



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) - The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors elected new officers and seated a new board member at the first monthly meeting of 2023 on Thursday.

David Rowe of Johnson Lake was elected to his third two-year term as board president. Rowe has represented Dawson County on Central's board since 2005 and was re-elected this past election year. Other directors elected as officers by their fellow board members were Kyle Shepherd of North Platte, vice president; William Knoerzer of Elwood, secretary; and Scott Olson of Minden, treasurer.

The newest board member elected in November is Brent Soneson of Holdrege, representing Phelps County.

Also at Thursday's meeting:

- Staff reported that Central finalized a deal for up to \$19.1 million from the State of Nebraska to divert water into the E65 Canal, Phelps Canal, Elwood Reservoir and several waterfowl production areas to provide groundwater recharge over the next 15 years.
- In addition, Central also completed work on a contract with the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program for \$9.15 million for Central to provide groundwater aquifer recharge services associated with the Phelps Canal and Elwood Reservoir for up to 20 years. The Platte Program also provided Central \$2 million to assist with a project to install a seepage control system below the dam at Elwood Reservoir to help support those recharge activities.
- The board of directors approved a construction services contract with RJH Consultants for the Elwood Dam Seepage Mitigation Project and approved the engineering design contract with JEO Consulting Group for the new E-65 Siphon Project.
- The board approved the inclusion of 1,320 acres in the 2023 Water Leasing Program. In exchange for payment of \$100/acre, irrigation customers who submit acres for the program agree to not irrigate the acres. Instead, the Platte River Recovery Program leases the water which is added to the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy and is available to benefit wildlife habitat along the Platte River.
- Legal counsel Charles Brewster reported to the board that a motion to dismiss has been filed in the pending litigation against the District in Phelps County District Court.
- The directors approved a work order of \$130,000 for Central's portion of work done on the Middle Phillips Boat Ramp project in conjunction with Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. NGPC will reimburse Central for most of the cost related to the project. Completion of the project is expected next summer.
- Hydraulic Project Operations Manager Cory Steinke gave an update on replacement of the bridge at East Midway Lake south of Cozad. The bid for the bridge construction was \$2.7 million. Central will provide 20% of the cost with Dawson County and the federal government responsible for the remaining balance and construction.
- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation was at 3225.0 feet on Thursday (44.7% of capacity), which is up over one foot since the board's committee meeting on Dec. 19. Inflows are around 925 cubic feet per second (cfs) and releases are about 150 cfs. Snowpack in the North Platte basin is currently at 126% of median average and 113% of median average in the South Platte basin.
- General Manager Devin Brundage gave the board an overview and discussed potential concepts for a new Water Services Headquarters located on the west edge of Holdrege.
- Two new employees were recently hired to work at the district. Tom Minnis as an irrigation service specialist in Holdrege and Chuck Wilson in a general maintenance position in Gothenburg.
- Central's Eagle Viewing facilities will be open to the public once again this year. The facility at Johnson No. 2 Hydroplant and the Kingsley Dam facility will both open January 7 and be open every weekend through the end of February. Hours are 8 a.m., to 1 p.m., at the J-2 site and 8 a.m., to 2 p.m., at Kingsley.

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