



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) - The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's board of directors heard reports on water conservation efforts from Dusty Way, Central's irrigation operations and maintenance assistant supervisor at Monday's board meeting.

Way, who has been working with Central's Conservation Director Marcia Trompke through this year's irrigation season, presented information collected during the 2019 irrigation season. Currently, 60 percent of the acres served by Central are irrigated by a center pivot (a total of 635 pivots), 39 percent by gated pipe and the remaining one percent is served by sub-surface drip irrigation.

Way also reported that work on the Linder Waterfowl Production Area pipeline was completed recently, which was the final of the six recent WPA wildlife habitat/groundwater recharge projects on Central's system. These pipelines allow Central to provide water to the WPAs in Phelps and Gosper counties during times of excess flows in the Platte River.

Trompke reported on the E67 Telemetry Project she has been working on for the past several years. The project allows E67 producers access to information including irrigation flow rates, precipitation, and soil moisture content via computer, tablet or smartphone to improve irrigation management. This year, the project data was transferred and is now housed on a server in house at Central's Holdrege headquarters. Most of the equipment for this project was purchased with grant funding from the Nebraska Environmental Trust; Central's contributions have been in-kind labor and smaller equipment installations.

Curtis Scheele, irrigation water management specialist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, presented his annual conservation report. Scheele reported 18 new Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts for the 2019 fiscal year (ending Sept. 30). This included installation of three new pivots, one sub-surface drip irrigation system and 14 other non-irrigation related projects totaling \$515,868.

Scheele also presented numbers from this year's Conservation Stewardship Program, providing a total of \$858,127 to 10 different contracts. The program funds projects to improve 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 2020 fiscal year, which goes into effect on Jan. 1. The budget anticipates total revenue of \$26.3 million, including \$17.9 million from the sale of hydroelectric power, \$3.7 million from irrigation delivery service, and \$4.7 million from other sources.
- The board voted to leave irrigation rates unchanged for the 2020 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.
- Civil engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy is at elevation 3257.3 feet above sea level or 87.1 percent of capacity. Inflows to the lake are around 1,150 cubic feet per second (cfs) while outflows are approximately 1,300 cfs.
- Irrigation Operations Manager Dave Ford reported that the Water Leasing Program sign-up period is currently on-going with about 1,600 acres enrolled so far. The cap for the 2020 irrigation season is 3,000 acres, and the enrollment period ends Dec. 18, 2019.
- The board approved water service agreements for supplemental storage water with the Keith-Lincoln, Lisco, Paxton-Hershey, Platte Valley and Suburban irrigation projects for 2020 through 2022.

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