News Release

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

Conservation Director Marcia Trompke initiated a teleconference with Adam Setzler of McCrometer, Inc., who demonstrated the capabilities available to producers who are part of the E-67 Telemetry Project. The project involved equipping all 67 turnouts in the E-67 Canal area (southeast of Johnson Lake) with telemetry equipment that provides irrigation, climatic and evapotranspiration data to customers' computers, tablets and smart phones to assist with their irrigation management decisions and improve irrigation efficiency.

Trompke said the next step is to work individually with producers to gather input on how to best tailor the telemetry tools to their individual needs.

Her report also included information about the sub-surface drip (SDI) demonstration sites using water from Central's irrigation canals. Operation of the SDI systems have now been turned over to the producers, said Trompke, who has been operating irrigation deliveries at the sites for the past several years.

Trompke concluded with a summary of several of Central's irrigation construction projects completed over the past year, including canal lining projects, pipeline installations, open-ditch retirements and groundwater recharge projects.

Curtis Scheele, irrigation water management specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, presented his annual conservation report, summarizing activity related to the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Through the program, $323,000 in cost-share funds were awarded to producers for pivot, drip-irrigation, and soil moisture sensing projects within the Tri-Basin Natural Resources District.

Also at Monday's meeting:

- The board approved the operating budget for the 2018 fiscal year, which goes into effect on Jan. 1. The budget anticipates total revenues of $20.98 million, including $12.04 million from the sale of hydroelectric power, $5.68 million from irrigation delivery service, and $3.26 million from other sources.

- The directors approved a 1.5 percent increase in irrigation delivery rates for the 2018 irrigation (51 cents/acre). 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 the final $159,572 payment to the W.S. Bunch Co., of Omaha, which recently completed the $612,251 siphon-coating project on the E-65 Canal.

- Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford reported that the pipeline project from the Phelps Canal to the Funk Lagoon Waterfowl Management Area is nearly complete. All of the pipe is in the ground, he said, and work will continue on the inlet and outlet structures.

  Ford added that groundwater recharge activities started last week with pumping into Elwood Reservoir and diversions into the upper end of the Phelps Canal. Recharge operations will continue as weather permits, he said.

- The board approved legal services agreements with the Anderson, Klein, Brewster & Brandt law firm and with attorney Robert McCormick.

- Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation is currently at elevation 3,253.3 feet (1.41 million acre-feet or 83 percent of capacity) and rising gradually. Recent inflows have been about 1,100 cubic feet per second (cfs), which is about 82 percent of the historical median.

  He also said that releases from the reservoir are currently being managed to provide 1,000 cfs at the North Platte Diversion Dam to comply with license conditions for non-irrigation season flows in the Platte River.

###