

The Communicator

Published by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

Central takes flight to aid land administration

Central's Land Administration team has taken to the skies with their new Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) – commonly known as a drone.

The UAV was purchased primarily to assist in the implementation of the Central's Land and Shoreline Management Plan for the Kingsley Dam Project. The UAV will primarily be used to take photographs and videos of project lands to assist in monitoring and protecting key environmental, cultural and recreational resources throughout the District. The drone will also be used to assist in identifying encroachments on District property and assist in the maintenance of Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CIKR). Another potential



UAV in flight — Central's Luke Ritz is shown here on a canal road testing the new Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

benefit will be using the aircraft to assist with emergency management and response operations.

In the past, Central has hired contractors to take aerial photos and surveyors to help with maintenance of shorelines around District lakes. Central staff will be able to use the UAV to conduct much of this work themselves in a much more timely manor.

Another benefit of the UAV will be the ability to access areas that may have otherwise been difficult to access in the past. The aircraft itself is a DJI Phantom 4 Pro and is approxi-

mately 16" square, and about 10" tall. It has a 20-megapixel camera that takes both still photos and video. The Phantom can fly up to a speed of about 45 mph, but can also be used in a hovering mode as well.

The use of UAVs is regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration which recently implemented new regulations in Part 107 to make commercial use of UAVs legal. There is a certification process outlined within the new regulations, and members of Central's staff will be attending training to become certified.

Central staff is eager to begin using the UAV this spring after the training and certification process is complete.



DJI Phantom 4 Pro — Pictured above right is the Phantom 4 Pro Drone Central recently purchased to use for aerial photography and inspections. On the left is the controller and tablet used to fly the UAV.

George E. Johnson nominated to Nebraska Hall of Fame

George E. Johnson, one of the chief architects and promoters of Central's hydro-irrigation project, may one day be recognized for his achievements as a member of the Nebraska Hall of Fame.

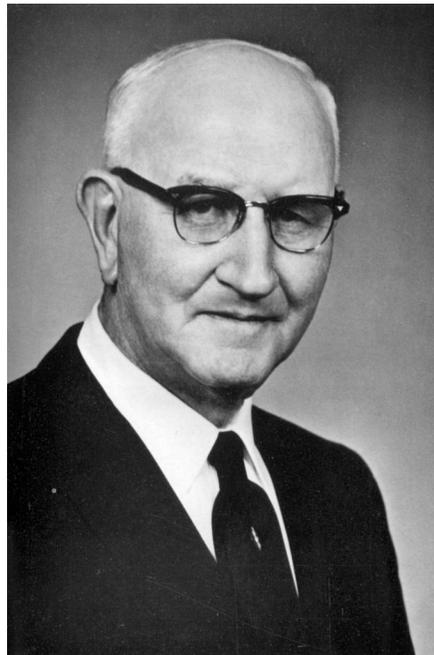
He is among 12 nominees being considered by the Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission. The commission has the option of narrowing the field, or advancing all candidates to the next step in the process, public hearings in each of Nebraska's three congressional districts next summer. The hearing in the 3rd district is scheduled for July 19 at the Nebraska Prairie Museum in Holdrege.

The commission may select only one nominee for induction, although it does not have to induct someone if it determines that no one deserves the honor.

While Johnson's name is perhaps most associated with the "Tri-County Project," as it was then known, recitation of his other achievements in the engineering field makes him a worthy candidate for the state's Hall of Fame.

George Edward Johnson was born at Wymore, Neb., in 1885. He was educated in the Wymore schools until age 10 when he left home to train as an apprentice in his uncle's foundry in Nebraska City. He became a fully qualified iron molder and machinist by the time he graduated from high school at 15.

He had become enamored with machines and mechanics and particularly with electricity, which was a relatively new phenomenon. His family wanted him to take over the foundry, but instead Johnson enrolled at the Armour Institute in Chicago, where



George E. Johnson

he received B.S. degrees in civil engineering in 1905 and electrical engineering in 1906. Over the next few years, he worked as a consulting engineer in Nebraska and neighboring states.

He was appointed state engineer in 1915 and served until 1923. During this time, he became aware of efforts to build the Central's hydro-irrigation project. He devoted much of his time over the next 24 years to designing, promoting and securing funding to build Kingsley Dam and the rest of the project.

He served as chief engineer and general manager for Central from 1935 to 1947, when he left the District to work on dams and hydropower projects in Argentina.

He returned to Central in 1952 as chief engineer and later as a consulting engineer for the Hydro Division and manager of the Steam Generating Division during and after construction of the Canaday Steam Plant (a

natural-gas fueled power plant southeast of Lexington). He resigned in January 1959, although he remained active as a consultant until fully retiring in 1964.

Before and during his career with Central, Johnson delved into a number of engineering projects. Besides serving as state engineer – where he instrumental in laying out the state's first highway system -- he was responsible for or played a key role in a number of other accomplishments:

- Early in his career, he designed power plants, electrical distribution systems and municipal water supply projects for towns and cities in Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.
- Was a member of the Capitol Commission that oversaw construction of the Nebraska State Capitol.
- Designed the sewer system in the early 1920s for St. Louis, Mo.
- Played a significant role in attracting munitions plants to Nebraska during World War II, as well as drawing upon his experience in aviation to attract airfields to the state to train military pilots.
- Built an industrial alcohol plant in Omaha that used corn and other grain to produce high-octane motor fuel for the military

(Cont. on p. 3)

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On the Lakefront



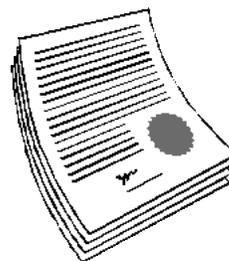
A friendly reminder from Central Land Administration staff— Please do not put for sale signs or other signage on commons areas. All signage must be kept within lot lines.

As of January 1, 2017, Central's Permitting Procedures were updated. Some of the significant changes to the



new permitting guidelines include changes to the major repairs and replacements to property; pathways to shoreline permits; the allowance of certain near-shoreline patios; changes to permits for small storage sheds; limits to allowed dates for cutting or trimming trees; as well as several other changes.

For more details or to view the new permitting procedures, visit Central's website at www.cnppid.com and click on "Permitting Procedures" under the Rec-



reation tab. Call our Land Administration team at 308-995-8601 with questions.

Also, if you plan on making any updates or improvements to your lot as the weather warms up, please get your permits applications submitted as early as possible, as turnaround time may vary.

Johnson nominated for Hall of Fame *(continued from p. 2)*

and for use in production of synthetic rubber.

- Was integral to the formation of the state's public power system, initially based on generation from the three new hydropower districts, and the purchase of the state's private power companies between 1937 and 1946.
- Helped organize and lay out Nebraska's electric transmission system under the Rural Electrification Act that brought electricity to Nebraska's small towns, farms and ranches.
- Was one of the first businessmen in Nebraska to fly an airplane for business and acted as his own mechanic.
- Was on the forefront of radio communication in the early 1920s, conducting research and experiments that helped usher in the "radio age" in America.

Johnson often played his roles in the background. He was not a self-promoter; rather he was an engineer

who engaged in and technical aspects of a project.

But when necessary, he could assume the role of a lobbyist. In fact, a contemporary once called him "the slickest lobbyist in Washington."

Johnson disputed this characterization by saying, "I did not see myself that way. True, I was lobbying to bring industries to the State of Nebraska. However, my methods were successful not because I was "slick," but because I used basic engineering methods. I did not present "argument," instead I marshaled the facts, as I would in an engineering report, so that the conclusion was almost inevitable considering the facts presented."

Perhaps the best summation of his work can be found in his own words in a biography written by one of his sons ("The Nebraskan," 1981):

"I have always loved Nebraska! It is a wide-open land with a big sky. It is a land where a strong man can use his muscles and stretch his brain. It is a land where a

boy can dream the great American Dream and see it come true.

"I have traveled it many times, border to border, by auto and airplane. I have farmed its soil and pioneered the use of surplus farm crops to make gasohol. I helped build its beautiful State Capitol building in Lincoln; and its highways, bridges, dams, canals and power plants.

"Yes, Nebraska is a wonderful land of golden opportunities. Do you wonder why I love it so much?"

In 1961 the University of Nebraska Board of Regents presented Johnson with its highest non-academic honor for distinguished service – the Nebraska Builder Award – in recognition of his "conspicuously effective leadership in the fields of engineering and administration."

Johnson died in 1967 in his adopted hometown of Hastings and was interred at the city's Parkview Cemetery.

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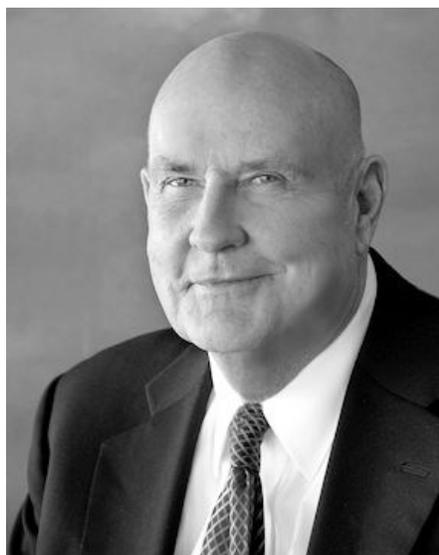
New director joins Central's board

David G. Nelson of Minden was seated as a new Kearney County board member in January. Nelson was elected to replace long-time Kearney County director Robert Garrett, also of Minden.

Nelson owns and operates a farming operation south of Minden where he grows corn, wheat and soybeans on land homesteaded by his great grandfather when he emigrated to Nebraska from Denmark.

Over the years, Nelson has served the public in a variety of capacities. He was a member of the Tri-Basin Natural Resource District Board of Directors for 27 years. While on that board, he also served as the President of the Nebraska Association of Resource Districts from 2004 to 2006.

He has also previously served as the President of the Nebraska Corn



David G. Nelson

Grower's Association and was a representative on the Ethanol Committee of the National Corn Growers Association.

Nelson also served as a member of the Governor of Nebraska's Water

Task Force.

"I feel like I have a strong background in water interests in Nebraska, and I will be able to serve the community well as a member of Central's board," Nelson said.

He is a member of the board's Irrigation Committee.

<http://www.cnppid.com>

On the Web

Central's website has a quick links feature on the homepage where you can find the most recent information. Find the big blue buttons on the right side of our homepage.

Also, check us out on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cnppid/ for updates on current events and photos from around the District.