



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) – The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District’s board of directors approved work orders at Monday’s monthly meeting for the removal of a flume on the Phelps Canal system in Kearney County and the subsequent replacement of the structure with a buried pipeline.

The 1,300-foot-long steel flume resting on wooden trestles will be replaced with a 2,700-ft.-long, 42-inch pipeline. The flume is located northwest of Axtell and carries irrigation water over Lost Creek to about 1,785 acres.

The flume dates to the original construction of the irrigation canals in the late 1930s and has required extensive maintenance over the years, including the installation of a synthetic liner to extend its useful life.

Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford said that the flume’s condition is such that replacement with a pipeline was determined to be prudent. The total cost of removal and replacement of the flume is estimated at \$389,700. District crews will begin the project following this year’s irrigation season.

Also at Monday’s meeting:

- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that inflows to Lake McConaughy on Monday morning were about 550 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is about 53 percent of normal for this time of year. Steinke said he is projecting total water-year inflows (Oct. 1, 2013 to Sept. 30, 2014) of about 550,000 acre-feet, which would be the seventh lowest total inflow on record.

“Nine of the top ten lowest inflow years have occurred since 2002,” Steinke said, “including record-low inflows in 2004 of 440,898 acre-feet.”

The only year on the list that falls outside the 2002-14 period is 1956 when inflows were 597,654 feet, the eighth lowest total on record. The historical median for inflows to Lake McConaughy is 913,234 acre-feet; and over the past 30 years the median inflow is 758,071 acre-feet.

Lake McConaughy’s elevation as of Monday was 3237.7 feet with a volume in storage of 1,036,500 acre-feet (59.4 percent of capacity). Steinke said that given the low inflows, the reservoir may have already reached its peak elevation for the spring at 3239.1 on April 4.

- The board approved a change order to add \$17,600 to an existing contract with Survalent Technology Corp., for additional on-site visits by engineers engaged in the project to update Central’s Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system. The SCADA system allows Central to remotely monitor and control structures within the hydro-irrigation project, including the North Platte Diversion Dam, four hydroplants, Supply Canal check structures, and the headgates and control structures along the irrigation canals.

The project is nearing completion, with final work being done on remote terminal units (mini-computers at the sites) and communications with the hydroplants still to be completed.

- John Kuehn of rural Heartwell, the sole candidate for the District 38 seat in the Nebraska Legislature, attended the meeting and briefly addressed the board about his priorities as a state senator. Kuehn is a veterinarian and an associate professor of biology at Hastings College who also farms, raises cattle, and is a member of the Southern Nebraska Public Power District’s board of directors.

Kuehn said a comprehensive statewide water policy that recognizes hydrological variations across the state and is based upon the best available scientific data is necessary to help sustain water resources and ensure continued benefits to the many and diverse water interests in Nebraska.

- Lori Potter, a reporter for the Kearney Hub, thanked Central for its sponsoring a recent tour of Kingsley Dam and Lake McConaughy and a dinner during the Nebraska Press Women’s association annual convention in Ogallala.

- The board approved two requests for variances by cabin-owners at Johnson Lake to permit construction and maintenance projects.

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