

Why Rural America Is The Absolute Best Place To Live

In this world of 24-hour news coverage, surprisingly it is hard to find a feel-good message. And it's always good to hear an uplifting story, even in the face of a tragedy. And that is exactly what our small community experienced recently. Many of you may have heard of the devastating explosion/fire that occurred at an elevator in our community. I am not going to focus on the devastating explosion and fire, but instead, I am going to share my observations about the human component that surrounded this event. Every time I think about how our community came together, my breath is literally taken away by the pride that fills my airways . . . Rural America is the absolute best place to live.

Explosion and Fire

So let me give you a short recap of what happened. On Thursday, December 28, a grain elevator in Northrop, MN exploded. Multiple nearby homes were damaged and three employees suffered minor injuries. The elevator is owned by a local family farm where they used the elevator to store corn, which is fed to their hogs. While the explosion itself was serious, things turned south very quickly early the following morning (Friday, December 29) when the elevator became engulfed in fire. And it was a major fire. The emergency personnel would be on the scene until the early evening of Sunday, December 31, fighting the fire. 62 hours straight of pumping water. Over a million gallons of water was trucked in. There was a steady stream of emergency lights, fire trucks coming and going delivering water.

Here is where the terrible tragedy brought out the very best of our community. During the fire, temperatures were very cold. I mean, very cold. Daytime highs didn't get above zero. But with our local fire departments, it didn't matter. They were there doing their job.

Their *volunteer* job.

Fire Assistance

More than 50 surround fire departments came to offer their assistance. Yes, you read that correctly. More than 50. Fire trucks were freezing up. Businesses were offering their sheds for the fire trucks to unthaw. There was a continuous stream of water trucks assisting with the fire and every firefighter needed. Once word got out about how many emergency personnel was involved, businesses and people stepped up to the plate. Numerous grocery stores and restaurants prepared and delivered food. The local bar, located across the street, closed their business and opened up as a place to warm up and eat. Warm and dry socks and gloves, chapstick, hot meals and warm drinks were available along with words of encouragement. In fact, some local stores ran out of these needed items. Our community couldn't do enough.

Our community couldn't do enough.

Tears came easy thinking about how our community pulled together. I have a renewed appreciation and pride for our emergency personnel. *I will never look at a firefighter the same way again.*

Eagerness

Is this a unique situation? Absolutely not. People in rural America have a special eagerness to help their fellow man. Rural Americans rush to the aid of members in need, no matter what. That's just who we are.

A few years ago, the community came together when a [young father/farmer was killed tragically in a car accident](#). And personally, our family was the recipient of this same type of help. Many years ago, my father-in-law suffered a heart attack and went into surgery for a heart bypass. All during fall harvest. [Neighbors, who were never asked, came to help us](#). They were true heroes.

Even though the news media will tell us that people who live in flyover country are looked down upon. Not thinking we are at the same level of our suburbanite neighbors. Or, perhaps, maybe they don't think of us at all. But one person who has not forgotten us in rural America is the President. It was so refreshing to see our [President speak at the National American Farm Bureau conference](#). The first President to speak at this conference in the *last 25 years*.

Community Pride

We are proud of our community. No matter our strengths or weaknesses, people come together when they see the need. And it feels good. There just is no better place to live. And that attitude shows through as we build our communities in ways that matter.

I would love to hear about your community. Would your community do the same? Do you see your community working to make itself better?

Additional Fire Links:

[Northrop Grain Elevator Fire](#)

[Northrop Elevator Burns](#)

[Heroes Get Helping Hand](#)

[Answering the Call to Help](#)





