



News Release

HOLDREGE, Neb. - The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors heard reports on water conservation efforts from Central's conservation director and an irrigation water management specialist at Monday's board meeting.

Conservation Director Marcia Trompke presented information collected from the 2018 irrigation season. Currently, 59 percent of acres on Central's system are irrigated with pivots (a total of 621 pivots), 40 percent by gated pipe and the remaining one percent is mostly sub-surface drip irrigation.

Trompke reported on construction projects that had improved Central's system in 2018. The wetland access projects have added 6.27 miles of pipeline to Central's system. These pipelines will allow Central to deliver water to six different areas in Phelps and Gosper counties for recharge during times of excess flows.

Trompke also gave an update on the E67 Telemetry Project. E67 producers were able to use a phone app and get details on soil moisture availability during the 2018 irrigation season. The server for the E67 project will begin being moved to Central for future management. The Nebraska Environmental Trust - which helped fund the project - also notified Trompke that Central was granted an extension for access to their funding through June 2019. Trompke said this would allow Central to complete equipment purchases for the E-67 project.

Curtis Scheele, irrigation water management specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, presented his annual conservation report, summarizing activity related to the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). There were 20 contracts awarded cost-share funds in 2018 for a total of \$471,719 spent on installing center pivots, sub-surface drip systems, and numerous other small non-irrigation related contracts.

Scheele also reported that 38 contracts were awarded under the Conservation Stewardship Program, providing a total of \$854,856 for improvements in pest, nutrient, range and irrigation water management, as well as efforts involving cover crops and crop rotation on more than 45, 000 acres within the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District.

Also at Monday's meeting:

- The board approved the operating budget for the 2019 fiscal year, which goes into effect on Jan. 1. The budget anticipates total revenue of \$19.6 million, including \$12.1 million from the sale of hydroelectric power, \$4.14 million from irrigation delivery service, and \$3.34 million from other sources.
- The directors voted to have no change in irrigation rates for the 2019 irrigation season. The rate for a base allotment of 9 inches per acre will be \$34.61 and \$1.21 per acre/inch above the base allotment.
- The board approved funding to Johnson Lake Development, Inc., in the amount of \$54,897 (a 2.7 percent increase from 2018) pursuant to the Johnson Lake Services Agreement, which covers expenses such as administration, communications, lawn/tree waste site management and garbage collection.
- The board approved the renewal rates for the 2019 Property and Casualty Insurance from Harry A. Koch Co. in the amount of \$169,538 for property damage, boiler and machinery, inland marine and terrorism insurance and \$248,868 for general and management liability, excess liability, business automobile, worker's compensation/employer's liability, and commercial crime/public employee dishonesty insurance.
- Civil engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy is currently at elevation 3,253.2 feet above sea level or 1.4 million acre feet, and 80.7 percent capacity. Inflows to the reservoir are approximately 1,300 cubic feet per second, which is near normal for this time of year.
- Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford reported that sign-up for the 2019 Water Leasing Program is going well and has approximately 2,400 acres enrolled of the 3,000 maximum acres. Ford also said water is currently being pumped into the Funk Lagoon Waterfowl Production Areas for habitat improvement and recharge, and water is being pumped into Elwood Reservoir for recharge as of this week.

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