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Farm Rescue gets \$50,000

By Keith Norman
THE JAMESTOWN SUN

Farm Rescue received a donation of \$50,000 from Wal-Mart during ceremonies at the Jamestown store Monday. The money represents what Farm Rescue referred to as a “significant” donation to its efforts to help farmers affected by illness, injury or natural disaster.

“Wal-Mart started helping in 2006,” said Bill Gross, founder and president of Farm Rescue.

“The Jamestown store donated \$1,000 that year. Over time all the North Dakota Wal-Marts have helped. Also, they’ve been helpful in other ways than financial by allowing employees to volunteer. It is amazing to see what a good organization and volunteers can accomplish.”



John M. Steiner / The Sun

Bill Gross, founder of Farm Rescue, talks to a group of people Monday in the Jamestown Wal-Mart store after receiving a check in the amount of \$50,000 for the organization.

The donation marks the start of a new program for Wal-Mart. The retailer will continue its programs of individual stores making donations to local community groups and add a State Giving Program of donations to larger nonprofit organizations.

“This represents something new for Wal-Mart,” said John Shafer,

store manager in Jamestown. “This year we started statewide giving. In our markets grants will be given to five organizations totaling \$160,000.”

For Farm Rescue the grant strengthens its position to supply assistance to farmers in North Dakota and to expand the operation in the region.

“This \$50,000 helps us continue to increase the number of farm families we help in the future,” Gross said. “We will be using two units, just like this past season, in 2009. But in 2010 we plan to be planting with three units.”

Each unit includes a tractor, tillage and seeding equipment and support equipment.

Farm Rescue is currently accepting applications from farm families in need of help during the upcoming spring season.

“The sooner the better although our deadline is March 15,” Gross said. “We’ve received a few applications but most always come in during the last couple of weeks.”

The organization does not measure the number of acres planted or harvested but instead the number of farmers it has assisted. The goal for 2009 is to provide more assistance than in 2008 when it helped 36 farmers in three states.

Farm Rescue, founded in 2006, has helped 67 farm families in its three years of operation.

Anyone interested can learn more, or print out an application, at www.farmrescue.org, or by calling 252-2017.

Editor’s note: Keith Norman, a reporter at the Sun, is also employed part-time at Wal-Mart.

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