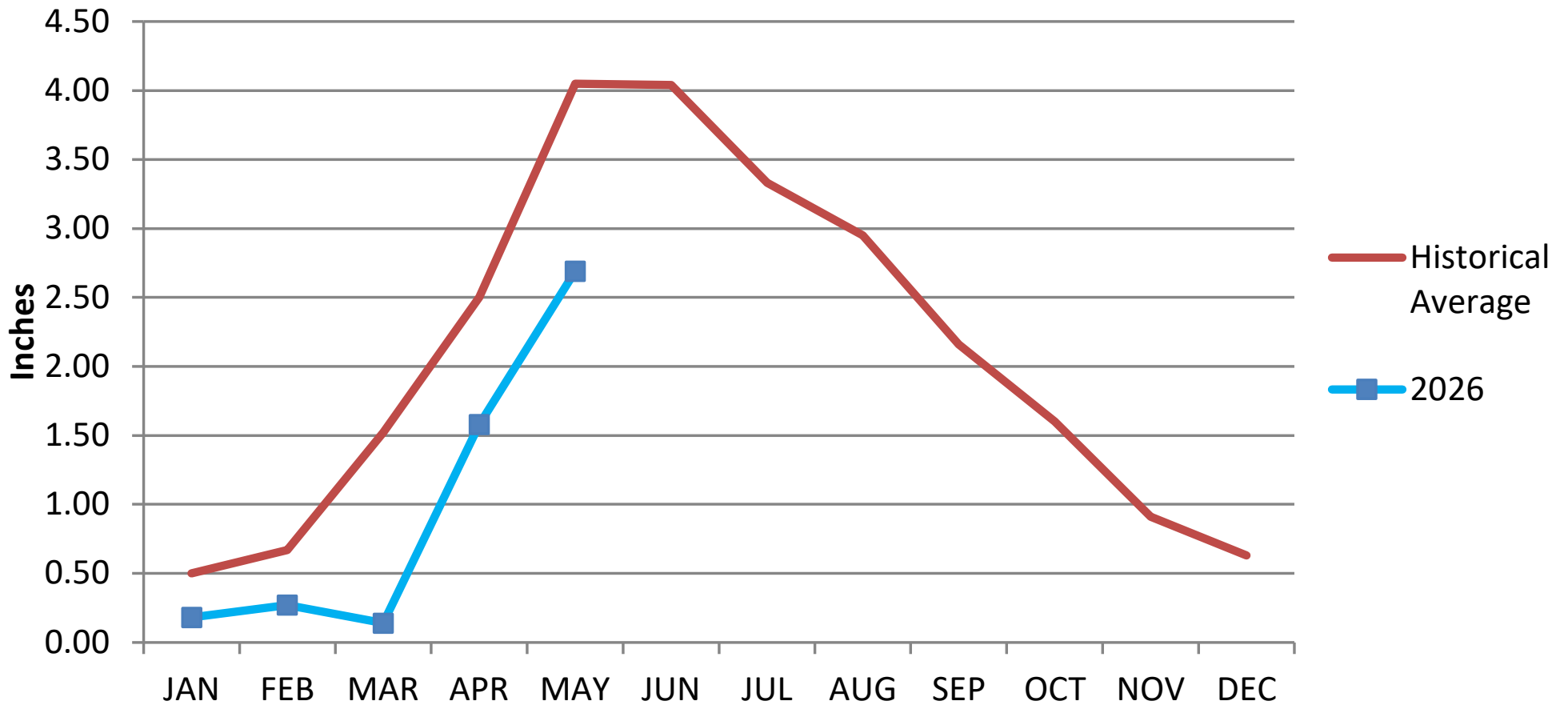
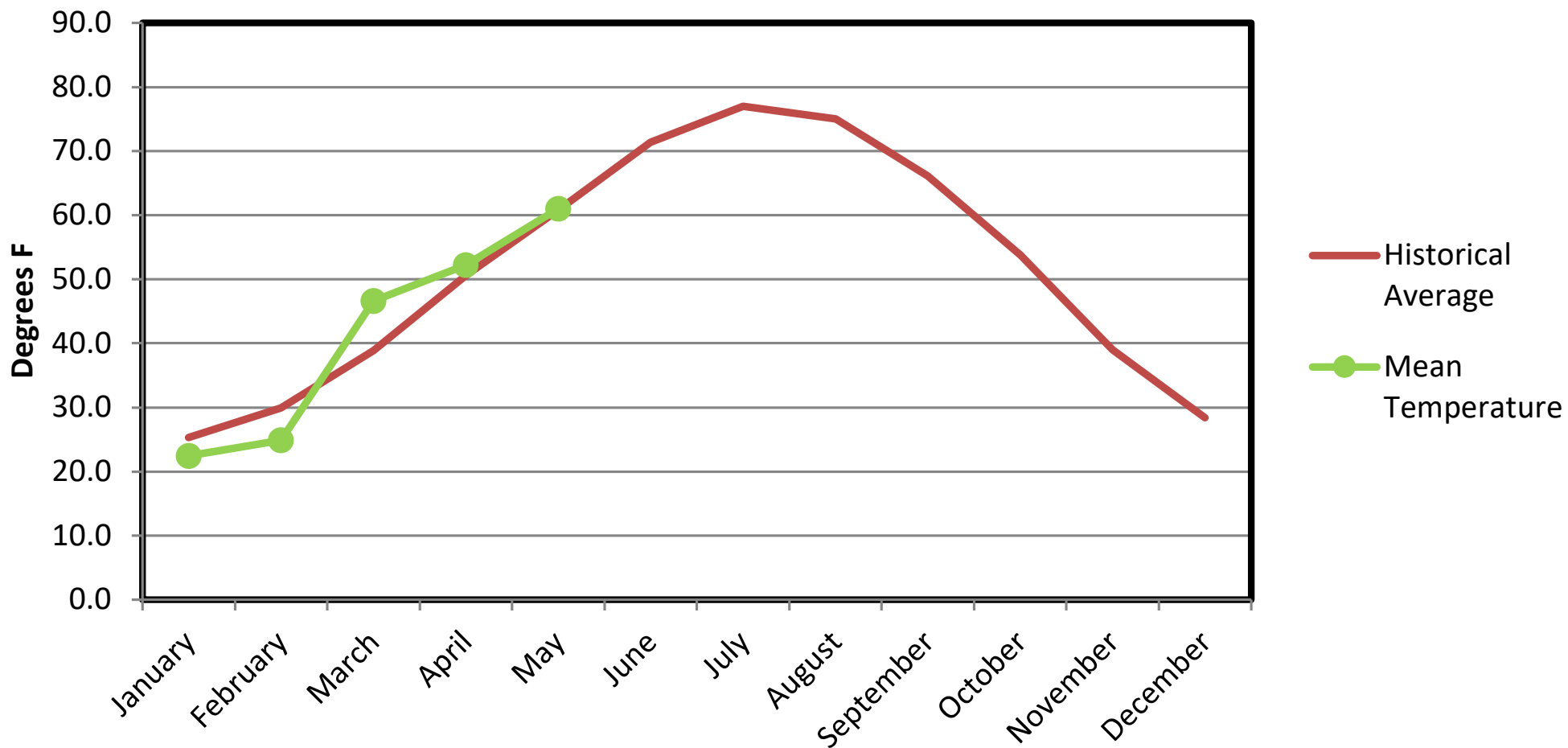


Tri-Basin NRD Holdrege Monthly Precipitation - 2026



Tri-Basin NRD

Holdrege Monthly Mean Temperature - 2026



Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington.
Holdrege, NE 68949



Phone: (308) 995-6688
Fax: (308) 995-6992
Email: tribasin@tribsinrd.org

Natural Resources District

May 2026 - Holdrege

Temperature: (°F)

* High: 93° (Recorded May 26)

* Low: 29° (Recorded May 2)

* Mean: 62.9° (Normal for May 51.2")

Mean High: 75.2° (Normal: 64.9°)

Mean Low: 44.8° (Normal: 37.6°)

NOTES:

Precipitation for May 2026: 4.43"

(Normal for May: 3.98")

Precipitation for the year through May: 6.42"

(Normal for the year through May: 8.96")

NOTES: Rain noted 10 days

Thunder noted 1 day

May 2025

Temperature:

High: 88°

Low: 37°

Mean: 59.9°

Precipitation:

For the month: 1.74"

For the year: 4.85"

Second Quarter 2026 Grand Island Stream Gauge Data

	Apr Act	AprTar	Well	May Act	May Tar	May V	June Act	JuneTar	Well Run
1	277	1700		3.37	1700		3.96	800	
2	340	1700		3.34	1700		3.92	800	
3	427	1700		3.36	1700		4.15	800	
4	476	1700		3.34	1700		4.18	800	
5	447	1700		3.31	1700		4.25	800	
6	1010	1700		3.26	1700		4.24	800	
7	1410	1700		3.26	1700		4.14	800	
8	642	1700		3.25	1700		4.04	800	
9	425	1700		3.23	1700		4.05	800	
10	376	1700		3.24	1700		4.11	800	
11	336	1700		3.22	800			800	
12	362	1700		3.19	800			800	
13	336	1700		3.14	800			800	
14	323	1700		89.6	800			800	
15	298	1700		85.5	800			800	
16	310	1700		74	800			800	
17	253	1700		214	800			800	
18	264	1700		115	800			800	
19	253	1700		85.2	800			800	
20	253	1700		3.25	800			800	
21	275	1700		3.31	800			800	
22	264	1700		4.02	800			800	
23	221	1700		3.9	800			800	
24	150	1700		3.8	800			800	
25	140	1700		3.92	800			800	
26	234	1700		4.07	800			800	
27	192	1700		3.87	800			800	
28	163	1700		3.56	800			800	
29	185	1700		3.86	800			800	
30	193	1700		3.9	800			800	
31				4.01	800				

Second Quarter 2026 Overton Stream Gauge Data

	Arp Act	Arp Tar	Well Run	May Act	May Tar	Well Run	June Act	June Tar	Well Run
1	196	1700		165	1700		1910	800	
2	175	1700		129	1700		2060	800	
3	574	1700		113	1700		2100	800	
4	1350	1700		108	1700		2020	800	
5	1920	1700		90.1	1700		2420	800	
6	291	1700		85.9	1700		2230	800	
7	271	1700		81.9	1700		2120	800	
8	211	1700		81.9	1700		2100	800	
9	191	1700		74.3	1700		1910	800	
10	199	1700		78.1	1700		1690	800	
11	177	1700		74.3	800			800	
12	191	1700		70.7	800			800	
13	191	1700		81.5	800			800	
14	184	1700		89.6	800			800	
15	177	1700		85.5	800			800	
16	139	1700		74	800			800	
17	128	1700		199	800			800	
18	3.04	1700		275	800			800	
19	2.66	1700		438	800			800	
20	2.43	1700		184	800			800	
21	2.41	1700		151	800			800	
22	2.61	1700		145	800			800	
23	2.41	1700		1950	800			800	
24	2.43	1700		1900	800			800	
25	2.34	1700		1840	800			800	
26	2.33	1700		1870	800			800	
27	2.38	1700		1780	800			800	
28	2.421651	1700		1820	800			800	
29	2.42	1700		1710	800			800	
30	2.66	1700		1930	800			800	
31				1660	800				

Tri-Basin NRD
1723 Burlington St.
Holdrege, NE 68949



(308) 995-6688
Fax: (308) 995-6992
tribasin@tribasinprd.org

Natural Resources District

May 21, 2026

General Manager
JOHN THORBURN

Mr. Kyle Overturf
AMGL CPAs
1203 W. 2nd St.
Grand Island NE 68802

Chairman
TODD GARRELTS
Holdrege, Nebraska

Vice Chairman
JOE BILKA
Holdrege, Nebraska

Treasurer
JEFF RYAN
Heartwell, Nebraska

Secretary
ROB HINRICHS
Axtell, Nebraska

BRIAN BERGSTROM
Axtell, Nebraska

JOEL GRAMS
Minden, Nebraska

DAVID GRIMES
Minden, Nebraska

ED HARRIS
Loomis, Nebraska

JOE LARSON
Loomis, Nebraska

BRAD LUNDEEN
Wilcox, Nebraska

G. REED PHILIPS
Bertrand, Nebraska

DAVID RAFFETY
Kearney, Nebraska

LARRY REYNOLDS
Lexington, Nebraska

Dear Kyle:

The Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) Board of Directors, during their regularly scheduled board meeting on May 20, decided to select a new firm to provide payroll and auditing services for the district. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of our letter of engagement with your firm, dated April 1, 2025, Tri-Basin NRD chooses to terminate our relationship with your firm. We would like to have your firm provide payroll services through the pay period ending June 26, 2026.

We thank you for your assistance to Tri-Basin NRD over the past several years.

Sincerely,

John Thorburn
Manager



Natural Resources District

1723 Burlington
Holdrege, NE 68949
308. 995.6688
FAX 308.995.6992
tribasin@tribasinprd.org

General Manager
JOHN THORBURN

June 15, 2026

Chairman
TODD GARRELTS
Holdrege, Nebraska

Vice Chairman
JOE BILKA
Holdrege, Nebraska

Treasurer
JEFF RYAN
Heartwell, Nebraska

Secretary
ROB HINRICHS
Axtell, Nebraska

BRIAN BERGSTROM
Axtell, Nebraska

JOEL GRAMS
Minden, Nebraska

DAVID GRIMES
Minden, Nebraska

ED HARRIS
Loomis, Nebraska

JOE LARSON
Loomis, Nebraska

BRAD LUNDEEN
Wilcox, Nebraska

G. REED PHILIPS
Bertrand, Nebraska

LARRY REYNOLDS
Lexington, Nebraska

ANDREW STADE
Minden, Nebraska

Mr. Matt Manning, Chief Water Officer
Nebraska Department of Water, Energy and Environment
301 Centennial Mall South
PO Box 94676
Lincoln, NE 68509-4676

Dear Matt:

In order to more effectively manage the land and water resources of Gosper, Phelps and Kearney counties, the Tri-Basin NRD Board of Directors find it necessary to revise our rules and regulations (see copy attached). Tri-Basin NRD intends to accomplish the following changes:

1. Change the numbering scheme used in our rules, to make it more consistent and to accommodate future revisions;
2. Revise, and, in certain instances, remove existing definitions (Sec. 1) to ensure consistency within our rules and conformity to state statutes;
3. Remove redundant and outdated language throughout the rules;
4. Add a minimum setback requirement for domestic wells (Rule 4.2);
5. Revise rules for permitting wells for large non-agricultural water users (Rule 8.3);
6. Clarify regulation of allocations in Phase 3 Groundwater quantity Management areas (Rule 8.5);
7. Added a Rule (10.7) that allows landowners to lease irrigated acre certification on an annual basis;
8. Further elaborate procedures for de-certification of irrigated land (Rules 10.2 and 10.8).

Pursuant to NE statutes 46-739 et al, Tri-Basin NRD invites you to review these proposed rules revisions and provide comments, criticism and suggestions for additional revisions to the board of directors for their consideration. Tri-Basin NRD tentatively plans to hold a public hearing on these proposed rules revisions during their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, August 19, 2026. We would appreciate it if you could provide your comments before that date, so the board can review them prior to our public hearing, and so that they can be included in the hearing record. Feel free to call or email me if you have questions or comments, or if you need additional information.



Nathaniel P. DeWald
Luke T. Deaver
Taylor A. L'Heureux
John A. Sauder

DEWALD · DEAVER
L'HEUREUX
LAW FIRM P.C.L.L.O.

Holdrege 308-995-8848
308-995-6555 (fax)
holdregelaw.com
contact@holdregelaw.com

June 11, 2026

Via Certified Mail

Mrs. Peggy Holen
10417 Westside Road
Overton, NE 68863

Re: Tri-Basin Natural Resources District Invoice 04222301

Dear Ms. Holen:

This firm serves as legal counsel to Tri-Basin Natural Resources District ("TBNRD"). I have been asked to reach out to you regarding a past due balance owed by you to my client. Please find enclosed a copy of Invoice 04222301. As you know, in May, 2025, TBNRD provided you with trees, drip tape and then planted those trees for you at your request for the total cost of \$2,667.95.

As of the date of this letter, TBNRD has received no payment on this balance. TBNRD would respectfully request that you pay this Invoice in full within 10 days of receipt of this letter. Please make all payments directly to TBNRD. If you have any questions please contact TBNRD at their office number at: 308-995-6688 or you certainly can contact our office. If our client is not in receipt of said payment or if satisfactory payment arrangements have not been made before that deadline, then TBNRD will assume that you are refusing to pay this debt and we will have no choice but to proceed with protecting our client's legal rights to this debt which may include filing liens, instituting litigation and securing court judgments against you and your property.

Please be advised that if our client is forced to pursue legal remedies to collect this debt, that the costs of such action can and will be charged to you. Furthermore, pursuant to NEB.REV.STAT. §45-103.02, our client shall also be entitled to prejudgment interest at a rate of 12% on any judgment entered by the Court from the date of this letter until such judgment is entered. Finally, our client shall also be allowed to recover their attorney fees pursuant to NEB.REV.STAT. §25-1801.

Our client has instructed our firm to tender this letter as the final demand for payment on this debt. We look forward to your prompt response. Best regards.

Sincerely yours,
/s/Luke T. Deaver
Luke T. Deaver

Enc.

This letter is an attempt to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purposes. This letter is a communication from a debt collector.

Notice Required by Federal Law

1. Unless within 30 days after receipt of this letter you dispute the validity of the debt, or any portion thereof, we will assume that the debt is valid.
2. If you notify us in writing, within 30 days after receipt of this letter that the debt or any portion thereof, is disputed, we will obtain and mail to you verification of the debt or a copy of any judgment that might have been issued thereon.
3. If you request of us in writing, within the 30 days after receipt of our letter and notice, we will provide to you the name and address of the original creditor, if different from the current creditor.

Natural Resources Report

May 12, 2021

I'm John Thorburn with Tri-Basin NRD, and this is the Natural Resources Report. Farmers need to irrigate their crops to achieve optimum yields, but irrigating too often wastes water and energy and can cause fertilizer and ag chemicals to leach below the crop root zone, leading to groundwater pollution. One way to accurately determine whether your crop needs to be irrigated is to track the amount of water it is using. Tri-Basin NRD partners with Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District and University of Nebraska Extension to provide crop water use data to irrigators during the growing season. Water use data is provided free by text message to irrigators five days a week. You can opt-in to receive updates by texting START to 855-743-2457. You can also call Tri-Basin NRD (308-995-6688) to receive our ET Data texts. Data is provided from automated weather stations at Axtell, Holdrege and Smithfield. The text message contains daily water use and anticipated water use rates for the next three days for both corn and soybeans. More detailed water use data can be accessed from Central's website cnppid.com. Once again, simply text the word "START" to 855-743-2457 or call Tri-Basin NRD at 308 995-6688 to get on the list for free crop water use texts during the upcoming irrigation season.

I'm John Thorburn for Nebraska's natural resources districts. Protecting lives, property, and the future for all Nebraskans, since 1972.

John —

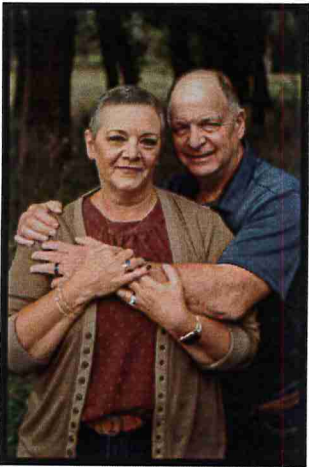
Great to meet you again
at Rotary. I am very
committed to working with
the NRD's if elected. Protecting
our land & water is critical
But we must keep local
control. Hope to have the
opportunity to talk with you
more soon.

— Thanks
— James



Her Journey's Just Begun

Don't think of her as gone away -
Her journey has just begun
Life holds many facets
The Earth is only one
Just think of her as resting
From the sorrows and the tears
In a place of warmth and comfort
Where there are no days and years
Think how she must be wishing
That we could know today
How nothing but our sadness,
Can really pass away
And think of her as living
In the hearts of
Those she touched
For nothing loved
Is ever lost -
And she was
loved so much!



In Loving Memory Of

Shirlee Annette Poyser

FUNERAL SERVICE

Friday, May 29, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.
Peace Lutheran Church - Alma, Nebraska
Pastor Curtis Simonson - Officiating

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 43: 1-3, 25 Psalm 23 1 Peter 3: 14-15

MUSIC

Processional Hymn: "Blessed Assurance"
Congregational Hymn: "Amazing Grace" #744
Special Recorded Selection: "Scars In Heaven"
Recorded Recessional Selections: "Home"
and "Left It In The River"
Judy Miller - pianist

PALLBEARERS

Troy Kuck	Travis Kuck	Jonny Sand
Spencer Gydesen	Skylar Svoboda	Nick Terpstra
	Dillen Mumm	

HONORARY PALLBEARERS

"Staff and Current & Past Board Members
of the Lower Republican NRD"

FINAL RESTING PLACE

Orleans Cemetery - Orleans, Nebraska

Expressions of caring and kindness can be sent to
nelsonbauerfh.com
Bauer-Torrey & Mach Funeral Home - Alma, Nebraska

Shirlee Annette (York) Poyser was born in Holdrege, Nebraska, on February 2, 1966, the fourth of five children, born to R. Douglas and Janice (Broeker) York and passed away following a courageous battle with cancer on Tuesday, May 19, 2026, at CHI Health Good Samaritan in Kearney, Nebraska at the age of 60.

Shirlee received her primary education from Mascot Public School, where she was taught by her grandmother, Elizabeth York. In sixth grade, she transitioned to Oxford Public School and graduated with the class of 1984. She pursued higher education and received an Associate's Degree in Secretarial Science from Central Community College in Hastings, Nebraska.

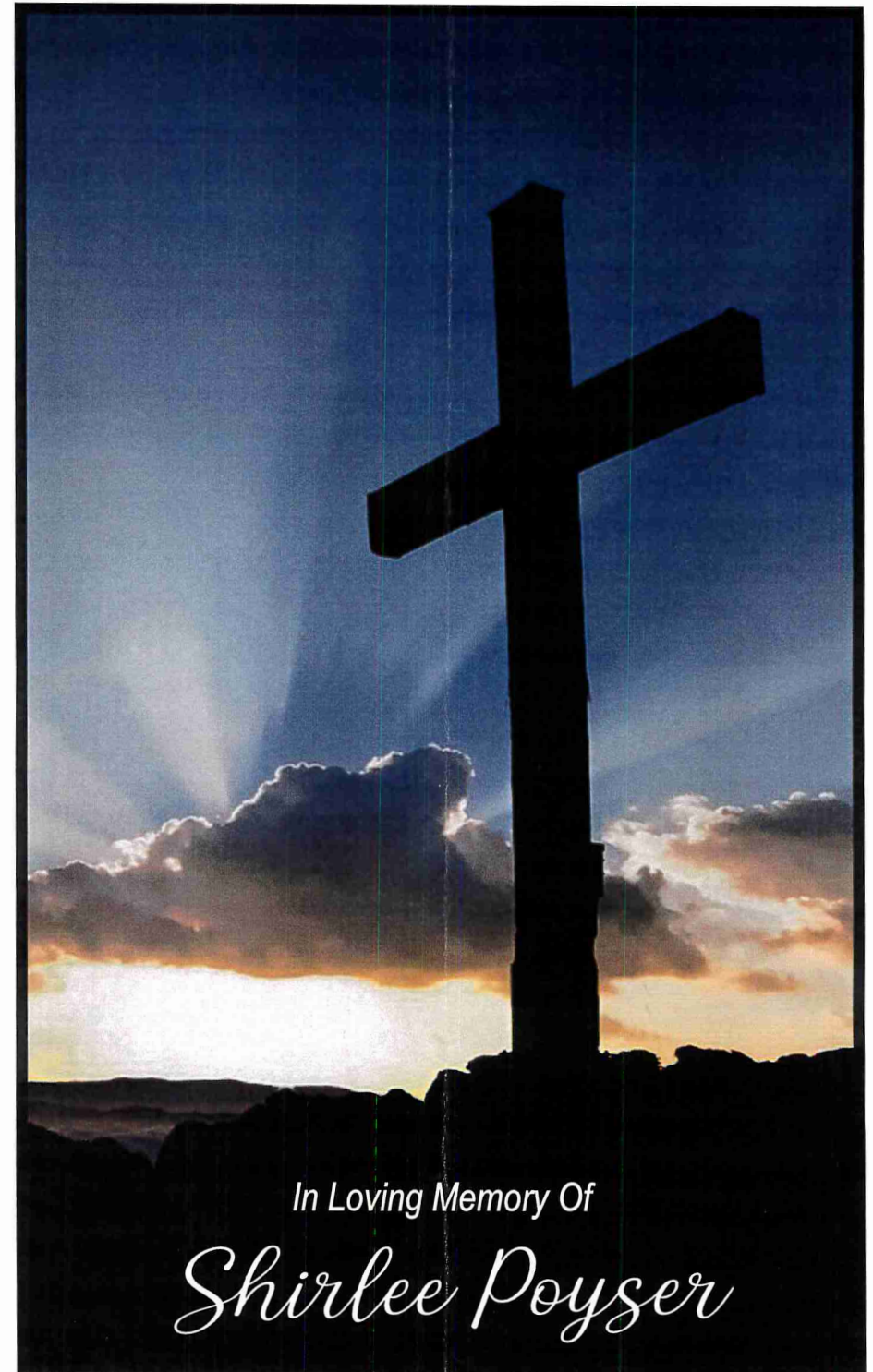
On June 21, 1986, Shirlee was united in marriage to Craig Poyser at the United Methodist Church in Oxford, Nebraska, and to this union two children were born: Kalyn and Ross. The couple made their home in Orleans from 1986 to 1999, when the family moved to Alma. Shirlee worked at Hays Pharmacy and then for the Lower Republican NRD as an Administrative Assistant for 33 years.

Shirlee was a dedicated member of Peace Lutheran Church in Alma, where she grew and matured in her faith. She found great joy sharing that faith as she encouraged many others.

She treasured spending time with her children and grandchildren. She also loved traveling, shopping and watching volleyball and basketball. She enjoyed her years serving with Team Mates as a mentor and as chapter treasurer. Shirlee especially enjoyed spending time taking in the beauty and tranquility of her childhood home near Oxford.

Shirlee was preceded in death by her father, Douglas York; her step-father, Darrel Maaske; one brother in infancy, Todd York; one brother-in-law, Randy Kuck; her father and mother-in-law, Keith and Dolores Poyser; and her foreign exchange "brother", Glenn Browning.

Shirlee is survived by her husband, Craig Poyser of Alma; two children: Kalyn Weers and her husband, Richard of Lincoln; Ross Poyser and his wife, Jessetta of Republican City; grandchildren: Kaden and Kaleb Weers; Boyd Poyser; her mom, Janice Maaske of Kearney; sisters: Shari Kuck of Bertrand and her special friend, Dave Wohlgemuth; Sheila Svoboda and her husband, Scott of Atlantic, Iowa; and Sandra Dannehl and her husband, Calvin of Bertrand; sisters-in-law: Keanna Leonard and her husband, Dennis of Grand Island, Nebraska; and Deb Miller and her husband, Barry of Hays, Kansas; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.



In Loving Memory Of

Shirlee Poyser

Nelson-Bauer Funeral Home

Gary L. Lindstrom

(June 14, 1943 - May 29, 2026)



A memorial service for Gary L. Lindstrom will be held on Friday, June 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church in Holdrege, Nebraska, with Rev. Dr. W. Kirwin Stewart Jr. officiating with Military Honors provided by the Wilcox American Legion Post #377 in conjunction with the United States Air Force Funeral Honors Team. Inurnment will be held at a later date.

Gary Lee Lindstrom, 82 years of age, of Wilcox, Nebraska, passed away on Friday, May 29, 2026, at his home in rural Wilcox. Gary was born in Holdrege, Nebraska, on June 14, 1943, the second of three children, born to Eugene and Rosa (Schlem) Lindstrom. He received his education from Wilcox High School in the class of 1960. He joined the Air Force in 1961, serving four years in Mississippi, Texas, and Nebraska as part of the 789th Radar Squadron and received training in ground-to-air communication. Gary was honorably discharged from the service in 1966 to work for Western Union as an electrician, where he continued his education.

On May 1st, 1965, Gary was united in marriage to Cynthia Hicks at the United Church of Countryside Community Church UCC, in Omaha, and to this union, two children were born: Teri June, born in Omaha, and Kelli Hicks, born in Grand Island. The couple lived in Omaha, Grand Island, and then moved to the family farm in rural Phelps County in 1972. Together they enjoyed 61 years of marriage. Gary worked hard farming and running Lindstrom Electric and Farm Supply.

Gary enjoyed serving others. If you needed something,

Gary was always there to help out. He loved to fish and enjoyed spending time on the water with anyone who would go fishing with him. Gary had a love for animals; he especially loved his dogs.

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, where he served faithfully. Gary was on the NRD Board for a number of years and was a member of Pheasants Forever and the Wilcox Lions Club.

Gary was preceded in death by his parents; Eugene Edwin and Rosa June Schlem Lindstrom; and one brother, Jimmy Lou Lindstrom.

Gary is survived by his wife, Cynthia Lindstrom of Wilcox; two daughters: Teri June and her husband, James Vosicky, of Lincoln; Kelli Hicks and her husband, Jason Sidel of Holdrege; three grandchildren: Anna Vosicky; Emma Sidel and fiancé, Tyler Ferris; and Dane Sidel; one sister, Sandra Kay and husband, C.L. Wimer; sister-in-law, Edith Lindstrom; and a host of nieces and nephews that were very important to him, other relatives, and friends.

A memorial book signing will be held on Thursday, June 4, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with family greeting friends from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Nelson-Bauer Funeral Home in Holdrege.

A memorial has been established in Gary's honor, and kindly suggested to the family for later designation.

Expressions of caring and kindness can be sent to the family at www.nelsonbauerfh.com

The Nelson-Bauer Funeral Home in Holdrege is in charge of the arrangements.

NRD water tour focuses on South Platte, Perkins Canal

Kearney Hub

6/2/2026

Nearly 100 Natural Resources District directors and staff, along with state and federal conservation partners, gathered in North Platte on June 8-9 for the annual NRD Basin Tour organized by the Nebraska Association of Resource District with the Central Platte, South Platte, and Twin Platte NRDS.

The tour included presentations from Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, and the Western Irrigation District.

Each year's tour focused on the South Platte River Basin and featured discussions on water management, irrigation infrastructure, energy generation, drought resilience, wildfire, recovery and Perkins County Canal project.

"Reading reports and seeing maps can only tell part of the story," said Deb VanMatre, Central Platte NRD and NARD director. "This tour gives NRD directors the opportunity to see water management in action, talk directly with the people operating these systems and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing different regions of the state. These first experiences help elected directors make more informed decisions as we work to protect Nebraska's water resources for future generations.

Throughout the two-day event, participants traveled across south-west Nebraska as well as eastern Colorado to examine projects and infrastructure that play a critical role in water management and interstate water obligations.

Participants learned how irrigation districts, public power districts, NRDS, state agencies and local landowners work together to manage the water supply, maintain critical infrastructure, support agricultural production and meet interstate compact requirements.

A significant portion of the tour focused on the South Platte River System and the Perkins County Canal project, including discussions on Nebraska's

South Platte River water rights, interstate water management and the infrastructure being developed to support future water needs.

“The South Platte River plays a critical role in the water resource management of western Nebraska and beyond,” said Alex Boyce, Twin Platte NRD general manager. “The Perkins County Canal project help Nebraska protect and fully utilize the water available to us under the South Platte River Compact ensuring reliable water supplies for agricultural, communities and wildlife. It’s important for NRD leaders to understand both the opportunities and responsibilities that come with managing this shared resource.

Just The Facts

As Nebraska continues to face challenges related to water use, drought, and ever-changing environmental conditions, events like the NRD Basin Tour provide critical opportunities for education, partnership building, and strategic planning.

Our stops included:

- CNPPID Tri-County Canal Diversion (North Platte)
- Fort McPherson (Maxwell)
- Jeffrey Reservoir (Brady)
- Wildfire Recovery (Dawson County)
- Multiple Irrigation Canals (Dawson County)
- Johnson Lake (Gosper County)
- Perkins County Canal Diversion (Ovid, Colorado)
- South Platte River Compact Stream Gage (Julesburg, Colorado)
- Western Canal Diversion (Deuel County)
- Lake McConaughy (Ogallala)
- NPPD Siphon (Paxton)
- Lake Maloney (North Platte)
- North Patte Hydro (North Platte)

For more information on NRD events and activities, visit www.nrdnet.org.

Central Board hears new riprap undersized for Big Mac

Kearney Hub

6/3/2026

The Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District Board of Directors Heard there are concerns about the riprap being used to protect the face of Kingsley Dam from wave damage.

Replacing riprap is a major project for CNPPID under the supervision of a dam project board of consultants.

At the Central Board's June 1 meeting in Holdrege Natural Resources and compliance Manger Mike Drain summarized the initial report prepared by the independent board after they gathered at Kingsley Dam in May.

Drain reported that the board of consultants were in concurrence with project engineer RJH that the riprap on the dam is undersized, inadequately bedded and the problem varies by location and elevations throughout the dam.

They stressed that the magnitude of waves is similar to coastal protection and that Kingsley dam has the largest internal waves in North America.

The board of consultants agreed with earlier findings that there is no immediate safety risk at the dam. Drain emphasized the riprap issue has been identified and should be addressed, but it does not pose a new-term threat.

As part of the information-gathering process, the board recommends using historical photos and data from previous damage to further analyze locations and elevations on the dam.

They also proposed geophysical explorations, including helicopter mounted testing to improve knowledge of riprap thickness. The coastal expert on the board provided various technical recommendations on wind and wave data analyses and calculations.

Through their review, the board has determined that h focus should be on riprap and Xbloc as the most viable material for the facing on the dam. Other explored ideas likely can e excluded because they have never used

in a project with the size and importance of Kingsley Dam, according to Monday's discussions.

The board's report also suggests considering combinations of approaches such as benches or berms with Xbloc in areas needing more protection and riprap in areas needing less protection.

Drain said the next step in the process belongs to Central. RJH will file the report with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission this week that they are in concurrence with board of consultant's recommendations.

A new plan and schedule will be developed to modify the scope of work.

- Civil Engineer Tyler Thulin reported that Lake McConaughy's elevation was at 3,225 feet on Monday. That level is 44.7% of capacity, which is 3.2 feet below the elevation reported at the working meeting of the board on May 21.
- Inflows are around 165 cubic feet per second (cfs), while outflows were at 2,950 cfs. Thulin stated the inflows he has ever seen at this time of year.
- Thulin reminded the board that 1,1580 cfs per the releases out of Lake McConaughy are being made at the request of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service through its environmental account.

The USFWS goal is to maintain Platte River flows of 1,500 cfs at Grand Island to help prevent seed from germinating on sandbars along the river.

The releases are scheduled to continue through the end of June.

- The Board approved the purchase of head gates for \$121,052 apiece from Eilers Machine & Welding of Lexington to replace head gates at both the Phelps Canal head gate and a supply canal steel gate.
- Irrigation and Water Services Manager Scott Dicke reported that the scheduled irrigation season begins on Monday, June 8, and will run through Aug. 30. He said irrigation demands has dropped because of the recent rains.

- Hydraulic Operations Manager Cory Steinke gave an update on weather damage that occurred at Johnson Lake over the weekend. Steinke said Central staff is assessing the damage to determine what repairs might be needed.

Nebraska water cases gains federal support

Lori Pilger, Lincoln Journal Star

Kearney Hub

5/27/26

The U.S. Solicitor General says one of Nebraska's claims against Colorado should be allowed to go forward in a fight over water between the states that has gone on for more than a century.

Nearly a year ago, Nebraska filed a motion asking the U.S. Supreme Court, which has direct jurisdiction over disputes between the states, for permission to file a "bill of complaint."

In it, the state alleged that Colorado has not honored its commitments under the South Platte River Compact, ratified by Congress in 1926, "and has, in several ways, actively breached the compact."

"Specifically, Colorado has allowed water diversions that the compact expressly prohibits, resulting in less downstream water flows for Nebraskan. Colorado is also frustrating Nebraska's efforts to construct a canal, specifically authorized in the compact. That would give Nebraska access to water reserved in the state under the compact." Nebraska Solicitor General Cody Barnett.

Colorado in October filed a brief fight with the move, saying Nebraska, like every western state, wants more water during certain times of the year.

"But only if it builds a canal that originates in Colorado. After more than a century, Nebraska still has not built the canal, and for good reasons," Colorado Solicitor Sarah Krakoff said.

She said the project to revive and finish the Perkins canal—announced by then-Gov. Pete Ricketts near the end of his term—poses significant technical and financial risks "and may, in the end, yield insufficient water to make it worthwhile."

"To avoid these risks, Nebraska first requested additional water without having to satisfy the compact requirements to build the canal. Colorado

rightfully declined. Nebraska now seeks myriad advisory opinions from the court to aid its assessment of the value of pursuing the canal.

This is not the role of the court,” Krakoff wrote.

A month later, the U.S. Supreme Court invited the Solicitor General D. John Sauer to file a brief in the case expressing the views of the federal government .

In a friend – of- the- court brief filed last week, Sauer side in the government’s view Nebraska’s motion should be granted on its claim on its claim that Colorado has denied Nebraska the share of the South Platte’s water to which it is entitled under the compact and refer the matter to a special master.

(Special masters often play crucial roles like this involving disputes between states, according to Cornell Law School.)

But, Sauer said, in the government’s view the court should deny Nebraska’s other claims ; That Colorado has ignored its obligations and has actively opposed Nebraska’s right to build a canal.

He said, in the complaint Nebraska accuses Colorado of obstructing the states’s efforts to construct the canal but does not point to any actual obstruction – such as the refusal to issue a required permit or the erection of physical barriers to construction.

“Instead. Nebraska points to statements such as the Colorado Governor’s spokesperson calling the canal a ”boondoggle” and the Colorado Attorney General noting the case would ‘raise some significant legal issues.”

Nebraska does not explain how it is injured by such statements, much less how they violate the compact,” Sauer said in the brief.

He said, with construction years away and contingent on the outcome of a federal permitting process, it’s too early to take up many of the other issues Nebraska raises.

But, he said, Nebraska’s first claim raises “a purely factual challenge about whether Colorado’s augmentation plans operate as intended.” It does not

appear to contend that the compact prohibition Colorado from using augmentation plans in general.

“Instead, Nebraska challenges whether Colorado’s plan are, returning water to the river as needed to meet Colorado’s obligation ,” Sauer wrote.

A decision from the Supreme Court is expected later this year.

Ricketts, Fischer pushing for E15 legislation in Senate

Den Doody, Omaha World-Herald

Kearney Hub

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A week after the house passed a long-sought bill allowing sales of E15 gasoline, farm-state senators are maneuvering to find a path for the measure through the Senate.

The House bill, sponsored by Rep. Adrian Smith of Nebraska, narrowly passed on May 13 by a vote of 218-203. The bill drew support from 123 Republicans - including all three Nebraska representatives – and 95 Democrats

Sen. Pete Ricketts told The World Herald on Tuesday that it seems “unlikely” the Senate has enough time to pass a standalone E15 bill. But Ricketts and other E15 proponents are hoping to include E15 language in the farm bill or another piece of legislation.

E15- gasoline blended with E 15% ethanol – is subject to seasonal sales restrictions much of the country, limiting availability during summer months.

Farm-state lawmakers have for years pushed to remove those federal restrictions and expand year-round sales. Arguing that broader E15 use would increase domestic demand for ethanol and benefits corn farmers.

President Donald Trump has signaled that he would sign E15 legislation if it reaches his desk. But proponents acknowledge uncertainty about the fate of the legislation.

“It seems unlikely that we’re going to have the time to pass standalone E15 bill,” Ricketts said. “I think we’re going to have to do a look for a vehicle that is moving and try to get E15 attached to that.”

In statement to the World-Herald on Tuesday, Sen. Deb Fischer said she shares Ricketts’ assessment of what might be possible.

“I think it’s accurate that E15 riding alongside other legislation is the most likely path in the Senate,” she said. “We’re pushing on any and all fronts. “We need to get this done.”

E15 legislation has faced opposition from small- and med-sized oil refineries, as well as environmental groups that argue expanded ethanol demand could encourage more intensive corn production and worsen environmental problems such as runoff and water pollution.

Sen. John Boozman of Arkansas, a Republican who chairs the Senate’s Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, was in Nebraska in March to speak at an roundtable that Ricketts hosted in West Point.

Boozman said at the roundtable that he wanted to craft E15 legislation that could address concerns from small refinery operators in Arkansas.

He said in a statement to The World-Herald on Tuesday that he thinks the Senate and “strike the right balance” to advance E15 legislation.

Boozman called Ricketts and Fischer “strong voices” for Nebraska farmers who were working with him to advance legislation.

“We will continue working with our colleagues to pas a bill that supports agriculture and small refiners,” he said.

While pushing for expanded domestic ethanol demand through D15, Ricketts is also promoting legislation aimed at diversifying export markets abroad.

He introduced a Senate bill on Tuesday aimed at supporting expanded international markets address for ag producers at risk of being harmed by trade tensions with China and other adversaries.

The MARKET Act which stands for Moving Away from Risk to Key Export Targets, would require the U.S. secretary of agriculture and U.S. trade representatives to publish an annual report on market access for ag exporters.

The text of the bill does not call out China by name. But in talking about the rationale for the bill, Rickettes told The World-Herald that “Communist China has always been a bad trade partner,”

“We certainly appreciate the marketplace (and) we want to sell there, we should not be so dependent on one market that it puts our farmers and ranchers in a bad position if they decide to be capricious with regard to how they’re going to do things.”