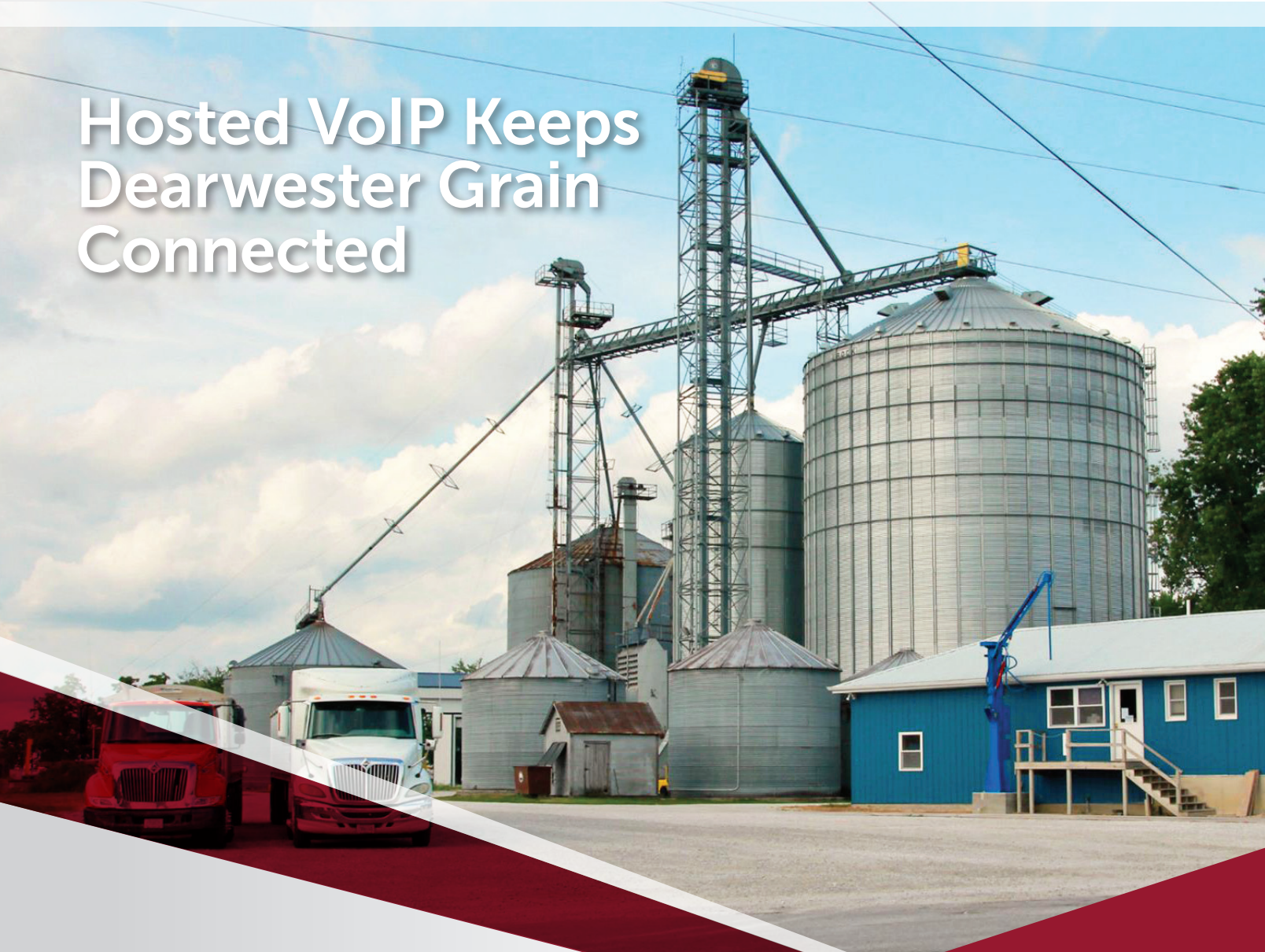


# BUSINESS connections

## Hosted VoIP Keeps Dearwester Grain Connected



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# BUSINESS connections

## Welcome to the first issue of *Business Connections*.

Adams has created this quarterly publication to provide valuable information to our business customers. You can expect each issue to cover topics that affect your company and provide examples of how our communications services can be a part of your success and growth.

We start on page 3 with reasons to **Make Your Next Phone System a Hosted VoIP**. This voice technology offers many features to save your business time and money, so it's well worth a look when you're in the market to replace your current phone system.

We share a **Business Spotlight on Dearwester Grain Services, Inc.** on pages 4 and 5. This family-owned business serves Western Illinois from its nine locations, and Adams is keeping everything connected through our Hosted VoIP. I think you'll enjoy reading owner Matt Dearwester's thoughts on how Hosted VoIP is benefiting Dearwester as well as what has led to his company's success.

Adams is committed to bringing you a full range of solutions for your business, and the addition of **Adams Experts** to our suite of services is evidence of this. On page 5 of this issue, you'll learn about the computer services it offers. Speaking of computer issues, don't miss the **Top 5 Online Security Tips** and **Common Security Threats** on page 6. Then on page 7, check out the **Employee Profile on Mike Ridder**, our Chief Operating Officer.

We're here to keep you connected to your customers, while giving you the tools and technology you need to keep your business moving forward. Let us know how we can help you grow your business into the future.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Broemmer".

**Jim Broemmer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Adams

# Make Your Next Phone System a Hosted VoIP



You'll gain more cost-efficiency, more mobility, and more flexibility

**D**oes your business have aging on-site phone system hardware that's a challenge to maintain and needs to be replaced? Or are you just looking to cut telecommunications and/or maintenance costs? If so, Adams encourages you to consider switching to our Hosted VoIP system and service.

Hosted VoIP is a business phone solution provided by Adams that's 100 percent cloud managed. It uses Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to convert the voice signal from your telephone into a digital signal that travels over the Internet.

## Reduced Costs and Increased Features

Director of Business Development Darlene Scheuermann says, "The Hosted VoIP system and service offered by Adams offers a long list of advantages over traditional phone systems. At the top of that list is the ability to provide significant cost savings. That's because our Hosted VoIP includes unlimited long distance in the 48 contiguous states, only requires the business to purchase the phones (no server), and uses only an Internet connection (no phone lines)."

The cloud-based infrastructure of Hosted VoIP offers additional advantages. Scheuermann notes, "The fact that the servers reside in the cloud and push software updates to users' phones prevents technology obsolescence—you'll always have the latest and greatest phone features."

## Mobility and Flexibility

She continues, "One of the biggest features of Hosted VoIP is seamless integrated mobility, or unified communications. You no longer need to be tethered to your desk. You can conduct business on your smartphone, tablet, or laptop—anywhere with an Internet connection—and have access to the same phone features you have at the office. You can also give out only one phone number, and by using the mobility apps and features, enjoy unprecedented flexibility and reachability."

Hosted VoIP allows for remote management through an incredibly intuitive user portal. You can add new users as your business grows without any capital charges or equipment upgrades, which reduces long-term maintenance costs. In addition, the user portal enables end users and administrators to configure the service as needed—including call forward, transfer, music and announcements on hold, and auto attendant—right from their computers. "This gives businesses incredible flexibility," adds Scheuermann.

Adams will make it a smooth transition when your business switches to Hosted VoIP. Our back-office systems and portals have been carefully designed to achieve that outcome and are backed by our dedicated personnel. Adams stands ready to quickly respond to your needs long after the sale.

**Call Adams at 217-214-8708 to see how your business could benefit from Hosted VoIP.**

Matt Dearwester, Owner

*Dearwester  
Grain Services, Inc.*

# Dearwester Grain Services, Inc.

Best nutrition, best employees, and best technology

Dearwester Grain Services, Inc. is full-service animal nutrition supplier serving Western Illinois. It sells products from Purina Animal Nutrition, Kent Feeds, and Kalmbach Feeds to provide its customers with the best nutrition programs for their animals. Headquartered in Golden, Dearwester has additional locations in Paloma, Blandinsville, Mt. Sterling, Carthage, Industry, Clayton, La Prairie, and Liberty, enabling its field staff to make farm calls and provide customer service in a timely manner.

## Loyal Employees and Customers

Owner Matt Dearwester and his wife Andrea founded Dearwester Grain as a grain-handling firm in 1996 after purchasing a private grain elevator in Golden. The family-owned business, together with sister company Nutrition Services founded in 2003, currently employs a total of 50 people.

Matt Dearwester says, "What I'm most proud of about Dearwester Grain are our loyal and dedicated employees. For example, the first three employees we had when we began are still with me today. I attribute the successful growth of our company to our employees as well as our very loyal customer base."

## Connecting With Hosted VoIP

Dearwester Grain is a long-time customer of Adams—it became an Adams Telephone Co-Operative member in 2004—and now uses the Hosted VoIP system and service to connect all nine of its locations. With Hosted VoIP, Dearwester Grain

gained the ability to transfer calls between locations, use voicemail at all locations, and enjoy the convenience of the many mobility features. Dearwester notes, "We previously used a different Adams phone solution, where each of our locations had its own on-site phone system. Since a few of our locations were outside the Adams service area, we had to use another provider for those locations."

He continues, "We decided to switch to Hosted VoIP from Adams because our locations are scattered over a 60-mile area, which means our employees are also scattered. With Hosted VoIP, we have three-digit extension numbers to call between our locations. So when a customer calls one of our locations and we don't have the right expertise there, we can do a quick transfer to another location. I'd say the biggest benefit of



Hosted VoIP is being able to transfer calls to one of our other locations without any hassles for our customers."

Another benefit experienced by Dearwester Grain is significant monthly cost savings compared with their previous business phone system. "We're saving about \$250 a month with Hosted VoIP, compared with our previous combination of phone systems and services, since we no longer have to pay long distance charges. We also have the convenience of getting our entire phone solution from Adams and having just one bill," Dearwester notes.

In addition, Dearwester appreciates the conference calling capabilities of Hosted VoIP. "It saves us from having to drive in order to get employees together for a quick meeting. We're currently just doing voice conferences through Hosted VoIP, but we may start holding video conferences in the future," he explains.

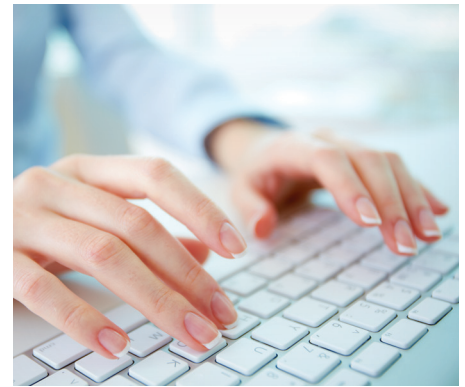
**"I'd say the biggest benefit of Hosted VoIP is being able to transfer calls to one of our other locations without any hassles for our customers."**

— MATT DEARWESTER, OWNER, DEARWESTER GRAIN SERVICES, INC.

### Adams is Responsive

What does Dearwester Grain appreciate most about the local service his company gets from Adams? He replies, "Adams has top-notch people on its staff who are a pleasure to work with. We haven't had any major service issues, but whenever anything comes up, Adams is just one phone call away. Their people are always very responsive to our needs."

According to Dearwester, the company will continue to look for growth opportunities in 2017: "Thanks to our customers and employees, I expect more good things ahead."



## Computer Problems? Call in the Experts!

Adams Experts Computer Service is your go-to resource for business or residential IT solutions from local technology specialists.

### Business

- Business Phone Systems—Digital, VoIP, Hosted & Premise Based
- PRI Service
- SIP Trunking
- Internet Data Services
- Local Area Network Solutions & Support
- Fiber Offerings
- Routers
- Switches
- Wi-Fi
- Servers

### Residential

- Computer Sales & Service
- System Tune-Ups/Upgrades
- Virus and Spyware Removal
- Laptop Screen Replacement
- Advanced Hardware Replacement
- On-Site Service
- Pickup and Delivery

**To get more details, contact  
Adams Experts at 217-222-0045  
or [experts@adamstel.com](mailto:experts@adamstel.com).**

## Common Security Threats

Information systems are among a company's most vital assets, yet they are sometimes left vulnerable to threats that could damage or destroy them. In addition to computer viruses, common threats include:

### Denial-of-Service Attacks

A denial-of-service attack (DoS) is an attempt to make a computer resource unavailable to its intended users. It generally involves preventing an Internet site or service from functioning efficiently or at all.

### Cyber Extortion

Cyber extortion is a new twist on an old racket—"Give us money or we'll shut you down." Methods vary but can include a denial-of-service attack (DoS), theft of confidential data, defacement of your website, or an attack that locks up or encrypts your data.

### Unsecured Wireless Access Points

An unsecured Wireless Access Point (WAP) or an Access Point that is using old, outdated technology for security (such as WEP) provides a hacker with an easy route into your network.

### Rootkit

A rootkit is a set of software tools intended to conceal running processes, files, or system data from the operating system. Rootkits have been used increasingly by malware to help intruders maintain access to systems while avoiding detection.



# Top Five Online Security Tips



Everyone at your business has a hand in protecting against threats

Cybercriminals are a sneaky bunch and the consequences of their actions can range from poorly functioning computers to a devastating data loss. Fight back by having your staff consistently take the following precautions:

1. **Be sure all computers and mobile devices are running the latest operating systems (OS).** Malware creators are always adapting, and so are OS developers. If a vulnerability is identified, developers will fix it in the next update, so you want to be sure you have it installed.
2. **Use antivirus and antispyware software and keep it up to date.** New threats are discovered daily and keeping your software updated is one of the easiest ways to protect your business from an attack; simply set your computers to automatically update for you. Also, activate your firewall and regularly download the security protection updates (known as patches) that are released by most major software companies.
3. **Educate your employees not to open email attachments from unknown sources.** Computer viruses are commonly spread through email attachments so it's vital to pay attention to the source before opening them. In addition, make sure your employees don't click on links within unsolicited email messages.
4. **Use long, complex passwords that are unique to each account.** Each time an employee creates a new password, it should be long (preferably at least 14 characters) and contain uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. It's also important to not use the same password for multiple accounts and to change passwords regularly.
5. **Only download software from reputable sites or stores.** Cybercriminals tuck malicious code into fake versions of the programs and apps that you want. The best way to avoid a phony is to stick to official company websites and app stores.

**For more information about online security, visit [www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips](http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips).**

# App-titude for Workplace Efficiency



Apps can help your small business save time and money, enhance productivity, streamline communication, improve security, and more. If you're not already using the popular apps below, you may want to download them:

## **LastPass ([lastpass.com](http://lastpass.com))**

Trying to remember passwords for various sites online is now a snap. LastPass is a secure password manager that allows you to enter passwords into the site. Then, when you log on to a site like Amazon, LastPass automatically enters the right information.

## **Google Drive ([drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com))**

Google Drive is a cloud solution that allows you to create and store documents, then access them from any Internet-enabled device. You can develop and share text, spreadsheet, image, audio, and presentation files.

## **Hootsuite ([hootsuite.com](http://hootsuite.com))**

This social media dashboard helps you manage several social media accounts, and set up relevant streams within those accounts. Social media sites include Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Foursquare, and more.

## **Triplt ([tripit.com](http://tripit.com))**

Business travelers will appreciate Triplt, which enables you to create a comprehensive itinerary that includes all the flight, hotel, and car rental information for one trip. The app also provides weather updates, maps, and directions to make travel easier.

## **Square ([squareup.com](http://squareup.com))**

Small businesses can now accept credit cards without setting up a traditional account. For a small fee per transaction, Square allows you to process payments with a card reader that attaches to your smartphone or tablet.

## **OpenTable ([opentable.com](http://opentable.com))**

This handy app helps you find restaurants, and make reservations at them all within the same interface. Restaurant categories, such as "new," "best," and "available tonight" help you narrow down the choices.

## **Yammer ([yammer.com](http://yammer.com))**

Created by Microsoft, this app is like a social network for business. You can communicate via instant messaging within groups, post updates about what projects you're working on, or share and collaborate on files.



## **Employee Profile**

### **Mike Ridder** *Chief Operating Officer*

Mike Ridder started with Adams in 2002 as Director of Internet Operations and later became Director of Competitive Services. Ridder was promoted to Chief Operating Officer in April 2016. Prior to joining Adams, he spent four years in the Air Force and also held positions in IT, computer sales and service, and project management.

"As COO of Adams, I'm responsible for daily operations. I oversee about 75 employees in sales, marketing, support, customer service, network operations, installation, and construction. A typical day for me is spent in lots of meetings, analyzing and coordinating activities," Ridder says.

What does Ridder enjoy most about his job? He replies, "Everything! I love it so much, it doesn't even seem like a job. I like making a difference in people's lives—employees, customers, and community residents."

Ridder has two older sons and recently became engaged. He's completed three Ironman Triathlon competitions, and this July he'll participate in RAGBRAI—the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa. Notes Ridder, "I like to set big goals for myself."

# Meet Our **Business Sales Team**

Adams is your technology partner, so think of us for all of your business communication needs including Internet, phone, cable TV, colocation, computer services, and more. With more than 64 years of experience, our Business Sales Team is ready to take your business to the next level by recommending the right solutions for increased efficiency and productivity.



**DARLENE SCHEUERMANN**  
*Director of Business Development*



**MEREDITH ROE**  
*Business Sales Project Manager*



**TOM ALFORD**  
*Phone System Sales*



To learn more about our business solutions, call Adams 217-214-8708.