

Manager's Report
September 8, 2025

August was downright wet. We had 6.08" of rain in Holdrege last month, more than double the average August rainfall (2.78"). A lot of that rain came in two big batches. We got 1.65" on August 12 and more than three inches on August 30-31. Unfortunately, those rains came so quickly that there was more runoff than infiltration. Regardless, we are definitely out of drought-for now.

The board will need to affirm our tax levy for FY 2025-26, after we hold a public hearing on the subject. Our budget increased three percent, but valuations are up 13%, so our levy will be nine percent lower than last year (0.02871 in 2024, versus 0.02608 this year, see hearing notice in packet). What hasn't changed is that the NRD levy is only about one percent of your total property tax bill.

The levy hearing is an annual event, but our new business items are less commonly visited topics. First, we need to select two new Platte Basin stakeholders to replace Russ Edeal and Vernon Nelson. Russ passed away, of course. Vernon is still very much alive, but he would like to be replaced. Both men served as Tri-Basin stakeholders at various meetings for nearly twenty years. I would like to find two people who have an interest in Platte Basin issues and at least a general knowledge of past issues in that basin. I would appreciate board input regarding potential candidates for these positions. We will likely have a stakeholder meeting over this coming winter to review the basin-wide drought response plan. These people would also be expected to participate in meetings to develop our district drought plan, a task that we will need to take on in 2026 and 2027. Finally, we will need to update our Platte IMP in the near future and stakeholders will need to play a role in that process.

Our other new business item is something that the board probably hasn't discussed since the NRD was first formed in 1972. It was at that time that the board designated the *Holdrege Daily Citizen* as the District's "newspaper of record" for publication of meeting and hearing notices. Unfortunately, the *Citizen* discontinued publication last week. I consulted with our attorney, Don Blankenau, who explained that in this situation the best we can do is to publish notice in other local papers, along with posting the meeting notice on our website and posting it on our front door. I will recommend to the board that we designate the *Minden Courier* as our official publication going forward. We have always had a good working relationship with *Courier* staff. The only difficulty will be that the *Courier* only publishes once a week, so we will need to submit public notices at least a week ahead of the publication date.

The NARD Fall Conference will be held at the end of the month (Sept. 29 and 30) at Younes Conference Center-South in Kearney. Dean Edson notified NRD Managers that no proposals for legislative action had been received from NRDs prior to the September 5 deadline. NRDs can still submit resolutions during the conference, but such late proposals need approval by a two-thirds majority before they can even be

considered by NARD delegates. If no resolutions are proposed, the second conference business session, on Tuesday afternoon, will be cancelled.

Husker Harvest Days is happening this week near Alda, Nebraska. The Nebraska Association of resources Districts owns a building on the showgrounds (Site #39E). The building is a "one stop shop" for getting answers to natural resources questions, with representatives not only from NRDs but the USDA-NRCS, NE DWEE, Nebraska Forest Service and others. Best of all, you can get a FREE seedling pine or spruce tree during your visit to the Natural Resources building. Tri-Basin staff will volunteer at Husker Harvest Days both Wednesday and Thursday. Stop in and say "hi!".

I attended a meeting last Wednesday afternoon regarding possible construction of a nuclear powerplant near Holdrege. The meeting at the Sun Theater was sort of chaotic, because they didn't do a presentation, they had several "information stations" that people were supposed to rotate around to, to get information (see information in packet). I'm generally supportive of the idea. New design "modular" nuclear reactors are very safe, have a small footprint, and need very little water. The design that NPPD is considering would be cooled by liquid sodium. The reactors themselves aren't much larger than a 40' sea-land container. They are often installed in underground enclosures for maximum protection from weather and accidents. Holdrege is on a short list with 15 other communities as possible powerplant sites. Part of the next project phase is to evaluate suitability of sites available in the listed communities. The timeline going forward is somewhat vague, but the proposed plant isn't expected to produce power until at least 2032.

I was pleased to hear a presentation that Director Larry Reynolds gave to the Holdrege Rotary Club last Thursday. Larry was invited by Monty Vonasek to speak to the club about his career in the US Air Force and Air National Guard and how he transitioned back into agriculture. Larry gave a good talk and ably promoted his alma mater, the Air Force Academy. Great job, Larry!

That's all that I have to report for this month. I hope to see all of you next Wednesday afternoon.