

'Big picture guy' to retire from CHS Northwest

GM Don Eucker wants to spend more time with family

By Bill Helm
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LYNDEN — When Don Eucker began his career in agriculture, there were no cell phones, no personal computers, no email. Back in 1978, information, financials, everything was mailed to him.

Now, everything is available in an instant.

So it's somewhat interesting how Eucker (pronounced eye-ker) chose to announce his retirement after 43 years. He did it face to face.

Eucker, general manager of CHS Northwest, is retiring effective Oct. 1.

"I don't think anyone was surprised I turned in my retirement notice," Eucker said last week.

Tim Miller, regional vice president, western region, CHS Country Operations said in a recent internal release that the organization has "truly appreciated Don's dedication and leadership to agriculture and the insight and experience he has shared through the cooperative system."

"We wish him all the best in his retirement," Miller said.

Last week, Eucker told the *Lynden Tribune* that he looks forward to spending more time with



CHS Northwest General Manager Don Eucker will retire effective Oct. 1 after 43 years in agriculture. (Bill Helm/Lynden Tribune)

family, including visiting his son and family in Korea.

Agronomy - energy - retail

For those who aren't in the know, CHS Northwest provides products and services needed to successfully run a home or farm. The three main components to CHS, Eucker said, are agronomy, energy, and retail.

"All three have different needs and different demands," Eucker

said. "We look at it all holistically. We provide products and services our customers want."

Eucker calls himself the "big picture guy."

"I don't micromanage my people," he said. "We communicate as often as we can. We're all tied together. We all have to be focused on the entire company."

As general manager at CHS the past 11 years, Eucker "has been a good leader," said Board

President Rod Tjoelker.

Tjoelker explained last week that the organization hopes to find his replacement within the next 4-5 months, "if we get the number of applicants that we want."

Hops, orchards, open land, mint

As the company's GM, Eucker oversees 270 employees in 28 locations across Washington and

Oregon.

"It's a big space we cover," he said. "Three hundred miles long, 280 miles wide."

But Eucker hasn't always worked in Lynden. Eucker worked 22 years for local cooperatives in roles from branch and agronomy manager to chief operating officer and general manager. He started his career in Walla Walla.

"Grew up on a farm in Prosser," Eucker said. "We had hops, orchards, open land, and mint. Spent most of my life in eastern Washington."

Eucker enrolled in college planning to become a teacher. "Changed it to business," he said.

Eucker has spent 21 years with CHS in Cenex and CHS Country Operations roles including regional refined fuels distribution manager and West Region Certified Energy Specialist supervisor. He's also been a member and past president of the Western Area Managers Association and board member and past president of Fare West Agri Business Association.

In more than four decades in the business, Eucker said he's worked "with a lot of great people, both internally and my customers." Also a constant for Eucker, the desire to learn.

"Whether through training or my skills, I always stay up on what I need to do things easier and better," Eucker said. "Business has changed so much; my staff and I need to always continue to learn how to do things better."