



CSW

Central Storage & Warehouse Co.

Central Storage Opens State's Coldest Walk-in Freezer

Next year, Central Storage & Warehouse Co. (CSW) will celebrate 70 years of providing temperature-controlled (primarily frozen) storage environments for customers in the food industry. But the Wisconsin company continues to be a young-at-heart pioneer in the public refrigerated warehousing industry with a flair for high-tech innovation. Last year CSW installed Wisconsin's largest rooftop solar array at its Madison facility, creatively using the heat of the sun to keep customer products cold. This year, CSW has taken the term "cold storage" to an all-new extreme at its Pleasant Prairie site.

Commissioned on June 1 of this year, CSW's latest expansion was an ultra-cold storage space operating at a shocking -70 degrees Fahrenheit. The new deep-freeze storage space is for specialty food ingredients whose shelf life requires such extremely low temperatures to maintain viability and quality.

Vice President of Operations Jack Williams who oversaw the project construction said CSW spent over six months in the design of the facility working closely with customers and suppliers to ensure operational and quality standards could be met. The project was unlike anything previously built by CSW and may be the first public facility of its kind in the entire US. Williams also pointed out that early collaboration with building envelope, racking, and mechanical partners was a key to the project's success, because the harsh conditions of the space required specialized engineering and design. To fully utilize the tall ceilings of the existing building, CSW went with an innovative three-story design, served via mezzanines and a material lift. Obviously, with such sensitive products in storage, reliability was a major concern and the refrigeration system therefore has complete

redundancy as well as a back-up power supply, all run by electronic monitoring with remote access and alarm.

But to get the work done inside the ultra-cold space, CSW had to go back to basics. CSW's CEO John Winegarden said he originally wanted to find an automated solution for the case-picking process, but encountered several dead ends dealing with robotics providers. It turns out that normal hydraulic, mechanical, and electronic systems are typically just not rugged enough for such a temperature extreme. So what was the answer? Rugged employees! CSW had several volunteers from its existing workforce where working at or slightly below zero is the norm. CSW provided special outerwear and training to minimize risk of cold weather injury. After some initial trepidation, the ultra-cold crew has found that with proper preparation, clothing, and observation of common-sense precautions, working at -70F really isn't that different from working at -5F. To keep their efforts efficient, several time and exposure saving features are built into the process, like carton-flow racks that keep products properly rotated and speed up the case pick process.

"CSW has always relied on innovative technology married with outstanding employees to provide the very best in quality control and service to our customers, so that's nothing new for us," said Winegarden. "This time it just happens to be at temperatures colder than the North Pole!"

Central Storage and Warehouse is a family-owned, public warehouse business, headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin. It operates seven facilities across the state, in the cities of Madison, Pleasant Prairie, Eau Claire, Wausau, and Menomonie, primarily serving the food and beverage industry through temperature-controlled environments.



CSW employees selecting frozen products for customer orders at -70F.