

Director Candidates: Region 3 — III. (4-year term), Candidate 1 of 2



Donald (Don) Carley

57 years old
Springfield, Ill.
(309) 533-2339
carleyfamilyfarms@gmail.com
Farm Credit Member since: 2010

Family: Wife Patricia; Children Kathryn, Lauren, Sarah & Clarie

Brief description of agricultural operation and employment/business experience for the past five years:

Carley Family Farms is our family-owned agricultural operation, which started with the purchase of a 60-acre farm in Adams County in 2009. Our farm now spans approximately 1,200 acres in Adams and Sangamon Counties, Illinois, where we grow corn and soybeans. Recently, we expanded our operation by acquiring a 2,250-acre cattle ranch in Southeastern Colorado.

In addition to farming, I work at Horace Mann Educators Corporation, a publicly traded insurance and financial services company, focused on addressing the needs of public K-12 educators and others who serve the community. I currently serve as the Company's General Counsel and Corporate Secretary. I also oversee the company's facilities across the country.

Boards or committees you currently serve on and boards or committees you have served on in the past five years:

Throughout my career, I participated as a board member on numerous non-profit boards. Currently, I serve in two key roles:

- Member of the Rochester School Board, supporting our local schools.
- As Corporate Secretary for Horace Mann, I am responsible for managing the company's Board meetings and governance processes.

Community involvement/government service: My wife Patricia and I are raising our four daughters in Rochester, Ill. Over the past five years, our focus has been on our family and staying engaged in the local community. My service on the Rochester School Board reflects my commitment to education and civic involvement. I also support economic development through active engagement with local businesses, town leaders, and community organizations.

Education:

- William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA (B.S.)
- Temple Law School, Philadelphia, PA (J.D.)
- University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (M.B.A.)

What is your vision for the future of agriculture? The future of farming in the Midwest is rooted in tradition yet powered by technology and sustainability. Farmers will increasingly rely on precision tools like drones, sensors, and AI to help boost yields and trim waste. There is also a growing focus on regenerative practices such as crop rotation, cover cropping, and reduced tillage to protect soil

health and conserve resources for future generations. Automation—from self-driving tractors to robotic harvesters—will moderate labor pressures and improve efficiency. New crop varieties will also help farms adapt to unpredictable weather and changing climates. These advancements will require capital expenditures, increased risk, and additional training. The need for ag-centric financial institutions will be critical in enabling farmers to evolve and thrive.

What do you believe are the primary issues facing agriculture and Compeer Financial? Today's farmers face tremendous challenges and stress: volatility in commodity markets, severe and unpredictable weather, soaring input costs, and tightening credit conditions. Land values have risen dramatically, and the higher borrowing costs make it harder for new farmers to get started or for existing ones to expand. For Compeer Financial, larger and more complex farm operations bring greater risk, especially in a down market. Additionally, a shrinking base of new farmers presents long-term sustainability concerns. Compeer Financial must continue to evolve and innovate to meet these challenges head-on, ensuring its services remain vital to farmers now and in the future. Its support for rural communities is also critical to ensure the infrastructure exists to support farming operations. And its risk management tools will need to evolve to meet current and emerging risks.

Why do you want to serve on the Board of Directors at Compeer Financial? It would be an honor to serve on Compeer Financial's Board. One of my favorite items in our home is a milk can from my great-grandfather's dairy farm — a simple reminder of the legacy and values that shaped me. Some of my best, early memories are hunting and fishing with my grandfather, father and brother — all of whom shared my love of agriculture and rural life. My grandfather served as the head of 4-H in New York State, and my father, a plant pathologist, helped develop agricultural chemicals still in use today.

I want to ensure that the next generation can build a life in agriculture — to raise their families, steward the land and watch the sun rise and set over their own farms.

If elected, I will work to ensure Compeer Financial continues delivering exceptional service to its members — helping today's farmers grow and adapt, and helping tomorrow's farmers get started. I am especially passionate about supporting generational transitions and breaking down barriers for young or first-time farmers. I also believe deeply in the value of rural living and want to help find solutions that keep rural communities thriving.