

Loadout Capacity Doubled

THE ANDERSONS REPLACES A BULKWEIGHER IN MICHIGAN FOR LONGER UNIT TRAINS



The new 60,000-bph, fully automated CompuWeigh bulk weigh loadout scale at The Andersons grain elevator in Reading, MI, installed the second week of July 2013 designed to load 75-car trains on the Indiana Northern short-line. Photos by Ed Zdrojewski.

Back when **Jake Drake** started as operations supervisor at **The Andersons Inc.**'s 2.5-million-bushel grain elevator in Reading, MI (517-283-2156) in 2009, a unit train consisted of 50 covered hopper cars, and they were loaded a few at a time out of an old 20,000-bph bulkweigher.

Today, a unit train has 75 railcars, and the railroad allows less than a 12-hour loading time, before applying demurrage charges on top of the regular per-car freight rate. The Reading elevator loads trains on the Indiana Northern Railroad,

a short-line with connections to the Norfolk Southern at Montpelier, OH, a few miles to the south. The elevator lacked the capacity to keep up.

In July 2013, The Andersons remedied the situation by replacing the old loadout scale with a brand new **CompuWeigh 60,000-bph bulk weigh loadout scale**, equipped with a complete package of GMS control software.

Preferred Supplier

Drake notes that **CompuWeigh Corp.**, Woodbury, CT (203-262-9400), is a preferred supplier to The Andersons, so the grain handler had a certain amount of experience with the supplier at other locations. Also, he adds, the CompuWeigh product was easy to integrate with the facility's grain accounting software, the supplier offered plenty of support, and the price was competitive.

In addition to the automated controls, the system at Reading includes several of CompuWeigh's "Smart" options:

- **SmartRead**, which includes a track-side RF tag reader that "reads" the ID mounted on North American railcars. The system accesses CompuWeigh's **SmartCar** database, which includes dimensions and capacities of all the railcars in service in North America. Wheel sensors can alert the system to any cars missing RF tags, so no car is ever unaccounted for.

- **SmartLoad**, which preloads the weigh hopper allowing the bulkweigher to continue filling, while the next railcar is brought into position.

As of mid-October, Drake says, the new scale had been used to load only a few cars at a time. However, he anticipates that it will cut 2-1/2 hours off the loading time of a full 75-car train.

Ed Zdrojewski, editor



GMS 4000 workstation inside the rail loadout shed, which receives input from CompuWeigh's SmartRead system that gathers data from railcar-mounted RF tags and accesses a North American database that includes capacity information for every railcar on the continent.