

The Communicator

Published by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

Central Recognizes Importance of Recharge to Region

This past February, The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District diverted over 3,000 acre-feet of additional water for intentional recharge. This follows immediately on the heels of 2023 deliveries which eclipsed *17,000 acre-feet*. Intentional recharge is made possible by Central through Water Service Agreements with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NeDNR) and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP).

These commitments from PRRIP and NeDNR recognize the value and important benefits of recharge to Nebraska. Combined, the agreements commit nearly \$30 million for recharge deliveries to sustain the benefits they are realizing, while providing revenue to help offset operation, maintenance, and delivery costs to the District.

The PRRIP agreement provided \$9.15 million for groundwater aquifer recharge services associated with the Elwood Reservoir and parts of the Phelps Canal with a term extending out for at least 20 years. In addition, NeDNR provided \$19.1 million for excess flow diversions into the E65 Canal, Phelps Canal, Elwood Reservoir, and several Waterfowl Production Areas over the next 15 years. In partnership with the Tri-Basin and Central Platte Natural Resource Districts, out of the \$19.1 million, Tri-Basin provided \$1.19 million while the Central Platte NRD contributed \$1.2 million.

Recharge activities are identified in two separate and very distinct ways, one is known as intentional, and the other is known as incidental. The long-term agreements between Central, PRRIP and NeDNR are part of intentional recharge efforts. In contrast, recharge that occurs normally from diverting water into Central's canal system for irrigation deliveries is referred to as incidental recharge. Over the last 80 years incidental recharge has resulted in an artificially high water table known as "The Mound."

Not to be confused with groundwater, the mound is surface water stored underground as part of Central's approved "U-2 and U-12 appropriation for Incidental Underground Water Storage rights." The mound's creation has been funded through revenue generated by Central's operations over the



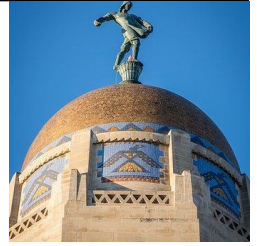
Irrigation Service Specialist Keith Jauken opens the gates to deliver water into Funk Lagoon. This recharge occurs with excess flows within the basin

past 80 years. Those revenue sources are largely provided through energy sales and water service deliveries, with energy sales accounting for nearly 70% of total gross revenue from 2011 to 2021. More recently, support from residential leases around area lakes and these recharge agreements have also helped contribute to operations and maintenance of the District's aging infrastructure and helped keep costs for all customers as low as possible. The artificially high water table created by Central also supports the Imported Water Supply Credit to the Republican Basin while providing a positive financial benefit to groundwater pumpers in the Tri-County irrigated area.

Since beginning operation in 1942, it is estimated Central's project has already contributed 10.5 million acre-feet to create the mound. Central has further continued supporting groundwater management by diverting excess flows for intentional recharge through contracts for nearly 15 years.

Central recognizes the importance of recharge to our region, along with others that receive the benefits created by our surface water irrigated infrastructure and long-standing customers. Central's investment and customer commitment is ongoing with construction efforts that secure the surface water irrigated infrastructure. These investments make it possible to sustain the benefits and the heritage of surface water deliveries that helped create prosperity in agriculture across the Tri-County area along with a large part of Central and South Central Nebraska.

Legislative Bill Passes Allowing Directors to Vote on Irrigation & Lease Rates



An important piece of legislation was signed into law by Governor Jim Pillen on April 15 that affects Central's board of director's ability to now serve their constituents to the fullest ability.

LB1260, introduced by Senator Mike Jacobson of North Platte, is specific to public power & irrigation districts and allows Board of Directors who are irrigation customers to discuss and vote upon annual irrigation delivery rates. It also allows directors who have homes/cabins at District owned lakes to discuss and vote on the general terms and rates for those leases. The bill does not give authority for individual accounts, just standard rates and terms for all customers.

Approximately five years ago, in response to a question raised by a constituent to the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission, Central sought an advisory opinion from the Commission regarding any possible limits on the authorities of directors that were also customers of the District. Unexpectedly, the commission concluded that board members with either cabin leases or irrigation contracts with Central could not engage in discussions regarding or vote on matters related to those contracts. That opinion limited several of our directors in their important roles governing the district.

The bill was introduced during the 2024 legislative session and passed 40-0 with an emergency clause as part of a package of bills (LB1370) from the Natural Resources Committee meaning the law takes effect immediately.

With the passage of LB1260, our directors with a unique perspective that comes from being customers themselves, may now fully participate in the governance of the District. This was a critical bill that moving forward allows our directors to discuss, consider and vote on the issues that are the greatest importance to their constituents.

Central Enters into Power Contract with MEAN



A new power agreement went into effect on January 1, 2024 for the power generated at the Johnson No. 1 and Johnson No. 2 hydroplants with the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN). The contract runs through December 31, 2033.

Also on Jan. 1, the power generated at the Jeffrey hydroplant began selling on the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) market.

All generated power at J1 and J2 is being delivered to MEAN for their customers in Nebraska, Iowa, Colorado and Wyoming. Together, the two plants have the accredited capacity to produce about 42 megawatts of carbon free energy.

MEAN is one of four organizations that make up the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool (NMPP) energy coalition. MEAN is a not-for-profit organization that provides wholesale electricity supply and services to 69 participating communities in four states. The agreement with Central aligns with MEAN's Carbon Neutral 2050 Vision which was approved by their board in 2020.

The Jeffrey hydroplant was not initially included in the agreement with MEAN. Since Jan. 1, Central has sold the 20 MW of power generated by that plant in the SPP market.

At the May board meeting, Central directors approved adding the Jeffrey hydroplant to the MEAN contract for the period of July 1, 2024 through Dec. 31, 2024. This partially aligns the Jeffrey contract with that of J1 and J2 while the board continues to investigate ways to improve realized value.



Power from the J2 Hydroplant, located south of Lexington, is now under contract with MEAN

The Communicator

Published by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District
415 Lincoln St., P.O. Box 740
Holdrege, NE 68949-0740
(308) 995-8601

Editor: Alex Linden

The Communicator is published by CNPPID to inform its customers and interested parties of District activities and issues. © CNPPID, 2024

On the Lakefront



2024 Permitting Season, Setbacks and Inspections

With the 2024 permitting season already in full swing, the land administration team at Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District would like to remind everyone of the importance of knowing and having marked the **lot boundaries and buildable area or Shoreline and Water Access Facilities (SWAF) placement zone** prior to commencing on any permitted activity.

This step, along with the required pre-construction meeting helps ensure that projects are constructed in accordance with Central’s permitting procedures and helps avoid costly issues that can result from violations.

Expect Inspections

Throughout the year, the land administration is responsible for ensuring users and projects on Central’s land and waters are done in accordance within the requirements of the Land and Shoreline Management Plan, the District’s Permitting Procedures, leases and other contractual agreements. One of the ways in which this is accomplished is through routine site visits and inspections.

If you have any questions about allowable construction or Central’s permitting process, please contact any of the land administration team members listed in the chart below.

Johnson Lake Cabin-owners Tour Dates

Thursday, June 6

Thursday, July 18

Friday, August 9

Tours of Central’s hydro-irrigation project leave from the Johnson Lake EMS Building at 7 a.m., and return around 5 p.m. Lunch at Ole’s Big Game Steakhouse and transportation is provided.

For reservations contact

Alex Linden:

alinden@cnppid.com or

(308) 995-3560

Employee Name	Project subject matter	Contact Info
Luke Ritz (Senior Land Administrator)	Land and Shoreline Management Plan; permit rules and regulators, Certified Contractor Program; lease questions	Office: (308) 537-3582x4186 Cell: (308) 529-0009 lritz@cnppid.com
DeAnna Ernstmeyer (Land Administrator)	Dwelling & Associated Construction Permit; dredge, excavate, fill permits; concession leases; residential lease questions & transfers; pre-construction/on-site meetings	Office: (308) 995-3563 Cell: (308) 991-5565 dernstmeyer@cnppid.com
Dustin Ehlers (Land Administrator)	Shoreline & Water Access Facility Permit (SWAF); erosion control permit; pre-construction/on-site meetings	Office: (308) 537-3582x4184 Cell: (308) 991-9778 dehlers@cnppid.com

The Central Nebraska Public Power
and Irrigation District
P.O. Box 740
Holdrege, NE 68949-0740
Return Service Requested

Bulk Permit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 217
Holdrege, NE

Irrigation Season Kicks off With Customer Events



*Devin Brundage (left) Niles Buettner (middle) &
Justin Warring (right) grilling burgers in Axtell*



Customers enjoy lunch at the event in Bertrand

Central's irrigation department hosted a pair of customer appreciation lunches on March 5. For the second straight year, events were held in both Bertrand and Axtell. All irrigation customers were invited to enjoy a lunch and visit with their irrigation service specialists.

Additionally, the Central District Water Users held their annual meeting on March 12 in Holdrege. Central staff provided updates on legislation, water supply, Kingsley Dam and future projects within the District.



*Cory Steinke gives a presentation to the Central
District Water Users at their annual meeting*

New Employees Join Central, Retirees Say Goodbye

Central would like to welcome the new employees that have joined the Central District in recent months as replacements for retired personnel.

Haley Munson is a purchasing agent in Holdrege; **Frances Fecht** is the new GIS Specialist at the Holdrege location and **Dan Newbrey** works in the Gothenburg Control Center as an Assistant Control Operator.

Central also wants to thank two employees for their years of service and wishes them well in retirement.

Trent Ringenberg retired after 31 years as the drafting/GIS analyst and **Duane Cernousek** from his position of purchasing agent.