

# Staff Report

## Manager Report– Mike Onnen

The final payment of the Hastings ASR Project is scheduled to be made in September. Marty Stange from Hastings Utilities reported that the ASR project has been functional since May 8th. The City is meeting our injection parameters for chemistry stability. They have injected over 200,000,000 gallons of water (over 613 acre feet) at a rate of 2,000 gpm. They also have provided irrigation for the adjacent farm (1 full pivot and ½ pivot) for the entire season to date. Four injection wells are operating and 1 additional well will be hooked up once the corn crop is out. So far there is limited discharge to the sanitary sewer. The City believes they are doing well on water conservation. The top pump on Well 27 has a nitrate level of 11 to 13 mg/l and bottom pump is 5 to 7 mg/l of nitrates. The dual pump is working very well. The City has installed casing and screen for extraction well 30 and hope to have the building and dual pump system bid in the next couple of months. They also hope to have this well available for spring of 2019. Well 26, the third extraction well is being fitted with a VFD to help control flow. A dual pump is planned for this well but has been delayed until more injection wells can be constructed. The City may be able to avoid these costs if Well 30 functions well with the dual pumping. Five more injection wells have budgeted 5 and 2 miles of piping. Once this is completed they can double the injection rate to 4,000 gpm. The City's annual average demand is 6,000 gpm. The goal is to inject 3,000 to 4,000 gpm long-term. Depending on the time to get approval to construction injection wells on the airport, the City hopes to have a total of 4,000 gpm capacity by spring of 2020.

Marty also reported that uranium treatment at this time is on hold. They'll have a better idea on the future uranium levels for the extraction water once Well 30 is operational. Scottsbluff in late August.



## Upcoming Events

Please note all the special activities on the Calendar of Events on the Board Agenda.

Don't forget the ***Picnic in the Park*** for LBNRD staff and Board Members is September 15<sup>th</sup> at Lone Star Recreation Area starting at 5 pm.



## Manager Report (cont.)

Mike and Donnie attended the annual Manager's Retreat in Scottsbluff in late August. The North Platte NRD provided a tour of projects to showcase some of their activities. Of particular interest was their remote flow meter network which is still developing. They have received some grants to assist with installations and now have about 30% of their wells equipped with remote reads. Although an expensive endeavor, they believe that over the long term of their management activities the remotes will save them time and money. The average remote retrofit costs about \$1,300 per meter. The company AMCi Wireless has been good to work with and the NRD feels that their efforts have made management of their program much easier for both the NRD and cooperators. It may be something our district should examine in the near future. The NPNRD also showed us their greenhouse project which is entirely funded by donations and grants. The project is being used as an educational tool for schools and the community; it is also provides produce for the less fortunate in the community.

The group also spent some time discussing the growing nitrate problem around the state and what NRDs are trying to do to address those is-

sues. All agreed that the continuing problem requires a concerted effort by all involved in agriculture.

Mike and Kevin met again with the City of Fairbury. This time we had the Nebraska Rural Water Association provide some information on how to establish fair and reasonable rates for wholesale customers. The City was open to the discussion and recognize that we may need to be treated differently than other customers, but how that plays out in the end is still unresolved. NRWA plans to refine their numbers based on some formerly unavailable budgetary numbers and offer another proposal later in September. We'll keep you informed as the matter progresses.

Mike has been asked by a constituent to prepare a conservation easement for as portion of their farm to protect the natural value and use of the tract. We hope to present the proposal to the Board in the near future. In the mean time, Mike has been working with the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture to complete the two conservation easements that the board approved holding earlier this summer.



*North Platte NRD greenhouse project*

## Manager Report (cont.)

With the heavy rains experienced around the district the first few days of September, we have had a good chance to review our flood control projects and stream gages. The rains have been scattered throughout the district with all areas getting a good soaking. At Clay Center MARC, they have already received upward of 5.5" for the month at all reporting stations and the stream gage at Hollenburg is running about 14,000 cfs (9/5/18). This should finish off the irrigation season and will be helpful for restoring our groundwater levels for our spring readings.

Staff has spent some time this month with interviewing for the new positions with the NRD. There is a lot of work that goes into preparing for the advertisements, interviews and post interview review process. I believe we have had a good selection of candidates and have been blessed with some great new hires. The advertisement for the General Manager position was made on August 30th and Randy reports that he is beginning to get some applications.

## Newsletter Reminder

- Newsletters will need to be completed by September 14<sup>th</sup>, so if you have anything you'd like to submit – please let Liz know by Sept 10<sup>th</sup>.
- This addition will have the section for people to learn about the candidates for the board of directors so if you have not submitted your questionnaire by Sept 10<sup>th</sup> – you will be left out.



## Recycling

Liz has been working with Trailblazers RC&D to complete the Tire Recycling grants which are now awaiting the events. These events will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup> at Clay Center, Geneva & Hebron. She also created posters for the electronic recycling to take place at the end of September.

## Electronic

9/20—Hebron  
9/21—Geneva  
9/24—Clay Center  
9/24—Superior  
9/25—Guide Rock

## Scrap Tire

10/26—Geneva,  
Hebron & Clay Center.

## Projects Manager—Kevin Orvis

A day was spent with representatives for Pillen Farms correcting well use and locations on their farm near Hastings. There was a permit in the adjacent quarter where spacing had to be verified against where the Pillen's well was actually located. A producer had a Seametrics meter reading and totalizing in cubic feet, Lonnie Nunnenkamp met with District staff in the field to recalibrate that meter to gallons per minute and acre inch for totalizing. We're still checking meters in Maintenance Area 1 that haven't been visited. We want to provide the most accurate info we can to the contractor for locating the meters for mechanical meter maintenance this fall. We were to flow check a new well in Jefferson county this week but the weather made that impractical.

Right now we have 3 conditional permits that need to be checked before the end of September.

The Rural Water Project continues to visit with Fairbury concerning the water contract and rates. Randy Hellbusch of Nebraska Rural Water made a presentation of what he considered an equitable wholesale rate at an informal meeting with a few committee members and

administrators. Randy works for every city, village, or water project in the State but had quite differing numbers than what the



cities' engineer has come up with. Water Project Advisory members are still interested in the potential for their own well. Several domestic or stock wells south of Fairbury along Highway 15, and near the south pumphouse, were sampled for household suitability. All but one had high numbers for Iron, Manganese, and Total Dissolved Solids; one of these also had a higher value for salt. The one with a better chemical analysis for drinking water suitability had a nitrate hit of 2.15, well below the MCL of 10.0 but probably indicating the site is getting recharge from the surface. The question is if the water is suitable long term for drinking, will the supply be viable, and can it be lifted 119 feet in elevation to the Gladstone Tower?

## Operations Supervisor—Kent Thompson

The Prairie Lake Recreation Area was opened to the public in late August. So far, everything has gone well and many people have been investigating the work done on the area. Kent is working with Adams Central and Hastings College in assuring that the grounds are mowed up for cross-country events that are scheduled by the schools on the Prairie Lake property.

The recreation season is starting to wind down. Our areas have been very busy throughout the camping season and have offered many outdoor activities for our constituents. A new technician has been hired to assist in the extensive technical needs of the district. Kayla Currie will begin work on September 10<sup>th</sup> and help out in the Water Department and Operations and Maintenance Departments.

## Watershed Coordinator— Dylan Long

The Ethan Epley dam which had construction completed within the last month, was breached after the large rainfall events on Labor Day weekend. NRCS Engineers and staff visited the dam to determine the cause. Initial thoughts were that a hole developed underneath the pipe and with the large rainfall in the area (5.75") the head pressure from the pool caused the hole to expand and breach the dam. The hole may have developed due to the soils on site being dispersive clays. Soil samples were taken to determine if this was the cause. The pipe which was set several feet above ground level was laying on the ground causing it to bend. The landowner is awaiting word from NRCS Engineer and the contractor on how to proceed.

Construction at Crystal Lake continues. The contractor is finishing up the fishing piers and placing rip rap and rock around the area. An information booth was setup at the Antique Machinery show the weekend of August 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone that stopped by was very complimentary of the improvements to the lake.



## Media & Communications – Elysabeth Kierl

August 18<sup>th</sup> Liz & Dylan represented the LBNRD at the Crystal Lake Antique Machinery Show. A booth was on display to inform visitors to the show of the Crystal Lake Improvement Project. They collected a survey from those willing to participate. Liz headed to the State Fair on August 25<sup>th</sup> to help the NARD booth. This year the booth contained the stream table in which participants can watch how a river works in adverse conditions including erosion and flood factors. Liz coordinated planning for the Earth Jamboree which is scheduled for September 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>. We currently have 497 children signed up to participate in this two-day event. She met with presenters on Sept 5<sup>th</sup> at the Clay Center fairgrounds to make final plan revisions. She is working with the other NRDs to collect the photos used for the NARD calendar. A meeting will be held October 5<sup>th</sup> to finalize the calendar in Grand Island. Preparations have begun for Operator Training sessions which start in December. The website launched over the weekend of September 1<sup>st</sup>. Liz has been trying to clear up some address issues as well as some pages missed from the old site. It is still a work in progress but is functioning properly.

## Database Specialist – Alicia Epps

The new website has been released! The feedback on it has been minimal but not too many complaints. If you observe any edits or corrections, please let us know so we can make those changes. It is a very large project but it seems to be easier to navigate. Angela Hafer (Angie) started August 16<sup>th</sup>, as the Database Specialist and continues to be a great asset. She is willing to learn and accept new responsibilities as we progress. With the hiring of the new employees, brings us closer to the training opportunity with Beehive we are all looking forward to.

### **Beehive and Irrigated Certified Acre Reports**

There are approximately 1000 landowners that we have yet to receive their reports. This is very concerning. Alicia is working with Liz to promote the awareness of this situation. Flyers have been placed in surrounding locations (gas stations, restaurants, cafes....). There is mention of it on the pumpage report letter that was mailed August 31<sup>st</sup>. A “reminder” postcard is scheduled to circulate before October 10<sup>th</sup>. The FSA and NRCS offices are aware and approaching the public with reminders as well.