



Date: April 26, 2016
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Briess elevator falcons attracting a large audience

CHILTON, WI — A pair of Peregrine Falcons are calling the top of the Briess elevator in Manitowoc, WI, home this summer in the hopes of producing offspring. Thanks to the addition of a camera in the nest box earlier this year, a growing number of internet users from around the world have been watching the falcons' daytime activities via live stream on the internet. To watch go to www.BrewingWithBriess.com and follow the link.

Briess purchased the Manitowoc barley storage and handling operation two years ago. The falcon nest box had been built into the top floor of the 244' tall elevator around 1992, part of the Wisconsin Peregrine Falcon Recovery Program. Dave Luckow, Briess Manitowoc operations manager, said it took a while for Peregrines to locate and use the nest after it was first installed. That happened in 1998, and Peregrine Falcons have been nesting there successfully ever since, producing 56 Peregrine Falcons to date.

According to Greg Septon of the Wisconsin Peregrine Falcon Recovery Program, Peregrine Falcons were put on the U.S. Endangered Species list in 1969. In 1972 the use of the pesticide DDT, the main cause for the population decline of these birds, was banned, clearing the path for repopulation efforts. While the Peregrine population had been completely eradicated east of the Mississippi River by the late 1960s, today there are an estimated 1,650 breeding pairs in the U.S. and Canada.

After acquiring the facility, Briess committed to continue supporting the falcon recovery program. Last year company owner Monica Briess participated in banding two eyasses. This year, the company installed the camera for live streaming.

Greg said that the new webcam in the Manitowoc elevator nest box is helping him track the Peregrines that occupy the nest box. Earlier this spring, Greg saw that a young unbanded female from unknown origins visited the nest box in hopes of making the Briess elevator her new home. However, in March there was a turnover of females, which is not uncommon as falcons vie for territory and nest sites. On March 2, Greg saw that the new female was an adult and presumed that she was the stronger of the two female falcons, and drove the younger immature female falcon away from the site; in essence taking control over the territory.

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On March 8, Greg identified the new female as “Valcor”, who was born in 2013 at the Chicago Wrigleyville nest site. Greg was also able to identify the adult male falcon as “Patriot”, who has made the Manitowoc Elevator his home for the last several years. Patriot was born at a nest site in nearby Green Bay, and banded in 2007 by Greg.

Briess will continue live streaming until the falcons vacate the nest for the winter, then resume in early spring 2017 upon their return.

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