

Excerpt from Article:

Counting Steps for Increased Efficiency



By [Lynn Marcinkowski Woolf](#) posted on April 6, 2016 | Posted in [Facilities](#)

PrairieLand Partners' new facility in McPherson, Kan., was designed to improve workflow and customer interaction, while keeping future growth in mind.

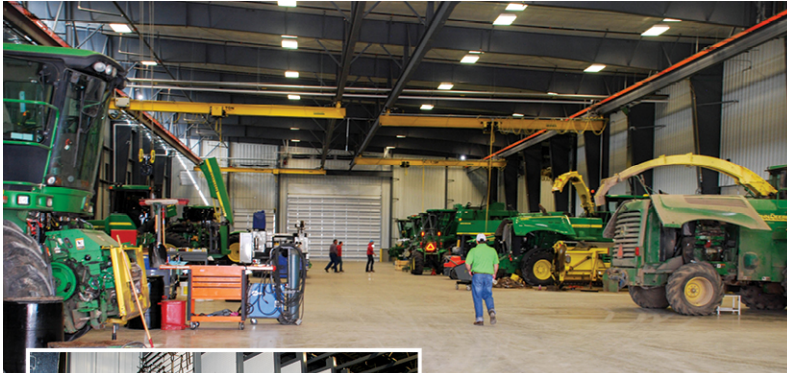
Pictured Above: PrairieLand Partners, a 9-store dealership in Kansas, recently opened a new facility in McPherson, Kan. The facility, at 84,000 square feet plus a mezzanine floor, is nearly 35,000 square feet larger on the ground floor than the previous facility.

A company-wide initiative to upgrade its 9 stores is the force behind PrairieLand Partner's new facility in McPherson, Kan. The 84,000 square foot facility plus a mezzanine was designed with a "blank slate" approach, literally counting steps to build efficiencies and improve customer service.

PrairieLand Partners is *Farm Equipment's* 2014 Large Multi-Store Operation Dealership of the Year. The 9-store John Deere dealership was formed through the merger of Deer Trail Implement, Conrady Western and Pankratz Implement in 2008.

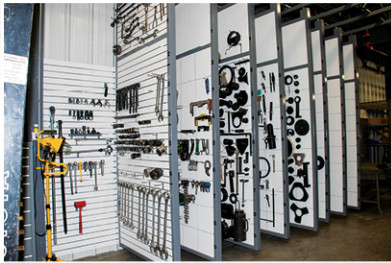
"Since we've merged, we've addressed facility needs across our company. Our priority is to provide facilities that take care of our customers and offer a quality place for our people to work," says Darrell Pankratz, CEO for PrairieLand Partners. He took over from Doug Neufeld, who recently retired. Previously, Pankratz was director of sales for PrairieLand and before the merger was CEO of Pankratz Implement.

Setting Goals Loren Balzer, aftermarket manager, led the design effort and interfaced with the architect, contractor and subcontractors. “The biggest thing in the design of what we did here is the flow — the productivity and efficiencies that would be generated for our employees as well as for our customers in the long run,” says Balzer.



The new PrairieLand Partners facility in McPherson, Kan., has a 42,000 square foot shop with space for 24 technicians. The shop includes amenities to help technicians do their jobs better, including a room for specialty tools, an engine repair room, equipment set-up areas, two wash bays and more.

PrairieLand worked with HASTCO Construction of Topeka, Kan. The dealership group used the design/build company on three other projects, and HASTCO has worked with Deere dealers in other states as well. Construction kicked off in February 2015 and the team began moving in on Jan. 20, 2016.



“To me, that’s fast for a structure of this size. We had ideal weather conditions going through last winter and then also this past winter, so that helped a lot. I figured it would take at least a year to get the project to where we could move in and it took right about 11 months, so it was a good timeline,” Balzer says.

Balzer met with HASTCO and the company’s subcontractors at least weekly and more often during phases where a lot of decisions had to be made. During those times, he often talked daily as well as visited the site three or more times a week.

“In any construction project, there’s the unexpected and you’re going to have things that are not quite what you thought they would be. But, we had a good working relationship with our subcontractors and with our general contractor,” Balzer says.

Local subcontractors supported the project. “I thought Loren and our contractor did a good job of utilizing people from our area. We cover all of south central Kansas, so we used some subcontractors from other areas, but we were able to put the money back in our communities,” Pankratz says.

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