

Manager's Report

October 19, 2026

Harvest seems to be picking up momentum after a mandatory pause for wet weather. On the bright side, the rainy weather in September at least got us caught up on annual rainfall. We had been below the year-to-date average all year long until last month. Now we're an inch ahead! (see weather data in packet) I hope that your harvest is trouble-free, or at least accident-free, this year.

I'm sorry to have to report that Greg Jorgensen died Sunday evening (October 18). Greg was an NRD director representing Kearney County for one term (2017-2020). I didn't know Greg well, but in my experience, he was a very pleasant, very positive guy. He will be missed. The funeral is planned for November 2 and will be conducted by Craig Funeral Home. Details are pending.

Even though we have had some nice rains recently, 2027 will be a "Compact Call" year in the Republican River Basin. Todd Siel asked if we would pump water for the benefit of Lower Republican NRD again this fall. Since our augmentation agreement is in force through the end of the year, we started the Holen well up for them on Friday. You will recall that we bill them a fixed rate of \$54 per acre-foot of water pumped. Our agreement with them expires at the end of the year, but I'm sure that they would like to extend it.

Central NE Public Power and Irrigation District has a new leader. They hired Tim Cervený, Manager of the under-construction "Princeton Road" powerplant for NPPD. Tim has worked for NPPD for more than 30 years in a variety of roles (see news release in packet). Welcome Tim! I look forward to meeting him and working closely with him to face the challenges that loom on the horizon for both our districts.

I transferred \$300,000 from the NRD checking account into 13 month CDs at Bruning State Bank. I got 4.35% interest rate. NPAIT had a 4.40% note, but I left the money with Bruning since the difference in interest rates between the two was minor. In retrospect, I should have taken money out of the Water Resources sinking fund. We may need to transfer funds to checking between now and January, when we will get our next big property tax disbursement.

NARD Fall Conference was interesting as usual. Andrew Stade attended both days. Hopefully it was a good learning experience for him. All three resolutions (NRDs take over chemigation program from the state, NRD bonding authority and publication of staff salaries) were approved with little opposition. The Platte Basin NRD caucus selected me to serve the remainder of Scott Schaneman's term on the Platte River recovery Program Governance Committee. I have served as Lyndon Vogt's alternate for several years.

The biggest news from the conference, however, came at the end. NARD Executive Director, Dean Edson, announced his retirement at the end of this year. Dean has directed NARD for nearly 30 years. His experience and wealth of detailed knowledge about NARD policies and projects has been invaluable to the association and its members. I wish Dean and his wife well in retirement. I hope that he gets to spend more time down by the Platte River at his hideout.

Tri-Basin has two job openings currently. We just finished running ads for the Administrative Secretary position. We have 15 applicants, at least some of whom look promising. I hope to have a new person hired for that job early next month. Meanwhile, Nolan and I are trying to take care of the basic duties of Administrative Secretary job (payroll, taxes and bills) with help from Paige Gray at KSO Accounting in Kearney. I will ask the board to approve the agreement between the NRD and KSO (see packet) and will list their bill as a “Special Bill” each month. Hopefully, directors got their per diem payments today. I will have you sign the paper forms during the board meeting.

We will start advertising this week for a new Water Program Specialist. Carrie Putnam will take over for Tammy as Data Manager when Tammy retires. This is a customer-focused position with a three-year term. The position is largely funded by the rainwater Basin Joint Venture, although we and Central Platte NRD contribute in-kind. The new employee could work out of our office or Central Platte NRD.

Dalton will give a brief IPA update during the board meeting. Just like farmers, Dalton had a long growing season this year. Keeping the ditches clean in dry years might seem like busy work, but they need to be ready for the next big rain, whenever it arrives. We have budgeted funds to hire a technician to help Dalton, at least during the growing season. We will advertise for that position in January.

I will ask the board to review an estimate that I got to replace the armory roof (see packet). We budgeted for the work and I think that the bid from Stonebrook Exteriors is pretty competitive. There aren't very many commercial roofing companies around anymore and two of them (Dobberstein and ABC Seamless) have done unsatisfactory work for us in the past. Apparently Tillotsons has a mixed reputation as well. Point is that I don't know who to ask to get a second bid.

I gave a short presentation on our groundwater recharge and streamflow augmentation work at the Nebraska Water Conference at UNL last week. I was part of a panel of several NRD employees. Given the variety of projects and policies explained by the panel, I thought that the session amply demonstrated the ability of the NRD system to respond to natural resources management challenges with locally-led solutions.

That's all that I have to relate to you this month. Remember that we will start our meeting at **7:30 PM next Wednesday, October 28**. I hope to see you then.