift Current, Stewart Valley, and Main Centre for fuel storage. A board meeting of September 1939 authorized the President to collect bad debts from members.

## 1940

In 1940, Pioneer examined the possibility of a machine agency (Cockshutt) and also began handling Sherwin Williams paints. After talking about purchasing the J. Rollefson building, the board decided to renew the rental agreement. Rollefson was in the hardware business and wanted to convert to a co-operative. He proceeded to form the "Sun Co-op". The Semi-Annual Meeting of July 1940 had preliminary discussion regarding forming a credit union.

## 1941

Minutes mention the larger co-operative problems -- talk about all Coops in Southwest Saskatchewan pooling petroleum purchases. A decision was made to join the Co-op Union of Canada (Sask. Section). There was also talk of the formation of a Co-op Grocery Wholesale and later spending \$500 to start same. This represents the beginning of Federated Co-op.

First motion on the books in June 1941 authorized borrowing for Pioneer (\$5,000 from Bank of Nova Scotia).

## **1942**

Again, the problem of the cost of shares surfaced at the Annual Meeting in March of 1942. The meeting passed a motion that the members purchase five - \$5.00 shares to bring their shareholding up to the \$25.00 of the original shareholders. Also in 1942, Pioneer paid a \$100.00 fee for membership in the Co-op Union, and we see that tenders were called for building a coal shed. There was talk about the need of a warehouse for the store and also for the possible construction of an oil shed. The company seemed to be expanding its operations at this time.

## **1944**

Annual Meeting again discussed the business of shares, and a bylaw was passed to reduce the necessary shareholdings to two shares for each member. (We assume two at \$5.00.) Also there was talk about holding meetings around the area to deal with a petroleum expansion program. Finally near the end of 1944, the minutes show a \$2,000 loan made by Pioneer Co-op to Canadian Cooperative Implements Ltd.

## **1945**

In early 1945, the board made a presentation to the Commission on Cooperative Taxation. J.T. Wightman, chairman at the time, made that presentation. Later on in the year, a special assessment of \$200.00 was paid to the Coop Union to cover the cost of this brief. The board decided to purchase a series of lots numbered 13 to 21 for a possible bulk petroleum site. The minutes record that the Saskatchewan Co-op Wholesale and the Consumers Co-op Refinery were put together to form Saskatchewan Federated Co-ops Ltd. As well, there was notice in the minutes of the recent organization of the Co-op Life Insurance Company and of the amalgamation of Pioneer Co-op with another co-operative in the City of Swift Current, called the Sun Co-op. This was a hardware co-operative set up by Mr. Rollefson. There was discussion about attempting to purchase the Sykes block. Later on in the year, an offer was made to Mr. Sykes for the Sykes Block, and the purchase was made at the beginning of 1946. Also, during 1945, the board made a decision to hold 50 percent of the 1944 dividends for the purpose of petroleum expansion. They purchased a lot adjoining the warehouse at Stewart Valley and also one acre of land at Main Centre. Also, in 1945, the board made a decision to enter into a contract with National Garage of Winnipeg to sell Reo trucks.

## **1946**

The minutes show that the Sykes Block, which was purchased in late 1945, was being sold to the Provincial Government for a Health Clinic. Later on in 1946, the board called for tenders for the construction of a warehouse building for their oil facilities. There were continuing negotiations with Sun Co-op regarding the hardware portion of the operation in the Rollefson building. In June 1946, they made an agreement with Sun Co-op to take over the hardware stock and the store lease. In July 1946, a notice in the minutes simply said that Pioneer Co-op was now in the hardware business as a result of the agreement with the Sun Co-op. The business of Co-op Union dues kept surfacing, and they were now up to \$200 per year, with some considerable debate on the item.

## **1947**

There was the beginning of discussion in the minutes about the possibility of purchasing the Rollefson building or the alternative of building a new building in which Pioneer Co-op could sell their groceries, hardware, and other goods. Also in early 1947, there was a motion on the books that Pioneer Co-op go on a cash basis as of April 1, 1947 with Western Savings and Credit Union to handle all credit for the business. The Annual Meeting of 1947 passed a motion to increase the share capital of the company from \$20,000 to \$200,000. In late 1947 there was talk about building a garage building for the company.

## **1948**

The Annual Meeting made a couple of decisions. First, they amended the constitution of the company to go from six directors to nine directors and also made a decision that they would sell so called building bonds to raise funds to either build or to purchase a store building. In October 1948 there was a motion on the books hiring Guy Willy as Hardware Department Manager and as most of us know Guy was to retain that position of Hardware Department Manager from 1948 until his retirement in the early 1970's; a lengthy and meritorious period of service. Also, in October 1948, there was a motion on the books saying that the company would spend one-half of 1 percent of gross sales in order to hire an educational director.

## **1949**

Two items perhaps worthy of mention here. The financial records of the company show that in the period from 1936, the beginning of Pioneer Co-op, to 1949, total sales amounted to about \$4.88 million with earnings of slightly over \$298,000. Also in late 1949 Mr. George Baker was hired as the General Manager for Pioneer Co-op taking over from N.E. (Cy) Cowan.

## **1950**

The year of 1950 shows the beginning of a series of years in which there was an unprecedented amount of activity on the part of Pioneer Co-op in terms of expansion. For example, during the year of 1950 there was talk of amalgamation or possible amalgamation with Neidpath Co-operative, Braddock Co-operative and with Rush Lake Co-operative. Of these three perhaps only the Braddock amalgamation was followed through. There was also continuing discussion about the need for space for expansion of the grocery store and hardware from the Rollefson building and in early 1950 there was continual and substantial negotiations with Hill Equipment to purchase the International building. The idea was that they would purchase this building and move the store operation into it. This negotiation eventually fell through and in June 1950 the decision was made by the board to construct a new building on the corner of Fourth N.W. and Chaplin. The Building Committee was authorized to okay the building start when the plans arrived. Also Western Savings & Credit Union was asked to move into this new building when it was opened. Western Savings & Credit Union made the decision not to move into the new building. There was also delay on the building plans as indicated in the meeting of August 25th, but they decided in late August to proceed with the building even though the plans were not totally finished and to go ahead on a cost plus basis to construct the building. Decisions were made also in late 1950 to upgrade Stewart Valley and Main Centre branches. During this year of 1950 there was considerable discussion on the activities of the educational region and this educational region was finally disbanded in late 1950.

## **1951**

The new building at 4th West was completed in early January and the move from the Rollefson block to the new building completed in late January. Official opening was held back until spring. The new building initially sold groceries and hardware but there were plans to open as quickly as possible a cafeteria, clothing department, and small machinery department. Also discussion appeared in minutes in early 1951 of the possibility of forming a new Credit Union. Notice was given at the March meeting of 1951 that Saskatchewan Federated Co-operatives were going to open a branch warehouse using half of the Standard Motors basement. Also in March the coffee bar was opened at the new centre at 4th West. The clothing department opened on April 13th. Throughout 1951 there was considerable discussion on the part of the board regarding the contract with Canadian Co-operative Implements Limited. Problems regarding the handling of used equipment and so on and problems with the kind of contract that the company had with C.C.I.L. culminate in late 1952 with the decision to stop selling C.C.I.L. equipment as part of Pioneer operation. C.C.I.L. made the decision to open their own depot in Swift Current. Also in 1951 some more amalgamation talks: Cantuar mentioned and later on Antelope and Simmie were enquiring about amalgamation. Another very significant decision made in 1951 was to organize another Credit Union. The new Credit Union was to include the name Pioneer or the word Pioneer in its name. About mid 1951 the Annual Meeting approved the organization of what is now the Pioneer Co-operators' Credit Union. Of all the possible amalgamations that were talked about during 1951, the only one that came to fruition was the amalgamation with the Antelope and Gull Lake Co-operatives, and that was completed on July 31, 1951. At the end of 1951, Pioneer Co-operative had branches at Stewart Valley, Main Centre, Gull Lake, and also had coal agencies at Leinan, Cantuar, St. Aldwyn, Beverly, Rush Lake, Neidpath, and Bracken.

## **1952**

An early board meeting in 1952 indicated the board was prepared to set up a superannuation plan with the employees. This is the first time that we see this possibility mentioned anywhere in the minutes of the company. In 1952, Pioneer was building a new store at Stewart Valley, and in May 1952, Neville Co-operative amalgamated and became a branch of Pioneer Co-operative. Also in 1952, the board was in the process of building an office building in association with the bulk plant and were talking of converting to center-of-the-yard loading at the bulk plant. There was also talk of constructing a service bay as part of the garage. In August 1952 there was the first mention of the possible purchase of the Service Station at the 4th West site as well as lumber shed with construction beginning in August. Remodelling was going on at the Neville branch with plans to introduce groceries in Neville. In late October a motion was made to proceed with negotiations to purchase the W.W. Cooper store.

## **1953**

After the better part of the year's negotiations with W.W. Cooper, the board called a shareholders meeting in early January of 1953 to approve the purchase of the W.W. Cooper Department Store and Pioneer Co-operative officially took over the operation of the store on February 2, 1953. At this time the minutes reported that the new service station on 4th West was almost complete and that we were in the process of renovating the old garage to serve as offices. The May meeting in 1953 makes the first mention of scholarships being provided by Pioneer Co-operatives to local high school students and those first scholarships were approved - two of them at \$300.00 each payable to the successful student on the

basis of \$100.00 over each of three years. I might add that Pioneer Co-op has since expanded this scholarship program to include more than two students each year and also to include students from the rural area. The scholarships have been paid continuously since 1953. Also, in May 1953 Federated Co-operatives agreed to build a Gull Lake Bulk Plant for Pioneer Co-op. Pioneer Co-op would pay for it over the next four years. This was made necessary because of the shortage of funds due to the purchase of the W.W. Cooper Store. There was talk at the May 1953 meeting of possible amalgamation with Tompkins Co-operative. The Tompkins amalgamation was approved in September 1953 and the official amalgamation was completed in early January 1954.

## **1955**

There was some discussion about constructing a propane distribution plant, however later on in the year it was found that the zoning rules would not allow the construction of a propane plant close to the Pioneer Bulk Plant so this decision was postponed. Also, in 1955 there was considerable discussion regarding the possible purchase of Pioneer Transport, a company which was transporting fuel for Pioneer Co-op from the refinery in Regina. These negotiations went on most of 1955 but did not resolve in any successful deal being completed and in early 1956 the board decided to go into the purchase TOMPKINS CO-OP of their own tanker fleet. Also, in 1955 plans were introduced for building a store in Main Centre, a store which would handle hardware and building supplies but no groceries. Construction began later in the year and near the end of 1955 the building was complete and Main Centre store was in business selling hardware and building supplies.

## **1956**

Early January the board recorded a decision to go into the plumbing business for the first time and later in the year they okayed plans to construct a plumbing shop on 3rd West. The minutes recorded also that the first trucking unit was on the road on May 1 of that year and the second unit went later in June. These trucks were to haul fuel from the refinery in Regina to Pioneer Coop and to its branches. 1956 saw the opening of a new radio station in Swift Current, C.K.S.W. and one of the programs on the air almost immediately was entitled "Co-operatives in Southwestern Saskatchewan" and at their April meeting, the board okayed the decision for Pioneer Co-op to become part of that new radio program. Also in late 1956, a decision was made to eliminate clothing that was for sale at 4th N.W. and introduce an appliance department instead. Decisions were made to close the service bay in Main Centre and add groceries and build some lumber sheds at Neville and Main Centre.

## **1957**

The April meeting of 1957 showed a motion where Pioneer Co-op withdrew from the Co-op Union. Also in 1957 the decision was made to purchase a number of lots (number 2 to 13) on the southside with the idea of future expansion.

## **1958**

In early 1958 the board was informed that before the company could purchase these lots on the southside, they had to show what their plans were for construction and they also had to agree to build within two years. With this in mind, in May 1958, the board agreed to purchase the southside property.

In October 1958 the minutes show that plans were starting to be put together to build on the southside with the General Manager and other members of the board to go to the U.S. to see similar structures.

## **1959**

The July meeting showed the presentation of the first southside plans to the board. The cost of these plans one month later showed that they were very high and required some changes. There was expansion going on at Gull Lake with Service Station Bay under construction. Neville expansion was now open and the lumber shed in the city was also in operation by November 1959.

## **1960**

By the April meeting of 1960 new southside plans were in. The cost was more reasonable and the plans were approved by the board. At this April meeting, Kyle and Sanctuary Co-operatives talked about amalgamation and this amalgamation was approved by the annual meeting in June. In late 1960 Kyle and Sanctuary became branches of Pioneer Co-op. In June 1960 the okay was given to begin the construction of the southside service station. The annual meeting also approved in 1960 of increasing the share capital for Pioneer Cooperative from \$1 million to \$1.25 million. The southside service station was opened on November 1, and construction started on the store on the southside.

## **1961**

In early 1961 some changes were introduced in the administration of Pioneer Co-op. The position of Executive Vice-President was introduced and Mr. Baker filled this position. In addition, the position of Treasurer was opened with Joe Kristiniyak becoming the first treasurer of Pioneer Co-op. Later in the year Mr. David Dean was appointed as General Manager of Pioneer Co-op. The new southside store was officially opened on July 6th which was the 25th Anniversary of the beginning of the Pioneer Co-op. The opening was quite successful and was followed shortly thereafter by the annual meeting which resulted in substantial change in the membership of the board. Following this meeting and the first board meeting thereafter saw the resignation of Mr. Baker as the General Manager and the resignation of a number of administrative officials of Pioneer Co-op. In late July 1961, Mr. Gerry Doucet came into the system as the acting general manager and at the end of August the Board named Mr. Doucet the General Manager of the company. A position he held until his retirement in 1989.

## **1962**

Due to the opening of extra space at the southside and perhaps due also to the fact that 1961 had seen a drought through Southwestern Saskatchewan, the statement was starting to show a bit of a loss. Early in 1962 the board spent a fair bit of time talking about consolidation of their outlets. There was discussion of removing groceries from the 4th N.W. location and renting the space to someone else. Also, during 1962 the board put on the books a policy that candidates for election to the board must have purchased at least \$500.00 in the previous twelve months. During this period (1962 and carrying on into 1963) there was considerable discussion at the board level regarding the support of the Educational Federation which had been set up amongst the Co-ops in Southwestern Saskatchewan. No firm decisions were made at this point. Pioneer Co-op went from offering two scholarships to graduating high school students to offering five - \$100.00 scholarships. Three of these were to be tenable in the City

of Swift Current and two to high school students in the surrounding territory, particularly in the towns where Pioneer Co-op had a branch.

## **1963**

One of the very significant things that was started in 1963 by the Board of Pioneer Co-op was to set up a formal policy on branch committees. At this point Pioneer Co-op had a number of branches and it was felt by the board that it would be good to have branch committees - something in the order of five to seven people - and that committees would meet on a regular basis to make recommendations to the board regarding what things should be happening in their branches. A constitution covering these branches was put together at this time. Also, early in 1963 there was continued discussion on doing some renovating or at least making some changes to Central Ave. store. Some engineering reports had been made indicating that the concrete was not suitable for adding to the Central Ave. building as it now stood and so the decision was made that a general face lift for the building should be undertaken. Later on in the year (April) the new Plaza Shopping Centre on the west side of Central Ave. was announced and the board became sure it was necessary to hurry up the consolidation and probably increase some of the renovations that they had in mind at Central Ave. With that in mind in July they approved renovations to the Central Ave. store to be completed in early 1964, (some \$40,000 in fixtures and \$60,000 in building renovation). At the same time they talked about renting 6,000 square feet of space at the 4th West location to the department of Highways. In December we see a motion on the books approving the rental of space at the N.W. location to -the Dept. of Highways and to other government departments as well. Only the Farm Hardware and the offices remained in operation of the 4th N.W. location. Grocery operations were closed down-at that location.

## **1964**

During 1964 the company was involved primarily in completing some renovations at the Central Ave. location. They were still concerned about adding to that building at that location and with that in mind were examining the possibility of assembling property along North Railway Street and also some other property in that block in which the Central Ave. store was located. At the end of the year they made an offer on some of the property on Railway North.

## **1965**

In February the board approved a grant of \$2000.00 to the Civic Centre fund. The Civic Centre was being built as a 60th Provincial Anniversary project. Later on in the year the board made the decision to hire an agriculturist on staff and in May of that year Jim Puckett became the Farm Supply specialist on staff. Some renovations were carried out at the Kyle store and the need for more grocery and meat space at both southside and central was mentioned. There was talk about the feasibility of a service station at the junction of Highways No. 1 and 4.

## **1966**

The board talked about building a car wash at the Southside. In May there was indication from the Department of Public Health and Highways that they would like to have an additional 5,000 square feet of rental space at 4th N.W. The board also okayed the purchase of a half block of property directly across the street from the bulk plant. Later on, in the year they decided to rent additional space to the



Public Works at 4th West and keep only the Administration office space for their own use. They also made the decision to proceed with the building of the Farm Supply building on the new property across from the bulk plant.

## **1967**

There was discussion with Vanguard regarding possible amalgamation, but it did not occur. In September 1967 Pioneer Co-op and employees became involved in a strike.

## **1968**

In late 1967 and early 1968 the board became very much aware that it was going to be necessary to try to put together a block of land somewhere in the downtown area if they were going to try and build a new department store. With that in mind they took a look at purchasing at least portions of block No. 72. It soon became obvious that it was going to be very difficult to put together a whole block and so very costly. In fact, estimates of putting together the block of sufficient property around the Central Ave. location to build a department store, showed the land alone would probably cost something in the area of \$1 million. That price was considered to be prohibitive by the board at that time. Amalgamation with the Aneroid Co-op began to be discussed.

## **1969**

In 1969 Aneroid became a branch of Pioneer Co-op and Pioneer Co-op began to look at trying to put together enough land in the block of 4th N.W. between 3rd and 4th Avenues to put their new department store. With this in mind they purchased the Houston John Deere property which was on the corner of Cheadle and 3rd N.W. Also, in 1969 there is discussion of possible amalgamation with Ponteix and later in the year possible amalgamation with Hazlet. Neither of these amalgamations occurred. Right at the end of 1969 the board decided to renovate the Central Ave. Coffee Bar. It was completed and opened in June 1970.

## **1970**

1970 also saw the beginning of talks with Hodgeville Co-op regarding amalgamation. This amalgamation did occur a few months later. In late December there was a fire at the Farm Centre which had just opened in 1967. While it was closed down for renovations, some additional space was added on.

## **1971**

1971 saw a decision made to consolidate the two outlets in Aneroid. They closed down the grocery store and sold groceries and the farm hardware out of the Farm Centre building. Discussion was still going on regarding possible expansion and there was even consideration during late 1971 of the possibility of purchasing the Plaza Shopping Centre. However, after careful examination, they decided that was not what Pioneer needed at that point. The board, also at this time (late 1971), asked Federated Co-operatives Ltd. to carry out an expansion survey in early 1972.

## **1972**

The annual meeting increased the share capital of Pioneer Co-operative to \$3 million. The decision was made to purchase the F.C.L. warehouse in Swift Current and to pay out all non-profit organization equities in full. There was talk with Gary Brown of Woolworths, who indicated they wanted to build north of town. The board felt that at this point in time Pioneer had three choices to make: They could expand at Central Avenue, try to develop a shopping centre at 4th West on their own, or they could become involved with Woolworths and others in a development north of town.

## **1973**

During 1973 discussions continued throughout the year regarding possible options for expansion. In March the board agreed to engage the F.C.L. retail division regarding this expansion. Also, during 1973 Pioneer became involved for the first time in the Chargex program.

## **1974**

The board made the decision in May to rent the Laycock Drug Store on Central Avenue. Discussions regarding expansion indicated that the 4th N.W. property was too costly for us to develop by ourselves. It was obvious that there was going to be development on the north side of the city and the recommendations from Federated was that we should become involved as part of that development. Pioneer Co-op was involved (in financial terms) in supporting an engineering study at the corner of No. 1 and 4 Highways, which is now the present site of the mall. The F.C.L. development group reported that the mall at that point would cost something in the order of \$5.4 million including a service station. At this point Trojan Properties of Calgary met with Pioneer and asked the board to go in with them in the presentation to the city. The board declined and made their own presentation to the city. The Trojan proposal was accepted by the city and in November 1974 Pioneer began rather lengthy negotiations with them to become part of the Mall. Initial discussions with Trojan indicated that they would allow Pioneer to own their own service station and department store but rent the space for Pioneer food and drugs from Trojan properties. The board felt that they could not go into this sort of deal without owning rather than leasing the food and drug space. The impasse with Trojan continued into 1974 and in February 1974 the board became aware, when it was officially announced that the new government building would be built on block 68, (present location of the E.I. Wood building), and there would be some real advantage in attempting to develop a Pioneer Department store at 4th N.W. In March 1974 they made the decision that they would attempt to put together the land in that area and develop their own centre at 4th West. However, by April it became obvious that developing there was going to cost in excess of \$1 million more than to go with the Trojan group north of the city. Again, after considerable discussion and many meetings in the first half of 1974 the board at the end of June 1974 finally decided to go ahead with Trojan if a suitable agreement could be reached. Pioneer Co-op owns the service station, department store (including groceries and drugs) and also several acres of the parking lot. Along with all the discussions regarding the Trojan deal in 1974 there were a number of other things happening during this year. There was approval of an expansion of the Kyle lumber area. Amalgamation with Hodgeville was finalized. There was a decision to go ahead with food in the Neville operation. The Gull Lake Farm Centre opened up during May 1974. There was a decision made to purchase the Wilf

Caswell building, a garage type building on Cheadle West with the idea that down the road it would become the future downtown service station for Pioneer. A decision was made to consolidate the operation in Hodgeville, moving the store to the farm centre. In September 1974 the piles for the Mall started to be poured with completion August 1975. There was a decision made to include a service bay in the new Kyle Farm Centre and a decision made to buy J.O.E. Mutual which was a garage shop in Main Centre. This was later purchased and then leased to a private operator. The Kyle Farm Centre was completed January 31, 1975. Renovations were completed at the Farm Centre at Hodgeville. The store including groceries at Neville was completed in late 1974.

## **1975**

Still a number of things in the works including the continuing construction of the new mall and also a decision made to rent the Gibson Hardware in Tompkins from the town for about one year. There was discussion about ways of disposing of the Central Ave. property once the mall was opened. One of the possibilities was to limit the operations at Central Ave. to a coffee bar, drug store and possible confectionery. This decision was later followed through on. It was decided to lease the 4th West service station to the Swift Current School Unit and that meant that the Caswell building on Cheadle West which had been rented out to this point would be used as a service station for Pioneer Co-op. The decision was made in late January 1975 to advertise the Central Ave. building for sale. By July 1975 the Mall was nearing completion or at least the Pioneer portion of it. The Mall had now been christened officially the Wheatland Mall and Pioneer set the opening for employees, board and branch committees on August 23 and to out of town guests. City of Swift Current, Chamber of Commerce, government, retail management, etc. on Sunday, August 24th. The opening was held on August 26th and was a total success. Consideration was also given at the same time for the need to do some renovations at the Southside store so that it wouldn't have its traffic drawn completely away by the mall. The decision to do some renovations there but to do them in stages. By November 1975 the service station at the mall was opened.

## **1976**

By 1976 a decision was made to do some renovations to the Gull Lake store. There was talk about constructing a Farm Centre west of the city near the Peavy Mart; to extend the lease of the 4th West service station to the school unit; to close out the hardware in Tompkins retaining the regular store and to do some further renovations to the southside. Also in October 1976 Pioneer's banking was transferred from the Bank of Nova Scotia to Western Savings and Credit Union. In late 1976 the building at 4th West was leased for three years to Cypress Hill Community College.

## **1977**

The board directed a great deal of their attention to disposing of some of the property in the downtown area now that the mall was open and with that in mind they offered six - fifty foot lots to S.G.I, on 3rd West, the location where they now have their claims centre. They also sold property on North Railway Street and they advertised the Central Ave. property for sale. There were no takers at this point.

## **1978**

Some further renovations were made at the southside with the drug store being moved into the hardware area and the store expanding into the old bakery area as well. They also ended up selling lots 5-10 and the service station on 4th N.W.

## **1979**

In January the board made a decision to renovate the present warehouse at the mall and to expand it and include administration offices. With this in mind they were able to, in June, okay the selling of the 4th West property to Tekia Developments and the agreement included an opportunity for Pioneer to rent for one year. Decision was also made in 1979 to close out the Main Centre branch. In October 1979 Pioneer was able to sell the C.I. property at 11th and Chaplin to the School unit. In late October 1979 they began to examine the possibility of purchasing the Big Budd property which was north of the Peavy Mart to build a farm centre. The mall expansion, extra warehousing and offices were completed in later October. Also in late October, new pumps were installed at the service station at the Mall. This made it possible for Pioneer to provide diesel as well as other fuels.

## **1980**

In 1980 the Central Ave property was sold in March to the City of Swift Current with plans to completely vacate by October 1980. The Big Budd property was also purchased in early 1980 and about June 1980 the board began to talk about changes to the Southside and further renovations there. In August 1980 - First discussion of plans regarding a new farm centre out on the Big Budd property with a bulk fertilizer plant to be the first item constructed at the site. The new cafeteria was opened at the southside December 1, 1980 and the other renovations at the southside completed by the end of January 1981.

## **1981**

March 1st the building at the Budd property was in operation, handling such things as herbicide, twine, seeds, loaders, parts and short line machinery.

Plans were to expand the building further by the fall of 1981. There was also discussion about including petroleum on the Big Budd property. Further down the line it turns out there was a bit of a zoning problem but eventually the petroleum was included at the West Agro. During, 1981 there was considerable discussion about the building of a new store in Kyle. It was approved with construction to start in spring 1982. Also approved was the building of an Agro warehouse at Gull Lake and some discussion about putting in a meat department in Gull Lake. There was discussion by the board about petroleum hauling and whether or not to get out of the business and lease out the operation.

## **1982**

The West Agro building was completed and opened in late April. Decision finally approved to install bulk tanks and the feed and bulk fuel moved into West Agro in early July. Decision was finalized to dispose of the Kyle property and build a new store in Kyle. It officially opened on November 15. At a June meeting, first mention was made that Western Savings and Credit Union needed more room in the mall.

## **1983**

Trojan Properties indicated that they wanted to build a new Safeway store and twelve or fourteen small stores on the mall site. The board after considerable discussion, agreed to support Trojan in this decision, provided that Pioneer Co-op and Western Savings be allowed to add to the present Pioneer structure. The negotiations with Western Savings on the expansion of the mall continued through the next several months. In October the board approved that scanning be introduced in the food departments in the spring of 1984. During 1983 the Cabri Co-operative began discussion with Pioneer regarding a management contract and then later, in November 1983 Cabri asked that we consider amalgamation. The board talked about looking at the feasibility for constructing new warehouses at Kyle and Stewart Valley, and a new store at Sanctuary. At the December meeting of 1983, a number of items appeared. The mall service station had installed a small confectionary area as part of its sales area. A decision was made to offer the warehouse on North Railway Street West for sale to Swift Current Freightlines. A decision was made to build a new building in Sanctuary in 1984 and to go ahead with addition to the mall which would include something over 13,000 sq. ft. for Western Savings and Credit Union and additional space for Pioneer Co-op as well.

## **1984**

On January 17, the board approved of the final agreement with Western Savings to expand in the Mall. Total sq. footage, 13,200. Credit Union would lease 8,500 sq. ft. The board approved of selling the old Federated Warehouse owned by Pioneer to Swift Current Freightlines for \$140,000. Agreed to proceed with a 40 ft. X 72 ft. pole type warehouse at Stewart Valley and to proceed with renovation at Gull Lake Farm Centre. Contract for extension to the mall was let to Frontier Construction. Later a Patronage Refund to members for the year 1984 would be 15 percent on 1983 patronage allocations. In 1985 the board agreed to amalgamate with Cabri, Sceptre, and Abbey. A new P.O.S. (point of sale) program was installed with the city food and service stations.

## **1985**

In August 1985 a group from Ponteix came in to discuss joint petroleum delivery with Pioneer Co-op. Arrangements were made that one truck will deliver fuel to both Aneroid and Ponteix with the truck coming out of Ponteix. Presentation from both Tompkins regarding a new store 40 ft. X 100 ft. in Tompkins was discussed and approved. The store in Hodgeville was renovated. Cash refund of 15 percent on the 1984 allocations was paid. A new tandem diesel truck for Agro in the city was purchased. We supported the mall merchants and the B.I.D. downtown in opposing the new service agreement for the possible new mall by the Hat Developers.

## **1986**

Purchased a new I.H.C. Diesel Tandem truck with 4,000 gallon tank for Cabri truck. Cost \$47,500.00 and tank \$34,500.00. Morse Co-operatives approached Pioneer Co-op for possible amalgamation. It was felt we should get our branch operations on more solid basis. Declared a 2.5% allocation on 1985 purchases and cash payment of 15% on 1985 allocations. Purchases from F.C.L. were \$35 million. Received \$89,000.00 in cash in May and \$92,000.00 in December. Board agreed to build new store in Tompkins. Total cost was \$106,000.00 and opened in September. Upgraded Mall Service Station. New canopy and

pumps; 50% of \$220,000. Cost was shared by F.C.L. A group from Leader met with the board to put a food store in town. After survey, etc., board decided not to proceed. 50th Anniversary Fun Day was held on parking lot on May 31st. Bulk plant equipment from Cardston, Alberta was installed at Sceptre. \$18,000.00 payment to Town of Cabri for paving and renewal of water lines. Sod turning for S.C. Mall on August 5, 1986. Tom Cator Memorial Scholarship approved; \$150.00 to Cabri and \$150.00 to Abbey for a Grade 12 student.

## **1987**

Cabri Store renovation at a cost of \$33,000. Cabri Bulk Plant at cost of \$60,000. In February several board members and spouses toured the Co-op Refinery in Regina. Branch Annual Meetings were held at all locations prior to the Annual Meeting. An allocation of 4.5% on all commodities was approved. The Provincial Government has disbanded the Department of Co-operation. Delegates to F.C.L. Annual Meeting were Laura Vance, Linda Haubrich, Wilmer Senft, Russell Simpson and Levern Horvey. Western Co-operative Fertilizer closed their Calgary Plant. Arrangements were made for Pioneer to purchase fertilizer products from Sherritt Gordon. Cash refund of \$457,000.00 made during Co-op Week.

## **1988**

Farm Centre was destroyed by fire on January 12, 1988 resulting in the lay off of one full time and 5 part time employees. Proposed Home/Lumber Centre of 23,000 square feet to be built on South end of Wheatland mall. Approximate costs of \$1.3 million. Dental plan was discussed for employees and management. Pump 24 installed in Kyle. Propane sales distribution installed at Southside Service Station. A new telephone switch board was installed at the Mall at a cost of \$43,000.00. Glen McCormick, Men's Wear Manager retired on September 10th. Sanctuary Branch was closed in November. New scanning and P.O.S. equipment installed in Mall Food; will also cover Southside Food. Cost of \$118,617.00. December - S.C.R.A.D. conference. Saskatoon attended by three directors. Answers for rural Saskatchewan renewal hard to come by during December of that year. Members equity cap set at \$15,000.00 over which member paid dividend in cash.

## **1989**

During 1989 - 450 people left Swift Current; 17,000 left the province. Kincaid Corporate Bulk Plant established. What services to provide at Aneroid and Neville? 1989 - February - 5-year plan initiated. Business Interruption of \$120,000.00 by S.G.I. on old Farm Centre. April - Co-op Trust moved to Regina. June - "Building a Dream" Co-op history available now. September - Closing Cheadle West Lumber Yard, Move to Agro. New store in Tompkins appears to be satisfactory. Pioneer Co-op employs over 300 people with a yearly wage of 6.2 million. November - Sanctuary Co-op dismantled. Returned property to R.M. of Lacadena. 25 departments in a loss position currently. Concerns and ideas to rectify.

## **1990**

Renovation at Sceptre and Gull Lake Farm Centre. Frozen meats now in rural branches. Renovation at Gull Lake Store. Consolidate Cabri Farm Centre and Service Station. New hoist at Abbey. Break in and thefts in Kyle and Stewart Valley. New Corporate Bulk Plant at Kincaid in September 1990. Closed the Home Centre in Cabri. Stewart Valley store gets Post Office. Renovation to Stewart Valley warehouse.

Neville - new floor. Lots of break-ins in 1990. Retirement banquet was held for Gerry Doucet January 1st. Gerry Doucet Day set for November 29, 1990. Stuart Dyrland new General Manager in January 1, 1991.

## **1991**

Public Meeting at the Esquire Centre re: the closing of Service Station #1 resulted in the service station not closing. Cafeteria at the Mall was remodeled. Closed Ladies Fashions at Southside. New Corporate Bulk Plant at Hodgeville. Presidents Breakfast at Southside and Mall for staff and directors.

## **1992**

January - Credit/Equity Department moved downstairs along with Post Office. April - Equity cap reduced to \$14,000.00 per member. 1992 - June - installation of alarm system at Tompkins after a number of break-ins. Broke in again and alarm didn't work. Doug Coulter retired the end of 1992 from Gull Lake Farm Centre.

## **1993**

Delegates to F.C.L. Annual Meeting were Dwayne Klassen, Levern Horvey, Glen McCormick, Wilmer Senft, Victor Dombrowsky. Michael Davis hired as Drug Manager at the mall. A new tandem fuel truck was purchased for Kyle. Thirty-five members reached equity cap of \$14,000.00 in 1992. Michele Garrett appointed Branch manager in Sceptre in July 1993. George Murphy, former Pioneer Co-op Director, was given the Saskatchewan Certificate of Merit Award. Mall Frozen Food section was upgraded at a cost of \$180,000.00. Special payment of \$819,754.00 received from F.C.L. Delinquent account write off of \$6,679.00 and bad cheque write off of \$3,537.00.

## **1994**

1994 Budget sales \$59,731.00. 30th year for the Y.O.U. Charm Course. Leased Central Irrigation Property. Co-op Youth Day held during Co-op Week. Employee Assistance Program set up at Pioneer Co-op. New Director Development program. New Personal Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy. Water line to the Agro Centre. New bulk plants at Agro Centre and Gull Lake. New film developer at the Southside. New chemical sheds at Cabri, Kyle, Stewart Valley, and Gull Lake. New workshop at the Piling Yard at the old Central Irrigation site.

## **1995**

New photo processing for Wheatland Mall. Cardlock installed at Hodgeville. Long term loan at Credit Union was paid out. Further discussions with Morse Co-op re: amalgamation. Approved at our Annual Meeting to be effective in April. Roger Tangen retired from Kyle Farm Centre. New refrigeration installed at Cabri and Hodgeville. Lumber piling yard at Agro Centre. \$2,500.00 donation to Civic Centre for new seating. Automatic Temperature Compensation installed on fuel trucks and pumps. Sceptre upgrading at cost of \$65,000.00. New installation of water to Agro Centre. Co-op portion of the Mall parking lot repaved. Morse renovations at a cost of \$40,000. Laura Russell Simpson was presented a gold watch for serving 25 years as a Director. Agro expansion on the main building. Renovated Kyle Farm Centre.

## 1996

New cardlock and above ground tanks installed at Stewart Valley, Neville, and Sceptre. Old tanks removed. Liquid Fertilizer tank installed at Kyle. July - Fun Fest '96 was held on the Mall Parking lot. As well Pioneer Co-op co-sponsored a "Teen Splash" for youth and hopes to make this a yearly event. August - Sponsor of Saskatchewan Senior 55 Plus Games. September - Approved purchase of scanning for five branch locations. October - Co-sponsored pancake breakfast with Credit Union, Sask Wheat Pool, and Co-operators during Co-op week. Proceeds were donated to the Fairview Rink Expansion. December - The Plumbing Shop on 3rd N.W. was sold. Equity member payout for 1996 totalled \$2.8 million.

## Stewart Valley Branch History

Stewart Valley Branch was a part of the Swift Current Gas and Oil Co. and became a branch of Pioneer Co-op when it was incorporated in 1936. In 1931 or 1932, Jacob Bay, who had a grocery store in Stewart Valley, acted as fuel retailer for Swift Current Gas and Oil. Havelock Call was the truck driver and delivered the fuel from Swift Current. A little later, N.E. (Cy) Cowan was hired as manager of the Stewart Valley Branch and Francis Hovdestad was hired as truck driver. In 1936, Cy assumed the job of Manager in Swift Current and Francis became Manager in Stewart Valley. An oil shed and office were built on the site occupied by the present store. A scale and hand pump were installed in the oil shed. Bulk tanks were erected on the C.P. R. property across the road. Pipes connected the bulk tanks to an underground tank by the oil shed. Farmers brought their barrels and the manager placed them on the scale and hand pumped them full to the required weight. The finger measurement system was also used. In 1952 the oil shed and office were torn down and replaced with the present store. Living quarters for the manager were added to the store. The oil shed was rebuilt across the road next to the bulk tanks. In 1956 the Co-op bought part of the Revelstoke property and lumber shed and moved the lumber shed to its present location behind the store. In 1960 water and sewer services were put into Stewart Valley. The Co-op built a 10' x 20' addition onto the living quarters for a bathroom and utility room. In 1967 a lot was purchased and a new house was built to be used by the manager. The residence attached to the store was made part of the store and is the present grocery section and coffee bar. A new warehouse in 1984 was added to the Stewart Valley Branch. STEWART VALLEY MANAGERS Cy Cowan, Francis Hovdestad, Ross Campbell, Fred Stewart, Arne Tomlinson, John Wagner, Isadore Bonogofski, Bill Nixon, Ken Wall, Elden Trytten, Gerald Shaw, Mel Sutton, Darrel Tangen.

## Neville Branch History

Probably due to the depression the Neville Co-operative Association was formed in 1936. Some of the first directors were Charlie Davis, Hugh English, Tom Murphy and John Carleton. There are no doubt a couple more who should be added to this list but we are unable to find any records so we had to rely on people's memories. The first manager was Harry McNavin and his wife Mary was the secretary and bookkeeper. The Neville Co-op started out supplying fuel and other basic farming needs. In 1944 it expanded into more of a general store. Other early managers were Witney Randall, Lloyd Olson and Dave Hamm. In 1952 Neville Co-op amalgamated with Pioneer Co-op. It is believed the first manager under Pioneer was George Lindholm followed by Leroy Theissen, Jake Janzen, Harry Kelford, Gerald Shaw, Denis Fox, Daryl Linder, Angus Schneider, and presently Bill Twist. In 1959, Pioneer Co-op purchased the Security Lumber buildings and moved up from the lot where the bulk tanks are now. At



this time, they expanded into the lumber business. Within a few years the former store was moved up to the present location and used as a feed shed and storage for other things like cement and finishing lumber. In 1975 when Neville's last grocery store was closing. Pioneer sold bonds to help build an extension on the south side of the hardware. They then went into a complete line of groceries. At the present time Bill Twist is manager. We handle a full line of petroleum products, feeds, groceries, hardware, farm supplies and lumber.

## **Tompkins Branch History**

The Tompkins Co-operative Association was originated in the late 1930's when the late Allie Chamber's Right Way grocery was taken over by a group of Tompkins people, of whom John McEwan, Pete Paulsen, Carl Hansvaal, Ole Moen, A.C. Murray, E.J. McGregor, Frank Wolfater, Gus Wallms, J. Dagnais, were a part. This operation was comprised of grocery outlet, fuel shed and tanks, and a feed shed against CPR tracks. The Kerosene, Distolate and feed outlet was operated by Hugh Magee for several years. Then in 1946 Wm. Wiens took over until 1951, at which time Tony Hunt ran the combined operation, including the grocery over town. The Grocery Operation moved to the Chapman Building on the corner by Armeneau's Machine Shop in the early 40's, run by Otto Leoppy, later by his brother Bernard. This grocery outlet was moved to present Dixon Hardware (Arthan's) in the mid 40's and saw managers Earl Jenkins, Jack James and later Con Moe. This autonomous co-op operated until amalgamation with Pioneer Co-op in 1954. One employee for a number of years was Hans Arson, who handled meat and butcher chores. At this time Tony Hunt was a clerk. Randy Peterson and Iona Blanchard both worked for the Co-op during the early years. In 1951 Tony Hunt managed the grocery, followed by Royce Stinson from Swift Current. Ross Lee was manager for several years, marrying Aleatha Lindsay while with us. Sid Munt came next, followed by Ken Wallace. Wes Baragar and his wife worked both in the Tompkins store and at Gull Lake until his health forced him to retire in the early 70's. Gibson's hardware was added to the operation mid 70's and Greg Rieter handled the combined operation, spending a lot of time dashing across the street from one to the other. Graham Cammell was in the store at the time. Ron Elkington took over as manager in the late 70's and continued until 1988. Brian McGillivray is the present manager. Over the years, the grocery outlet has been a breakeven operation, providing service to the community; being the only grocery in town for the last 20 years. Gerry Doucet, general manager told of coming to a local committee meeting in 1961, and recommending that the operation be closed down, as it was a deterrent to Pioneer Co-op. For a number of years there was a joint branch committee with Gull Lake. Late 1960's saw a rejuvenated interest and a 5-8-member committee established. In 1985-86 with exhilarated local committee support, a new enlarged store became a reality. With increased local patronage and support, the facility will service our community for many years to come.

## **Gull Lake Branch History**

The Gull Lake Co-operative started in 1912 as a local of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association. In 1914 it was organized as the Gull Lake Co-operative Association with capital stock of \$4,500.00. In 1917 stock reached \$50,000 and the Co-op store was built (now Kirwan Equipment). In 1921 capital stock reached \$113,000 and John F. Potter was secretary manager. As business boomed many bad debts were accumulated, and the Co-op went into receivership. The town sold it out in Oct. 1933 at a sale that grossed \$1896.35. Mary Brown, a long-time employee, recalled the original Co-op having a sale, and her mother buying a pair of high button shoes for her sister Lil, costing \$.25; but not of the current style. Lil scuffed her way to school, trying to wear them out before she got there. Later in the forties a new Gull

Lake Co-op was organized and bought out Joe Daniels' store (present site). Later the Gull Lake and Antelope Co-op amalgamated, and the Antelope building (1951) was moved into the present Farm Centre site. Gull Lake amalgamated with Pioneer Co-op in July 1951. Current Managers are Janet Rezlaff, Store, and Curtiss Jones, Farm Centre.

## **Kyle Branch History**

The Kyle Co-op came into being as an incorporated body on December 27, 1920 as the Kyleville Farmers Co-operative Trading Association Limited, with an authorized share capital of \$50,000 consisting of 500 shares of \$100 each. The actual payment was \$5.00, the rest being made up of patronage. The object of the association was to "produce and purchase and sell farm supplies". Those signing the Memorandum were: A.M. Wick, E.A. Nelson, K.E. Long, T.E. Helsa, Aksel J. Sands, Ed Pederson, J.E.W. Mathews, J.C. Birtch, Thos. Closs, O.H. Gunderson, Ronald Smith, J.G. Gillespie, O.A. Strom, C. Hartman, Wm. Teets, Donald Bruce, S.R. Omland, Henry Thompson, H.J. Bird, O.P. Mindrum, and D.O. Nore. Due to the fact that there was no railway closer than 30 miles to Kyleville, the association did not actually engage in business until 1925, although they held yearly meetings in order to keep their charter. When the Home Bank, Cabri branch, went into receivership in late 1923, the association lost every dollar and was left so destitute of funds it did not possess the price of a postage stamp. During the 1925-26 years, trading consisted of a few carloads of coal, wood, slabs, and binder twine. A carload of lumber was brought in, having been made possible by a loan from one of the directors, I.H. Pittman. In May 1928, the books and records of the association were destroyed in a fire of Mr. King's store, who had taken over from E.A. Nelson. In 1929, the name of the association was changed to Kyle Co-operative Association Ltd. At about the same time, it was decided that the association should handle petroleum products. As a result of a drive to increase membership, 40 new members were obtained.

Mr. E.A. Elderton was prevailed upon to take over the position of secretary-treasurer and manager of the trading activities. As the early years went by and business activities increased, Mr. Elderton devoted more and more of his time to the work until it became a full-time job. In 1934, the association opened a branch in White Bear, which was closed in 1953. The year 1945 saw the addition of a grocery store purchased from G.M. Driscoll, the first manager being Elgo Schioler. The association again had a name change when it became a branch of the Pioneer Co-operative Association Limited in Swift Current in 1959, retaining local managers at both stores. Mention should be made to two employees, petroleum truck drivers, Dave Lowe who delivered fuel for 10 years and Keith Cates who has been with the Co-op for 17 years in 1986. The business has expanded from petroleum and groceries to include hardware, lumber, feed, fertilizer, chemicals, and a service bay in a new building. In 1980, the 60th Anniversary of its founding, the Co-op did a business of \$1,500,000.00. Current Managers are Eric Wittrock, Store and James Power, Farm Centre.

## **Sanctuary Branch History**

Back in 1929, local farmers got tired of poor service and short measurement in petroleum products and started up their own Petroleum Co-op. Sim Stephenson Senior was the first president; Bill dark, local livery stable operator, was the first manager. The first gas pumps were in front of the livery stable.

Second manager was Lawrence Davidson. Other products were gradually added to the inventory: feed, hardware, tires, farm chemicals. The Sanctuary Co-op amalgamated with Pioneer Co-op in 1960. Manager was Verna Bull. Sanctuary Branch closed in 1988.

## **Aneroid Branch History**

The Aneroid Co-op was organized in 1923 in the building which later became J.F. Walls & Son - John Deere dealer (which is still located on the same site). Everett Baker was the first manager with J.F. Walls, G.S. Howard, and George Corbin serving on the board. The Co-op dealt in machinery, oil, grease, coal, binder twine, groceries, general merchandise, flour, and feed. The manager and assistants worked long hours, but still Everett Baker managed to write a newsletter that was regularly sent to members. These covered a variety of topics of an educational nature, as well as items pertinent to sales or use of merchandise for sale. There were also meetings that were community gatherings with some educational feature. Due to difficult times in the depression, the Co-op was forced to close in March 1931. Members were on relief, and there was little cash available for individuals or businesses. Everett Baker made this notation; "Drought, Deflation, Depression. Every resource exhausted." The people of Aneroid again organized a Co-op in 1944, located on Main Street at the present site. Fuel and oil were sold under the management of Wellington Simpson. There was also a service bay in the early years. In 1960 the Co-op bought out Harold Elliott's store, at which time groceries and some dry goods were added to the stock, as well as an increase in hardware. At this time both stores were operational. Due to ever increasing costs of transportation and small volume buying, it became very difficult to continue as a small co-operative. In order to have the support of a larger organization with the advantage of volume buying, the Aneroid Co-op amalgamated with Pioneer Co-op Association, Swift Current in 1969, becoming a branch of that association. In order to cut down expenses and utilize staff more efficiently the Elliott store building was sold in 1974 and the Co-op building across the street remodelled to accommodate groceries as well as hardware. The Co-op now provided groceries, hardware, feed, oil, bulk fuel, and car gas. Some former managers not necessarily in order were as follows: George Sinclair, Wilmer Carey, Wellington Simpson, Albert Glassford, Merv Casteel, Wes Steele, Rick Munt, Wayne Targerson, Don Empey, Jack Corbin, Rod Andrew, Randy Miller, Joe Toth, Judy Empey, Steve Raymond, Ellert Dyrlund and at present Bill Twist. Over the years the Co-op has supported community events and provided consumer information. It is one of the few businesses left in Aneroid and provides a vital service to the town and surrounding community.

## **Hodgeville Branch History**

The Hodgeville Co-op began its organization in 1935. A provisional board was elected July 13, 1936 and appointed for 1937. President -Geo. Rambow Vice President - P.H. Gehl Directors - J.J. Jones, J. Rutherford, J.P. Grismer, J. Haubrich. The first recorded minutes show that at a meeting held on January 15, 1939, in the Pool elevator office, the members had begun to plan building their own oil shed. At this time the Co-op had as its headquarters, an old cook car. On the 15 of April in 1939, the provisional board of that year resigned so that a new board could be elected. President - Geo. Rambow Vice President. - P.H. Gehl Directors - J.J. Jones, Joe Bochek, Wm. L. Senft, J.L. Gross. The Co-op at this time sold coal, wood, twine, and flour, as well as oil and petroleum. Oil tanks, oil sheds and an office were constructed in 1944 on the present Co-op site. This lot was first leased, and later purchased from Don Kaufman. The

coal sheds were purchased for \$150 from the Revelstoke Sawmill Co. Anton Mann was the first person hired to take care of sales. A grocery store was opened in 1944 in the rented Cameron and Hutt store building on Main Street. Some years later the building was purchased. Pete Gertz was the first grocery manager, followed by J. Hunter, L. Wessner, and Alfred Seibel. A lumber shed as well as a fuel truck were added. A house for the manager was purchased. It was replaced some years later with the construction of a new one. When the Mauer store became available in 1955, the Co-op purchased it. The grocery department operated out of this store for many years. A farm supply center and a new lumber operation were built in 1967 to replace the old bulk station. Ever increasing costs made running the Co-op more difficult. In 1970 the board of directors began to negotiate with Pioneer, requesting permission to amalgamate. This became a reality in 1974. Today our Co-op facilities are all located in one complex. The grocery store has been relocated into the Farm Supply Center. In 1985 the Hodgeville Co-op underwent extensive renovations. We now have a very modern grocery department. Our Co-op also offers farm supplies, hardware, feed, lumber, petroleum, and tire services. The present manager is Lennart Folk.

## **Cabri Branch History**

Cabri Co-operative Association became part of Pioneer Co-op May 27, 1985. Cabri Co-op came into existence July 2, 1931 with a capital stock of one hundred shares at five dollars per share. Interim directors signing the charter were Henry McLeod, Sven Sondrol, Axel Gummesson, James Dark, and George Culham. The biggest concern of farmers at the time was the high cost of fuel, which was selling for 19 cents per gallon. The Co-op could buy fuel from the states for 10 cents, which could be sold to farmers for 12 cents, leaving a margin for expenses and saving the farmers 7 cents per gallon, over a third of their fuel costs. In spite of many difficulties, the Co-op slowly grew and prospered. In 1941 the Coop pursued a policy of joining other co-operative organizations such as the Co-op Union of Canada and the Saskatchewan Co-op Wholesale. Surrounding Co-op's gradually amalgamated with Cabri Co-op over the years: Abbey in 1944, Rosery in 1951, and Clintworth (Sceptre) in 1966. These smaller Co-ops felt there were more savings to be made by being part of a large organization. Cabri Co-op was fairly successful over the years and was able to add additional services and facilities. It offered many employee benefits and was also a major taxpayer in every place it operated. From a humble beginning of five hundred dollars in share capital, the Co-op grew to an organization with assets of over two million dollars. The first fifty years saw total sales of over 43 million dollars, with savings of over 2 million dollars. There is no doubt the Co-op succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its founders. Current Managers are Carl Blackwell, Cabri Store; Elenor Coulter, Cabri Farm Centre, Abbey, Brian Shaw and Jenna Ternes-Lerner, Sceptre.

## **Morse Branch History**

The Morse Co-op Association saw its first light of existence in 1913. A group of men from south of Morse decided to band together to save money on purchasing farm supplies by splitting car load lots. This association, called the Crocus Hill Grain Growers failed to succeed for more than a few years. In 1918 another group from north of town started again. The Rolling Hills Grain Growers was started. With help from the community, they were successful in signing a charter on August 3. A few years later the association changed its name to the Morse Co-op Association. The Co-op expanded through the years, acquiring their own property and a full-time manager. The Co-op had various petroleum arrangements until 1954 when they bought their own delivery unit which also transported fuel from Regina. In 1955

the Morse and Ernfold Co-ops amalgamated. In 1966 the Ernfold branch closed, and a branch in Chaplin was part of the association for six years. The Co-op operated over the years with the usual ups and downs that small towns experience. In 1992 the Morse Co-op started drawing its petroleum from the corporate bulk plant located on Highway 19. This resulted in the undertaking of the Saskatchewan Environmental clean-up plan of the old bulk facilities, which turned out to be the largest, most costly project that the Co-op had ever seen. While costs were covered by insurance, the environmental value of the project has to be questioned. In 1993 the Co-op celebrated 75 years of operation with a banquet and a dance in October. With discussions being held for years of the benefits of joining an even larger Coop, the directors decided to put the question to the membership. In the true democratic Co-op way, the membership voted in favor of amalgamating with Pioneer Coop. So in 1995 another new branch for the Pioneer Co-op was founded. Todd Gerbrandt is the present branch manager.

## **Pioneer Co-op – A Part of Your Community - 1996**

To be successful in any community, retail merchants should be good corporate citizens. Much of Pioneer Co-op's success is its contribution to community life. Many businesses main interest is the handling of product and profits. People to them are a by-product of the business. The Pioneer Co-op builds around people and the handling of profit is a by-product of the people starting with members and customers and employees. The world is made up of people. The nicer the people, the nicer the world. Your Pioneer contributes to all local worthwhile community projects. For example: - Grade 12 yearly Bursaries totalling \$1200.00, - Yearly Teen Charm Course - 32 consecutive years, recognizing some 300 district girls 14-17. - Pioneer Co-op supports all minor sports - curling clubs, golf clubs, rodeos, 4H, Heart Fund, M.S. Society, Kinsmen Telethon, etc. - Pioneer Co-op is the major taxpayer in Swift Current and eleven rural branch locations. In six rural branches, your Co-op is the last and only retail business left, proof that your Co-op is interested in the welfare of people. Pioneer Co-op is proud of its record and expresses its appreciation to all the people over the past 60 years that have made it possible: Members, Board Members, Customers, Committee Members, and Employees. That's what it's all about. Co-ops are different, and we're proud of it!

## **Pioneer Co-op Locations - 1996**

WHEATLAND MALL -1150 Central Ave. N. This is a complete department store. Included is Head Office, Service Counter, Post Office, Food, Deli, Bakery, Drugs, Ladies Wear, Men's Wear, Footwear, Lumber, Plumbing and Heating, Hardware, & Service Station with Key Op, Propane, Etc. We have 199 employees at our Mall location.

SOUTHSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE - 350 2nd Ave. S.E. This is a complete Department Store, but on a smaller scale as compared to our Mall location. This year we celebrate our 35th Anniversary at the Southside. Services available include: Food, Drugs, Service Counter, Post Office, and Service Station. We have 41 employees at the Southside location.

AGRO CENTRE- Highway No. 1 West Available at this location is petroleum, propane, small line machinery, feed, farm chemicals, fertilizer, Kard Gard petroleum dispensing, etc.

NO. 1 SERVICE STATION – CHEADLE & 7<sup>TH</sup> AVE. N.W.

NO. 2 SERVICE STATION – SOUTHSIDE SHOPPING CENTRE

NO. 3 SERVICE STATION -WHEATLAND MALL

### **Pioneer Co-op's Involvement in Federated Co-op Ltd. - 1996**

As a member, you share in the larger picture as Pioneer Co-op is a member of Federated Co-operatives Ltd., owned by some 300 retailers in Western Canada. Federated Co-operatives Ltd. own lumber mills, a petro refinery in Regina, distribution centres in Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg, with Head Office in Saskatoon. Services for retailers include: personnel, accounting, computer services, and all product department assistance.

The 19 districts each elect one director to the Federated Co-operative Board of Directors. At present, our vice-president represents South West Saskatchewan on the Board. Your Co-op participates in Federated Co-operatives Annual Meeting each year by sending five voting delegates. We received patronage refunds of 3.1 million from Federated Co-operatives in 1996 with 1/3 in cash. As of January 31, 1996 we have an investment in excess of 12.5 million in Federated Co-op.

The only way the Co-op System can maintain resistance to foreign owned corporations and monopolistic control of our future is to stick together supporting the Co-op philosophies and doing this together.