

The Communicator

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A day in the life of an Irrigation Service Specialist

“Chasing water” is what Keith Jauken, irrigation service specialist, says he spends his summer days doing. Jauken is the longest employed canal patrolman based out of Central’s Holdrege irrigation department.

Jauken is responsible for maintaining four different canals near the Funk, Neb., area. He covers many miles a day and often makes multiple trips to different check points along his canal system in one day. He starts his day at the head end of his canal and can tell by taking a quick look at the flow moving over the first gate whether he needs to adjust the level to accommodate for the irrigators that will be using water to irrigate that day.

He travels the winding curves of the canal road and makes adjustments to gates as he goes along, depending on how many farmers downstream may be shutting down or turning on their irrigation motors that day. The gates on Jauken’s canals and side laterals are not automated, so he is solely responsible for making changes to get the water where it needs to be and on time. He also has to be prepared to make adjustments for a rainfall event

or a high temperature day. As his morning goes on, he may need to



Jauken inspects a flow meter that isn’t working properly before deciding whether he can fix the problem or to replace the meter altogether.

check and re-check certain gates as many as four or five times to make sure levels are staying where they need to be.

If his levels are off, his most used tool – a tape measure – will be the first

thing he grabs. He measures the length of space between the handle and the top of the gate, and then uses a chart to know how much to raise or lower the gate to get the right flow of water. He keeps a notepad handy so he can keep track of which tenants are irrigating each day, and then does entries into the computer system after lunch most days.

His cell phone is another tool he uses regularly, keeping in touch with each of his irrigators to see what their plans are with each of their fields. Jauken keeps his conversations cordial and often asks about how his customer’s family is doing or answers questions about his own son’s recent wedding.

“I always try to be available for my customers,” Jauken says. “Whether its 6 a.m. or 10 p.m., I know that if they’re calling me then it has to be something important.”

There are multiple issues that can cause problems for Jauken’s system in a day. Blocked intake screens from too much vegetation or trash in the water, a flow meter that isn’t working properly, and a farmer who started his run late due to a power malfunc-

Specialist cont'd

tion are just a few of the examples that arose in a single morning this season. Of course, these are all issues for which Jauken is prepared. He clears intake screens with a special rake and calls for the maintenance crew to spray the overgrown vegetation soon. He removes the flow meter on site and replaces it with a new one when the original is beyond repair. He has backup plans for where he can release water, should a farmer not be able to take the scheduled water from the canal at his scheduled time.

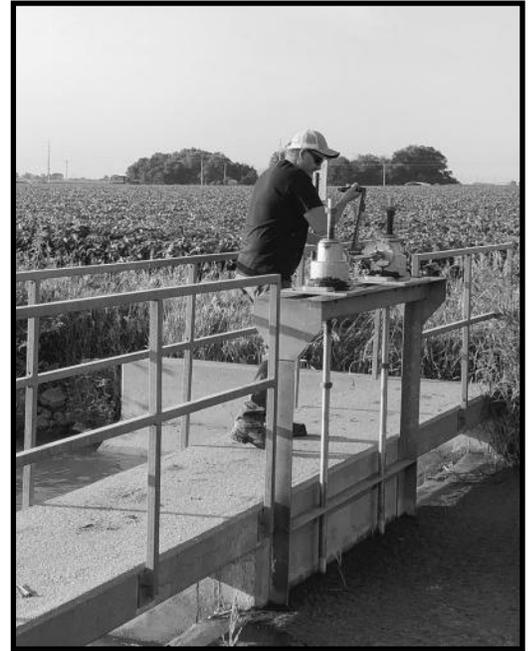
Each day's work varies, depending on how many farmers are irrigating that day.

"The days are all different, and I can have a few really busy days with lots of farmers coming on, and then hit a day with only a few guys running," Jauken said. "But that keeps me on my toes, and makes me pay better attention to whatever challenges I might see."

Once irrigation season ends in September, Jauken and the other canal patrolmen will start draining down their canals for the winter. They'll spend the winter months doing repairs to gates and flow meters, installing pipelines and fixing road crossings or improving drainage in certain areas. Then come spring they will begin cleaning out the canals and preparing for another irrigation season.

After 15 years on the job, Jauken says the most important aspect of his position is maintaining good relationships with the farmers he serves. He truly believes that by having open communication and a friendly relationship with his customers, the days run smoother and are much more enjoyable for everyone involved.

Decades of operating this canal system have given Jauken and his prede-



Raising gates — Irrigation Service Specialist Keith Jauken uses a tool to raise a canal gate to allow a higher flow of water to enter his canal during irrigation season.

cessors the tools necessary to make growing crops in south central Nebraska worth the hard work.

Water Leasing Program to grow in acre threshold for 2019

Central is once again partnering with the Platte River Recovery and Implementation Program to offer customers an option to "lease" their contracted water in exchange for dryland farming.

The customers who lease the water are paid \$220 per acre from PRRIP. In return, they are prohibited to irrigate those acres that they have contracted out for the crop year.

In 2016, the water leasing program's inaugural year, there were 58 accounts that leased a total of 1,037 acres to the program. The program has grown in size each year, with 112



accounts leasing 2,055 acres in 2018.

Because of the continued growth of the program, Central and PRRIP have revisited their contract terms and raised the threshold of total acres to 3,000 instead of the previous 2,000 acres for the 2019 water year.

According to Central's Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford, most of the acres that are leased each year are odd-shaped tracts of land—especially pivot corners. Central does inspections of the land after each irrigation season to ensure the land was not irrigated and

the terms of the contract were all met.

The water leasing program has allowed the PRRIP to continue working toward their First Increment goals of reducing shortages of target flows in the Platte River.

Central will begin accepting enrollment applications for the 2019 irrigation season beginning November 20, 2018 and ending December 20, 2018. To enroll, call 308-995-3572 to schedule an appointment.

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On the Lakefront



The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District will lower water levels at two of its regulating reservoirs this fall in preparation for shoreline inspections and maintenance projects at hydroelectric plants below the reservoirs.

The water level at Jeffrey Lake will begin to decline on Sept. 10 to an elevation about seven feet below normal operating levels. The reservoir south of Brady, Neb., will be down for at least two days to facilitate shoreline inspections. If inspections indicate that more work is required, the level could remain low to allow for repairs, but should return to normal levels in October. Additional notice to the public will be provided in the event of an extended drawdown.

Johnson Lake's water levels will begin to drop on Sept. 25. The goal is to reach an elevation of 2,608 feet or approximately ten feet below current levels. The lake should begin filling again on Oct. 8, and will take about 11 days to return to normal levels.

Water levels at Plum Creek Canyon Lake and Midway Lake will be somewhat lower than normal because of the reduced flow of water through the Supply Canal system, but the lakes will not decline as much as Johnson and Jeffrey lakes.

The public boat ramps in these areas will likely be out of service until elevation levels return to normal ranges.

All drawdown plans are subject to change depending on river flows and rain events.

Land Administrator	Contact Info
Luke Ritz	Office: (308) 537-4186 Cell: (308) 529-0009 lritz@cnppid.com
Jim Brown	Office: (308) 995-3556 Cell: (308) 991-5602 jbrown@cnppid.com

ACCEPTABLE MATERIALS

- Properly anchored trees, treetops, root wads, logs, and hay bales may be allowed on a case-by-case basis.
- The use of broken concrete for erosion control or bank stabilization will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If allowed, the broken concrete must be free of exposed rebar, wire, wire mesh, asphalt paving material, paint, and other erodible materials. Broken concrete must range in size from 6 to 36 inches unless otherwise justified by a qualified engineer.
- Rock riprap with a density of at least 140 pounds per cubic foot, angular shape, and no dimension greater than 3.5 times its minimum dimension.
- Formed or fabricated concrete, Fabriform, and Solid Concrete Blocks which are angular in shape and have no dimension greater than 3.5 times its minimum dimension.
- Plastic, PVC, and/or Fiberglass.
- Metal and plated metal.
- Plated nuts, bolts, nails, cables, straps, etc. used in seawall construction.
- Untreated lumber.
- Treated lumber and wood pilings (creosote, chromate copper arsenate (CCA) or alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ)) used more than one foot above the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) of the lake.

NOTE

All tenants planning to do shoreline work during the draw down must speak with Jim or Luke to obtain necessary permits PRIOR to doing work.

PROHIBITED / RESTRICTED MATERIALS

- Vehicle bodies, farm machinery and metal junk, including appliances and metal containers, are prohibited.
- The use of asphalt or asphalt coated material as a fill, bank stabilization, or erosion control is prohibited.
- The use of organic debris as fill material is prohibited.
- Any material subject to leaching when in an aquatic environment is prohibited, including but not limited to, chemically-treated material, roofing material, and wood debris.
- Individual or unanchored tires are prohibited.
- Slab material, regardless of source, must be broken before placement so that the maximum dimension of an individual piece of material is no more than 3.5 times its minimum dimension unless otherwise justified by a qualified engineer.
- All material must be free of exposed rebar, wire and wire mesh.
- Non-encapsulated, beaded polystyrene.
- Treated lumber and pilings (creosote, chromate copper arsenate (CCA) or alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ)) used less than one foot above the OHWM of the lake.

The Central Nebraska Public Power
and Irrigation District
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Central provides Husker Harvest Day meals

Central is once again providing meals for area FFA students during the three-day Husker Harvest Days event near Grand Island next month.

Central has provided transportation and meal tickets for its irrigation customers to attend Husker Harvest days for many years. There is a shuttle provided to the Husker Harvest Days festival from Central's Holdrege location. Meal tickets are provided to attendees for a free lunch and the group usually returns to Holdrege by mid-afternoon.

Last year, Irrigation Division Manager Dave Ford decided to extend an invitation for meal tickets to be provided for area FFA groups who are allowed free entry to the event with a canned goods donation. Over 100 students from five different schools have received the lunch passes each year.

According to their website, Husker Harvest Days is the world's largest totally irrigated working farm show. They feature the "latest equipment, supplies and technologies available to today's producers."



Attendees are welcome to visit vendor booths, check out different displays and even view equipment in action during the scheduled demonstrations.

This year's event is scheduled for

Sept. 11-13 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. To find a more detailed schedule of events, check out their website at www.huskerharvestdays.com.

If you're an irrigation customer interested in attending this event with Central's group, call Catherine at 308-995-3572 today to reserve your spot. Seating is limited!

<http://www.cnppid.com>

On the Web

If you're interested in our current activities, visit (and "like") our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cnppid to keep tabs on the latest news and updates from the Central District.