

The Communicator

Published by The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

Central Signs Agreement With Gosper County to Replace Bridge

The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District board of directors have approved an interlocal agreement with Gosper County for bridge replacement. In the agreement, Central agrees to begin the process of replacing the Johnson Lake inlet bridge that was forced to be closed by the county in November 2025 due to safety reasons.

Currently, that bridge was owned and maintained by Gosper County. With the new agreement, Central would take over ownership of the inlet bridge and commit to remove the current bridge and replace it with a new steel and concrete bridge. The district understands the importance of the bridge as an emergency vehicle route and access to Johnson Lake for residents and recreation visitors. Gosper County agreed to pay \$300,000 towards the cost of removal of the current inlet bridge and location requirements of the new one.

In exchange for taking over and replacing the Johnson Lake inlet bridge, Gosper County would close two of Central's bridges over the supply canal. Central would handle the removal of the district's two timber bridges located at supply canal mile post 70.7 and at post 73.4 which are downstream from the Johnson Lake outlet bridge.

Central approved a contract with Oak Creek Engineering of Kearney to design the new inlet bridge that will be located at the same site as the existing bridge. Estimated cost of the project is \$3 million. The engineering firm has started design of the project, and a construction timeline is dependent on contractors and availability of bridge materials. CNPPID



The Johnson Lake inlet bridge was closed due to safety reasons by Gosper County. Central signed an agreement to build a replacement bridge.

Hydraulic Operations Manager Cory Steinke projects that construction could begin in late 2026 with the earliest completion date of the project in late summer or early fall 2027, however it is expected to be done prior to the 2028 recreation season.

Together the working partnership provides cost savings for both entities. Central takes responsibility over the Johnson Lake inlet bridge from Gosper County by installing an updated bridge to meet today's standards and by removing the bridges, Central is expected to save \$5 million in replacement costs and future maintenance of the timber structures.



Bridges pictured above are the two timber bridges over the supply canal that will be closed by the county and removed by Central

Brundage Announces Upcoming Retirement as District General Manager

After more than 34 years of service with the Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District, including the past seven-plus years as General Manager, Devin Brundage announced his plans to retire at the end of the year.

Brundage shared the news during a board of director's meeting, noting that his retirement will take effect on December 31, 2026. He expressed his commitment to assisting the District throughout the transition and continuing to support Central's mission so the organization remains strong and positioned for long-term success.

"On behalf of Central's Board of Directors, I want to congratulate Devin on his upcoming retirement," Board President Kyle Shepherd said. "Devin has been a true leader. His vision for Central's role in a rapidly changing future has helped us maintain the essential balance needed for success today, tomorrow and for many years to come."

Throughout his tenure, Brundage advanced a long-term vision centered on responsible stewardship of Nebraska's water and energy resources and on aligning, maintaining and developing infrastructure to support the District's future and its service to the people of Nebraska.

"I want to express my gratitude for the dedication of the District's board, staff and partners," Brundage said. "I'm confident that Central's strong assets, institutional knowledge, and mission to serve position it well for continued leadership and opportunity in bringing prosperity to Nebraska."

The board of director's hired Woods Aitken law firm of Lincoln to assist in the executive search process. A job posting was posted in late April and the national search of applicants will remain open until June 5.



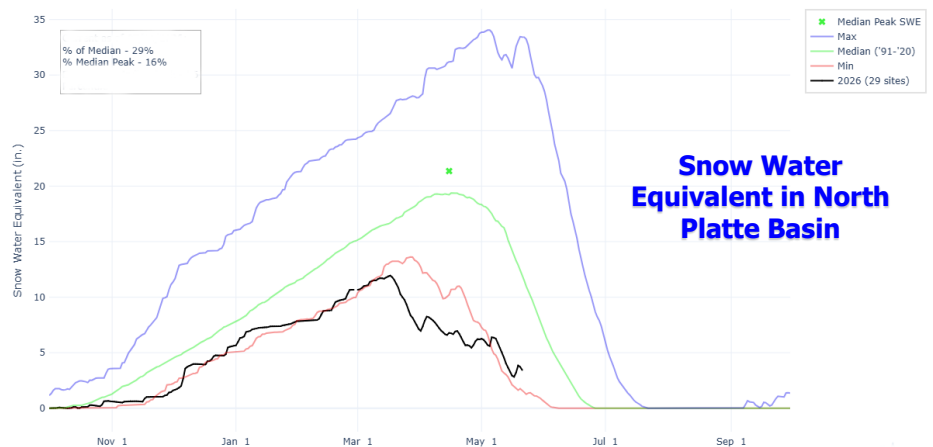
General Manager Devin Brundage, pictured with CNPPID Board President Kyle Shepherd and Governor Jim Pillen, announced his retirement at the end of 2026.

Snowmelt Forecast Well Below Average

The extremely dry weather experienced over the winter and early spring in the local region was also experienced in the mountain ranges of Wyoming and Colorado. This is monitored very closely by Central as snowmelt is one major factor that affects flows into Lake McConaughy.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's April forecast shows that spring water runoff from mountain snowmelt in the North Platte River Basin above Glendo Dam is expected to be well below average this year. Snowpack is well below average and the Upper North Platte River Basin is in severe drought. From April through July, total runoff is expected to reach approximately 140,000 acre-feet, which is only 15% of the 30-year average. Snowpack and runoff started about 30 days earlier than normal, with a snow water equivalent to approximately 9-10 inches less than normal.

However, Lake McConaughy being at near 50% capacity is holding 865,000 acre-feet of water and Central customers can expect a full irrigation supply in 2026.



Snow Water Equivalent in North Platte Basin

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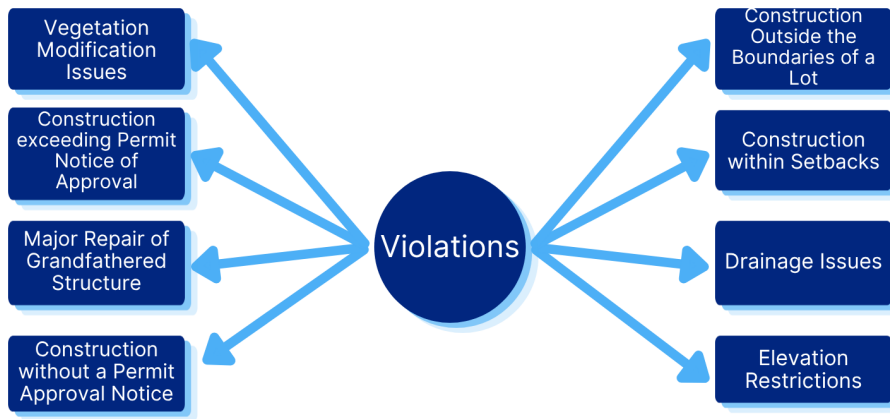
On the Lakefront



Opportunities to Avoid Future Issues

As we enter the 2026 permitting season, the Land Administration team would like to take a moment to look back on the past year with our customers in an effort to avoid many of the common violations that occurred in 2025. By doing so, we hope to avoid costly violations and after-the-fact permitting issues that were frequently identified in the previous permitting season.

Below is a diagram of the frequent violations from the last year that the Land Administration team is optimistic that we can reduce by working closely with our customer and their contactors.



Johnson Lake Cabin-owners Tour Dates

Thursday, June 18

Thursday, July 16

Thursday, August 13

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

Tours for cabin owners at Jeffrey Reservoir or Lake McConaughy can also be organized if groups are interested.

For reservations contact

Alex Linden:

alinden@cnppid.com or

(308) 995-3560

Employee Name	Project subject matter	Contact Info
Luke Ritz (Senior Land Administrator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land and shoreline management plan Permit rules and regulators Concession leases Agricultural/Residential lease questions 	Office: (308) 537-3582 x4186 Cell: (308) 529-0009 lritz@cnppid.com
DeAnna Ernstmeyer (Land Administrator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dwelling & associated construction permit Dredge, excavate, fill permits Residential lease questions & transfers Pre-Construction/on-site meetings Vegetation removal/planting 	Office: (308) 995-3563 Cell: (308) 991-5565 dernstmeyer@cnppid.com
Dustin Ehlers (Land Administrator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shoreline & Water Access Facility Permit (SWAF) Dredge, excavate, fill permits Erosion control/shoreline protection permit Pre-Construction/on-site meetings Vegetation removal/planting Johnson Lake vacation rentals 	Office: (308) 537-3582 x4184 Cell: (308) 991-9778 dehlers@cnppid.com
Nathan Fleecs (Land Administrator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural Leases Dredge, excavate, fill permits Pre-Construction/on-site meetings Vegetation removal/planting Shoreline & Water Access Facility Permit (SWAF) 	Office: (308) 995-3559 Cell: (308) 296-3642 nfleecs@cnppid.com

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Irrigation Department Prepares for Upcoming Season



Irrigation staff battled debris piles that gathered like the photo above of a gate structure on the Phelps Canal north of Holdrege

In preparation for the upcoming 2026 growing season, Central's irrigation department faced many challenges during the offseason.

A major issue that rose to the top was the abundance of debris and corn shucks that filled the canals. Prior to filling the canals, irrigation service specialists throughout the district were tasked with trying to remove all the debris. In order to provide timely and efficient delivery to our irrigation customers, it is essential that our canals and laterals are clear of debris.

Another major project that the irrigation department worked on was the replacement and maintenance of underground pipelines that had been damaged last season.

Due to the drought conditions in the irrigation area, customers were asking for water service earlier than normal. Headgates to the E65 canal were opened on March 31 and the Phelps Canal began to fill the second week of April.



Central is a proud sponsor and participant of the annual Water Jamboree that was held near Harlan County Reservoir. In its 33rd year, the 2026 event welcomed over 470 students from 17 schools to teach them about the importance of water.

