

# The Communicator

Published by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

## New Telemetry Equipment Installed on E67



Central employees Tony Hansen and Jeff Wilken stand next to newly-installed equipment at a field site on the E67 canal telemetry system.

Central's E67 pipeline canal southeast of Johnson Lake is seeing installation of telemetry equipment this summer. Conservation Director Marcia Trompke applied for and received a grant for the project through the Nebraska Environmental Trust. The grant allows for the installation of precision management software, a communications network for obtaining water use data, and the installation of two new weather stations in the area. Central has partnered with the company McCrometer, based out

of Hemet, California, as well as the Nebraska Environmental Trust, and Nebraska Extension to make this project possible.

A total of 86 sites will be installed over the three year project implementation process, with 26 sites installed in 2015. Each site has a UHF radio transmitter, digitized flow meter, rain gauge and solar panels. The base station is located at the J-1 microwave tower, and it polls the farm sites for reports every hour. The weather sta-

tions report new data every 15 minutes. All of these data are transmitted to a McCrometer server where sorting and calculations are done. Then field data and graphs can be accessed with a password from a computer, tablet or smart phone by the farmer or by Trompke.

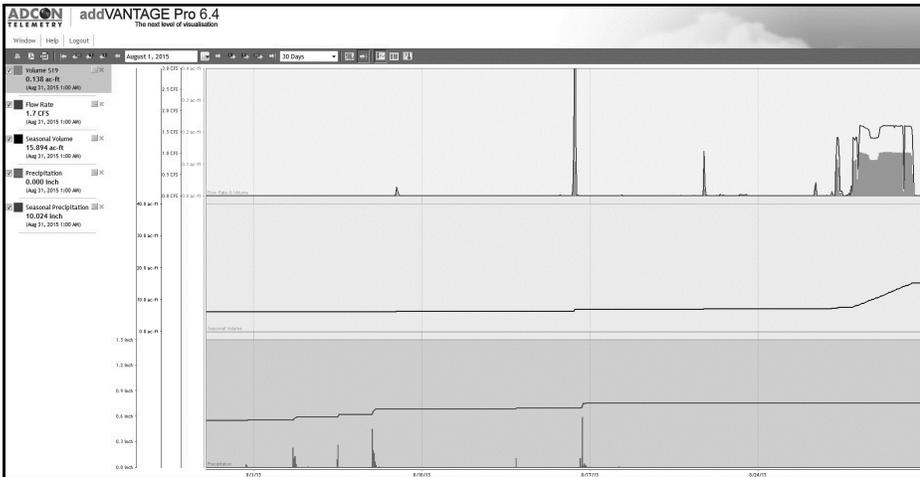
The main benefit from the project – water conservation – will be useful for many years to come. The “real time” data allows producers to know precipitation totals from the nearest weather station every 15 minutes, and then they can make decisions on when to shut off irrigation systems or let them run through small rain events.

The installation process began in early summer 2015 when the first 26 locations received their basic equipment installation. The remaining 60 locations will be installed over the next two years. The producers will have an option to add more equipment to their systems such as pressure gauges, soil moisture probes, and pivot lateral position monitors at their own cost at a later time.

“The biggest challenge that we have had so far was the month and a half delay at the beginning of this irrigation season,” Trompke said. “The rain was more than welcome, but it did slow us down a bit.”

*(Continued on p. 2)*

# Telemetry project *(continued from p. 1)*



The user interface above shows a location's volume of water applied, flow rate, precipitation, seasonal precipitation and seasonal volume. The user has the option to view in line graphs (as shown above) or in a list format. The user can also adjust the time period shown from one month (as shown above) to any dates specified.

McCrometer representatives are planning a trip soon to do more training for Central staff and participating farmers who are currently using the new technology. The following two

years will see additions on the E67 canal system, and then Trompke says there are other possibilities and opportunities for implementation on

## Water Leasing Program to Begin

Central's Board of Directors has recently approved the terms for a water leasing pilot program for the 2016 irrigation season. This new program will only be offered during full delivery years.

The lease term will last one year, or until the end of the irrigation season. A maximum of 2,000 acres total will be leased through the program. If there are more than 2,000 acres available for leasing, the participants will be selected through random drawing.

The accounts leased must not be in termination to be eligible for the program. If selected, the acres leased must not be irrigated by surface water or groundwater during the entire irrigation season. The land owner must agree to allow inspection of the crop to ensure it was not irrigated in 2016.

Central will pay the irrigation customer \$220 per acre leased by November 1, 2016, after verification that the lands were not irrigated.

Water service charges specified in the water service agreement will be the responsibility of the owner of the tract of land leasing the water. Also, all previous water service charges must be paid.

The application period begins November 15, 2015, and all applications must be signed by the landowner and completed by December 15, 2015, for consideration.

If you would like to know more, please contact Van Fastenau or Dave Ford at the Holdrege Irrigation Office at 308-995-3572.

Central's system that may be considered.

"We're just going to have to see where this goes over the next few years," Trompke said. "Right now we just want to make sure the small group we are working with has everything they need. We want to make this technology something that caters to them so that they can use it every day."

### 2016 Water Supply

Higher than normal inflows throughout 2015 have created a favorable outlook for Central's irrigation customers for the 2016 irrigation season.

"Upstream reservoirs in both Wyoming and Colorado are in good standing, and there are predictions of a strong el Nino, which usually means a wet Spring," said Cory Steinke, Central's Civil Engineer. "Unless something drastic happens, we should be looking at a full supply for 2016."

Central staff is preparing for a full irrigation season in 2016. This also means that there will be no need for any one-year water transfers. Instead, there will be the option to participate in the Water Leasing Pilot Program.

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# On the Lakefront



## Thank You!

Central's Land Administration staff would like to say thank you to customers for such great cooperation during the busy permitting season. Staff was very appreciative of the feedback received during meetings, and they look forward to continuing to make their customer relations better each year!

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## Hardship Relief Info

Homestead exemptions can be used to provide tax assistance for those tenants with hardship clauses in their lease.

Exemptions are valid IF you are 65 years old or more by January 1 of the year you apply; if you are a veteran who served on active duty during a recognized war of the U.S. and are totally disabled by a non-service connected accident; if you are a disabled

individual who has a permanent physical disability and have lost all mobility that precludes the ability to walk without the regular use of a mechanical aid or prosthesis, or individuals who have undergone amputation of both arms above the elbow, or who have a permanent partial disability of both arms in excess of 75% are eligible; or if you are a disabled veteran.

If a customer approaches Central requesting hardship relief, the customer must provide a copy of an accepted Homestead Exemption as filed with their respected County office.

If a Homestead Exemption is granted by the county to a Central tenant, Central will reduce the annual lease fee by the same percentage rate with a maximum of 85 percent.

Any customers receiving a rate reduction will have the option to pay the lease fee in a lump sum payment or

through monthly payments with no finance charges.

For 2015 lease rates, the hardship relief amount will be equivalent to an 85 percent reduction of the lease amount to allow time for the customer to apply with the county for Homestead Exemption. For 2016 rates, the above rules will apply. If you have any other questions regarding hardship exemptions please contact Central's Land Administrator Jim Brown at (308) 995-8601.

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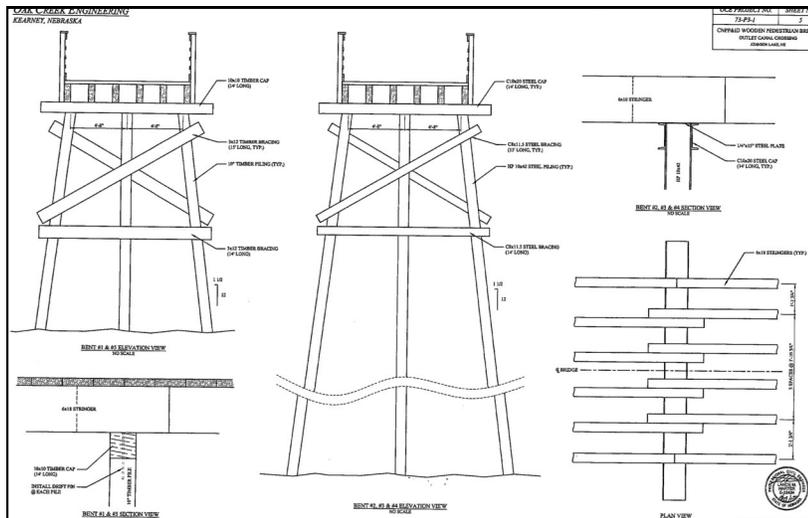
## Feedback

Central's Land Administration staff is looking for feedback from customers. If you have recently worked with staff on a project and would like to make a recommendation on how we can improve, please contact us at 308-995-8601.

# Johnson Lake Pedestrian Bridge Under Way

Construction on the new pedestrian bridge at Johnson Lake is set to begin Oct. 1, 2015. Once work begins, the Dawson Public Power District will be killing the overhead power lines and tilting the poles to provide for an easier path for driving the piling for the new bridge.

The new bridge, designed by Oak Creek Engineering in Kearney, and will have a very simple design for ease of use and to reduce the cost of construction. Materials used for construction



This photo shows the design plans created by Oak Creek Engineering for the new wooden pedestrian bridge that will soon be constructed at Johnson Lake.

will be mostly wood, with some steel used for pilings. The bridge will be 10 feet wide and will be located about six feet upstream of the current road

bridge due to drainage issues.

The current bridge will be used to support the 30 ton crane while the new bridge is being built, saving approximately \$50,000. Central hopes the project will be complete by Thanksgiving.

Please be aware that using the current bridge to hold the crane while the new bridge is being constructed will cause some traffic delays. There will be detours during the working hours on Monday through Thursday of each week until construction is completed. For more information on this project, contact the Gothenburg office at 308-537-3582.

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## On the Web - [www.cnppid.com](http://www.cnppid.com)

Nebraskastudies.org is a web site created by a partnership between Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET), the Nebraska Dept. of Education and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

The site offers teachers, students, and history buffs access to archival photos, documents, letters, video segments, maps, and more — capturing the life and history of Nebraska from pre-1500 to the present. It provides lesson plans and activities for use in the classroom and is one of the core sites teachers in Nebraska use for teaching the state's history.

From learning about pre-historic times to lessons about native tribes' life on the plains, on through pioneers, settlers, the railroad, the Dust Bowl, World War II and continuing to present day, the site contains a rich tapestry of Nebraska's people, places and events.

The impact on Nebraska made by the construction of the "Tri-County Project," the colloquial name for The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's hydro-irrigation project receives prominent treatment on the site. Contained within the 1925-1949 timeline, the website teaches students about the advent of irrigation and electrical power in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and follows the development of the project and the enormous benefits it continues to provide to Nebraska to the present day.

The NET partners recently completed enhancements to the site, including improved media, more and larger images, high-resolution videos and updated metadata.

Central's website contains a link to the site or you can go to [www.nebraskastudies.org/index.html](http://www.nebraskastudies.org/index.html). The site is professionally produced, extremely educational and, perhaps more important, fun to look at!