



News Release

(HOLDREGE, Neb.) -- The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District Board of Directors met Monday and received information presented by Natural Resources & Compliance Manager Mike Drain regarding the 2020 Annual Operating Plan between Central and Nebraska Public Power District.

The plan is based on the volume of water stored in Lake McConaughy during the storage season and the irrigation season and provides operating parameters for diversions by the two districts. The plan includes monitoring water supply projections and allows variations for certain water supply scenarios that could occur throughout the following year.

The annual operating plan is part of an agreement negotiated in 1954 that set up regular water operations and procedures. This is the first formal annual operating plan that has been negotiated since 2008. Both Districts have worked cooperatively through informal operations planning since that time.

Also at Monday's meeting:

- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy is at elevation 3257.0 feet above sea level or 86.6 percent of capacity. Inflows and outflows to the lake both remain around 1,200 cubic feet per second. Icing issues have been minimal so far, although one instance did occur which allowed Central to bring levels at Johnson Lake down to normal winter operating levels.
- The board approved contracted acres for the 2020 Water Leasing Program with 150 accounts enrolled covering 3,018 acres. The Platte River Recovery Program leases the water from Central's irrigation customers; and the water is added to the Environmental Account in Lake McConaughy and is then available for release to benefit wildlife habitat along the Platte River.
- The board approved the use of lake improvement funds to improve the walking path on the Mallard Beach jetty to the recently constructed lighthouse. The board also approved funding for new emergency responder directional signage at Lake McConaughy's K-1 Cabin Area.
- The board approved a change of location for the March 2, 2020 board meeting to the Rodeway Inn in Holdrege to coincide with the Central District Water Users annual meeting.
- Irrigation Operations Manager Dave Ford reported end of the year rain totals for 2019 were: Holdrege 31.93 inches; Minden, 33.17 inches; and Bertrand, 35.54 inches. All of the rainfall totals were well above annual averages.
- Electrical Project Operations Manager Eric Hixson reported that 2019 was the fourth highest generation year on record for Central with a total of 386,000 megawatt-hours of generation.

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