

MEMORANDUM

TO THE BOARD:

SUBJECT: General Manager's Report

DATE: November 10, 2016 UPDATED

FROM: John Winkler, General Manager



A. **INFORMATION/EDUCATION REPORT:** The Information and Education Report detailing Information and Education activities for the month of October 2016, is attached for your review.

B. **PERSONNEL/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

1. Attached is correspondence from Mark Crown and Scott Ussery, Omaha VeloCity, thanking Eric Williams and the contracting crew responsible for the drainage work completed on the Keystone Trail.
2. The General Election Results is attached for your review. Congratulations to Ted Japp – Sub-district #1; Larry Bradley – Sub-district #3; Rich Tesar – Sub-district #5; Patrick Leahy – Sub-district #7; Mark Gruenewald – Sub-district #9; and John Wiese – Sub-district #11. Departing Board Members will be recognized for their service at the December Board of Directors Meeting.

C. **REPORT ON PURCHASES – CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY:** Pursuant to Board direction, the report indicating construction services, professional services and personal property purchases from the month of October 2016, is attached for your review. Please review this report and contact me if you have any questions.

D. **CURRENT AND ON-GOING PROJECTS – P-MRNRD LEGAL COUNSEL:** A copy of current and on-going projects for District Legal Counsel, Husch Blackwell, as of October 18, 2016, is attached for your review. I would ask each Director to review this report. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

E. **NEWS CLIPS:**

- ✓ October 17, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, As it finishes big projects, Papio-Missouri River NRD plans to slash spending
- ✓ October 21, 2016, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Bradley's background will aid NRD
- ✓ October 23, 2016, Midland Voices article, Immigration puts growing pressure on national water resources

- ✓ October 24, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Agreement to study water issues in southern Sarpy County could make way for growth
- ✓ October 26, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Ohio State vice provost picked to lead UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, replacing Ronnie Green
- ✓ October 26, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Section of West Papio Trail in Sarpy Co. to close temporarily
- ✓ October 28, 2016, Omaha World Herald Editorial: Papio NRD on right track
- ✓ November 4, 2016, Washington Co. Enterprise Letter to the Editor, Rhea making more progress than NRD predecessor
- ✓ November 5, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, West Papio Trail will connect to southwest Omaha after \$450,000 expansion
- ✓ November 9, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Water issues await at least two incumbents, likely newcomers on Papio-Missouri River NRD board
- ✓ November 9, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, 8 of 14 legislative candidates supported by Ricketts win, giving the Unicameral a more conservative bent
- ✓ November 9, 2016, Lincoln Journal Star article, Legislature should see 17 new faces; 5 incumbents appear ousted
- ✓ November 9, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, 2 incumbents picked for Papio-Missouri River NRD board

## October 2016 Information/Education Report

### Information

- Coordinated completion and launch of new web site.
- Continued work on updates for Chalco Hills Visitors Center Exhibit
- Distributed news releases
- Coordinated Media Day at Pigeon Creek Dredging Project
- Responded to several requests for information/materials received through web site contacts
- Completed work on Fall 2016 Spectrum Newsletter
- Monitored local media coverage of NRD-related stories
- Coordinated Speakers Bureau presentations by John Winkler

### Education

#### October Programming Schedule:

- 10/3- Millard Library Program- Turtles- 63 people  
10/3- Upchurch Elementary- Field Trip hike+animal program- 53 students (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
10/4- - Upchurch Elementary- Animal Presentation- 57 students (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
10/7- Sandoz Elementary – Habitats- 65 students (1<sup>st</sup> grade)  
10/7- Millard West High- Animals- 86 students  
10/10- Blair Heartland Academy- Owls- 46 students (K-5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
10/11- Rohwer Elementary- N.E. Animals- 94 students (4<sup>th</sup> grade)  
10/12- Mary Our Queen– Owls- 68 students (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
10/14- Arbor Park Elementary – Env. History- 67 students (4<sup>th</sup> grade)  
10/17- Morton Elementary Nature Club- Animals- 18 students  
10/18- Parkview Heights Elementary- Lizards- 13 students (pre-K)  
10/19- Pine Creek Elementary- owls- 66 students (1<sup>st</sup> grade)  
10/20- Saddlebrook Elementary– Owls - 69 students (1<sup>st</sup> grade)  
10/20- Sandoz Elementary Cub Explorers-- 26 students  
10/22- Educator's Day at Mulhalls----Informational Booth  
10/24- Castelar Elementary – Owls- 126 students (4<sup>th</sup> grade)  
10/25- Walnut Creek Elementary– Insects- 29 students (pre-K)  
10/26- Arbor Park Middle, Blair– Owls- 45 students  
10/26- St. Pius/St. Leo School- Owls- 72 students (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
10/27- Wegner School at Boys Town- Recycling- 23 students  
10/28- Kiewit Middle School – Careers-30 students  
10/30- Ghoulish Gardens- Creepy Critters- +1000 people

#### Planning:

- Updates/Monitoring of Papio-Missouri River NRD Facebook/Twitter/Google+/Instagram Sites and Web Pages  
General NRD Animal Care  
Outdoor Classroom Grants  
Assist with Press Releases and Press Statements  
Spring Program Planning

#### Meetings/Trainings:

- Post WO!W Meeting  
Web Site-WordPress Training  
Statewide I&E Meeting  
Elkhorn Crossing/Platte River Landing Pictures/Update

From: Crown, Mark C CIV STRATCOM J56 (US) [mailto:mark.c.crown.civ@mail.mil]  
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2016 11:39 AM  
To: Williams, Eric <ewilliams@papionrd.org>; Scott.Ussery@physiciansmutual.com  
Cc: info@omahabikes.org; info@modeshiftomaha.org; mattstoffel@gmail.com  
Subject: RE: [Non-DoD Source] RE: Nice job!

Eric, Add my thanks to Scott's. The crew did a nice job of getting the job done fairly quickly and cleaning up on their way out--whether it's a big project or home remodeling, you really can't ask for more than that. Well done!

As you mentioned enjoying the trails, more and more people are doing just that. I'm not aware of how you track trail usage, but it's increasing every year. I've been cycling to work from midtown to Offutt AFB for a long time, and it's becoming apparent I can no longer daydream on the trail during my pre-dawn commute. Years ago, absolutely no one would be on some stretches of the trail, allowing me to zone out, gather my thoughts, and prepare for the work day. Not any more. There are runners, walkers, cyclists along much of the trail, with a huge amount of activity near Aksarben and UNO. It's nice to know so many people use our trails.

Mark, Omaha VeloCity co-captain

Mark Crown  
United States Strategic Command: J56  
(402) 232-4943, DSN 272-4943

---

**From:** Scott Ussery [mailto:[Scott.Ussery@physiciansmutual.com](mailto:Scott.Ussery@physiciansmutual.com)]  
**Sent:** Monday, October 24, 2016 11:12 AM  
**To:** Williams, Eric <[ewilliams@papionrd.org](mailto:ewilliams@papionrd.org)>  
**Cc:** 'Omaha Bikes' <[info@omahabikes.org](mailto:info@omahabikes.org)>; 'ModeShift Omaha' <[info@modeshiftomaha.org](mailto:info@modeshiftomaha.org)>; 'Crown, Mark C CIV STRATCOM J56 (US)' <[mark.c.crown.civ@mail.mil](mailto:mark.c.crown.civ@mail.mil)>; '[mattstoffel@gmail.com](mailto:mattstoffel@gmail.com)' <[mattstoffel@gmail.com](mailto:mattstoffel@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Nice job!

Hi Eric,

I'm glad the L St drainage work along the Keystone Trail is finally done. I especially want to give a shout out to the contractor and the way they swept off the trail as well as they did. I wish Omaha would give their post trail repairs (Field Club, SO Trail), and storm aftermath (Big Papio), this kind of attention. Is there any chance other trail underpasses are going to receive some lighting/drainage TLC?

Scott  
Omaha VeloCity co-captain

Scott Ussery | Data Mining Statistician, Direct Marketing Group  
Physicians Mutual | 2600 Dodge Street | Omaha, NE 68131  
402.633.1666 | [PhysiciansMutual.com](http://PhysiciansMutual.com) | [scott.ussery@PhysiciansMutual.com](mailto:scott.ussery@PhysiciansMutual.com)

Unofficial General Election Results  
November 8, 2016  
(Taken from the Nebraska Secretary of State Office – 11/8/2016)

<u>District 1</u>	Votes	Percent
Ted Japp	13,730	56.70%
Bill Rhea, Jr.	10,486	43.30%

<u>District 3</u>	Votes	Percent
Larry Bradley	10,704	50.12%
Curt Frost	10,654	49.88%

<u>District 5</u>	Votes	Percent
Bill Pospichal	10,292	37.20%
Rich Tesar	17,376	62.80%

<u>District 7</u>	Votes	Percent
Patricia Hannan	7,555	36.52%
Patrick Leahy	13,132	63.48%

<u>District 9</u>	Votes	Percent
Patrick Bonnett	11,582	48.38%
Mark Gruenewald	12,356	51.62%

<u>District 11</u>	Votes	Percent
Ron Woodle	10,716	47.61%
John B. Wiese	11,790	52.39%



Updated: October 18, 2016

## **Current and On-Going Projects P-MRNRD Legal Counsel**

☼ = **Top Priority**  
F = Future Work – No Assignment  
N = New Assignment  
O = Others Handling  
W = Work in Progress  
P = Counsel Portion Completed  
B= Next Board Meeting

- **Little Papio:** (Cleveland)
- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
  - ☼ Master Tune Sign License Enforcement (F)
- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
  - ☼ Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96<sup>th</sup> St.) (P)
  - Bellino Sale of NRD ROW (W)
- **Western Sarpy Dike:** (Cleveland/Petermann)
  - NRDs/NE-ARNG Interlocal for Camp Ashland Property (F)
- **Floodway Purchase Program:** (Laster/Grint)
  - Arlington Purchase Agreements, Deeds, etc. (F)
- **Trail Projects:** (Williams)
- **Missouri River Corridor Project:** (Becic)
- **USDA PL 566 Projects, Silver Creek and Pigeon/Jones Watershed:** (Schumacher/Cleveland)
  - ☼ Papio W-3 Eminent Domain (Camden) (W)
  - Papio PL 566 Site W-2 Issues (F)

- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Williams)
  - ⊛ ROW Acquisition Documents for WP6 & WP7 (F)
  - ⊛ Transfer Deed to City of Omaha for Zorinsky Basin 1 (P)
  - ⊛ Transfer Deed to City of Papillion change elevation of Top of Dam for Prairie Queen (W)
  - ⊛ City of Omaha Interlocal Agreement for ZB-2 (B)
  - ⊛ WP6 & WP7 Interlocal Agreement with Papillion and Sarpy Co. (B)
  
- **Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Grint)
  
- **Southern Sarpy Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Laster)
  - ⊛ Southern Sarpy Watershed Partnership Interlocal Agreement (F) (Laster)
  
- **Missouri River R-613 and R-616 Levees:** (Cleveland/Woodward)
  - Offutt AFB Culvert O&M Agreement (W)
  - ⊛ ROW Acquisition Documents (N)
  
- **Rural Water Projects:** (Nelson)
  - WCRW – Amendment to Washington County Interlocal Agreement
  
- **Other:**



# As it finishes big projects, Papio-Missouri River NRD plans to slash spending

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer/10-17-16

As the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District finishes up some big projects, officials expect to cut its spending nearly in half by fiscal year 2021.

The district's board approved a long-range plan at its Thursday meeting that decreases spending from about \$72 million in this fiscal year to about \$38 million in five years.

That's down from a high point of \$93 million in the 2014 fiscal year.

"This is what we said we were going to do," General Manager John Winkler said.

The Papio-Missouri is one of Nebraska's 23 natural resources districts, which are charged with flood control and water quality maintenance.

The Nebraska Legislature gave the district the ability to issue bonds in 2009.

The district issued more than \$70 million in bonds, enough to pay for large projects, most of which have been completed.

It's still finishing up the last project, the 15A dam site north west of 168th and Fort Streets.

The district won't be able to issue more bonds after 2019, unless the Legislature reauthorizes its authority.

But even if the Legislature does so, Winkler said, the district is going to finish the six other dam projects on its priority list with a pay-as-you-go method.

Those projects are expected to cost the district more than \$90 million.

If the district keeps spending the way it does now, those projects won't be finished until after 2030, possibly even 2040.

But Winkler said he'd like the district to roll back spending on other programs and focus its spending on the six dam sites.

Early estimates say that could shorten the timeline to 2026, according to Winkler.

The six dam sites are:

- » 168th Street and Bennington Road, with a price tag of \$13.8 million
- » 216th and Fort Streets, \$20.7 million
- » 192nd Street and Giles Road, \$23.7 million
- » 180th and Fort Streets, \$13.7 million
- » 180th Street and Giles Road, \$9.9 million
- » 204th Street and Schram Road, \$9.9 million

As for the future of the district's budget, Winkler said he's not counting on being able to turn that into a tax cut.

That's because those expensive projects were paid for in part by grants or other funding, which will go away along with the spending.

And the district will still have debt payments to make.

But Winkler said a tax cut might be possible.

The district expects to take in \$22.5 million in property tax money next year.

The long-range plan assumes that valuations will rise by 1.5 percent each year.

Winkler described that as a “very, very conservative estimate” and said valuations generally rise at twice that rate.

If that happens over the next five years, residents of Douglas, Sarpy, Washington and parts of Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties could see their tax rate go down, Winkler said.

Papio Missouri NRD budgets

(by fiscal year) \*projected

**2007:** \$37.4 million

**2008:** \$44.2 million

**2009:** \$52.4 million

**2010:** \$83.7 million

**2011:** \$59.6 million

**2012:** \$82.5 million

**2013:** \$87.4 million

**2014:** \$93 million

**2015:** \$83.4 million

**2016:** \$71.9 million

**2017:** \$70.5 million

**2018\*:** \$56 million

**2019\*:** \$53 million

**2020\*:** \$38.3 million

**2021\*:** \$37.8 million

**World Herald Public Pulse 10-21-16**

**Bradley's background will aid NRD**

Larry Bradley is my top choice for the Subdistrict 3 seat on the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District. Bradley is the pro-environment candidate and has three science degrees that go hand in hand with natural resource management. He served on the NRD board previously and made common-sense decisions on budget issues, conservation flood control and recreational trails.

Bradley is also a veteran of the U.S. Army.

He is, by far, the best selection for NRD Subdistrict 3. He should be elected.

Tim Lonergan, Omaha

# Midlands Voices: Immigration puts growing pressure on national water resources

By Don Blankenau/Oct 23, 2016

*The author, an attorney in Lincoln, holds a degree in natural resources management and has represented states in multiple interstate water disputes.*

In this election year, immigration is one of the most hotly debated issues. Although much of the debate revolves around the implications of immigration to national security and the cost of associated social programs, the impact to our water resources is generally overlooked.

Yet when viewed through the lens of water resource conservation and sustainability, existing levels of immigration pose enormous management challenges.

With a population of 320 million, the United States is the third-most populous nation in the world, trailing only China and India. With the world's most liberal immigration laws and policies, the population of the United States has more than doubled since the 1960s.

Legal admissions into the United States since then have hovered around the 1 million mark annually. Current immigration policy allows the legal and illegal entry of about 1.25 million persons every year, making immigration the single greatest source of population growth in the United States.

At its present trajectory, conservative estimates indicate that immigration will swell the population of the United States to over 420 million by the middle of this century. This increase in population is greater than the existing combined populations of every state east of the Mississippi River.

Although water use across the nation varies considerably, the average American uses about 200 gallons of water per day and another 1,250 gallons per day for food production.

Annually, the impact of 1.25 million new residents on just the nation's water resources is an increase of over 2 million acre-feet — more than the capacity of Lake McConaughy. That means the U.S. must make available the equivalent of a new Lake McConaughy each year to accommodate our new residents.

With an increasing frequency of droughts, as recently experienced in California, the margin between water demand and water availability in many areas of the country becomes perilously slim.

There are more than 250,000 rivers and streams in the United States. These rivers provide essential water to meet domestic, industrial and irrigation demands. These rivers also provide essential ecosystem habitats for the thousands of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and flora that make North America so special.

But as the population grows, it is inevitable that the use of our rivers must change to accommodate the increased production demands. These changes will invariably result in less water being available for irrigation and for fish and wildlife habitat.

And it is these changes that will set the stage for a different kind of legal and political conflict: how existing environmental laws can accommodate the use of limited water resources in the face of what is, seemingly, an endlessly growing demand.

Shortly after Congress dramatically expanded immigration in the 1960s, it enacted sweeping changes to laws concerning the management of natural resources. Among the key federal laws passed were the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

In the face of the projected population growth, it is unlikely these environmental laws will be able to function as envisioned by Congress. When demand for water and other natural resources is dictated by necessity, laws must change.

Already conflicts and litigation, spurred by increasing demand for water resources, are expanding across America and are amplified by climatic conditions.

Congress and the next president must soon decide whether to modify immigration laws and policy, in part, to preserve our water and natural resources for future generations.

While there are many differing viewpoints on immigration, each with merit, the implications of the status quo policies to our water and natural resources should not be ignored.

Congress and the new president, whomever that might be, must engage in a full, careful and fearless examination of all the implications of immigration policy, including water resources, for the sake of future Americans.

## Agreement to study water issues in southern Sarpy County could make way for growth

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer 10-24-16



Water issues in southern Sarpy County are about to get some attention — and developers there are going to start paying new fees.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, Sarpy County and its cities have reached a three-year agreement to study and make rules about a host of water-related issues in the southern half of the county.

NRD General Manager John Winkler said he wants to “have a plan before it really starts to pick up and people start building stuff.”

The southern half of Sarpy County could be the metro area’s next big growth area.

Sarpy officials are studying the best way to provide sewer service to the area. Once that has been decided, development could boom.

“Here it comes,” Winkler said.

The new agreement covers the areas that drain into the Elkhorn and Platte Rivers. It’s modeled after an agreement in the Papillion Creek watershed to the north.

The new group will focus on six areas:

- » Improving water quality.
- » Maintaining or reducing the amount of runoff during storms.
- » Conserving natural areas.
- » Controlling erosion.
- » Managing the flood plain, including studying and mapping water patterns.
- » Finding a way to pay for any projects that come out of the agreement.

The government entities are supposed to pick up two-thirds of the \$300,000 tab; development fees are slated to cover the rest.

Development fees start at \$864 per lot for a single-family home, \$3,803 per acre for an apartment complex and \$4,609 per acre for commercial or industrial development.

Those fees are set to rise over the agreement’s three years.

Winkler said the fees mirror those in the Papillion Creek watershed, which includes much of Sarpy, Douglas and Washington Counties.

Winkler said the partnership could eventually approve development restrictions.

He said he wants to start working on those now, before a potential development boom.

“This is a textbook thing to do as far as being proactive,” he said.

*roseann.moring@owh.com, 402-444-1084*

# Ohio State vice provost picked to lead UNL's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, replacing Ronnie Green

- By Nancy Gaarder / World-Herald staff writer /10-26-16

A vice provost at Ohio State University and expert on plant pathology has been selected to oversee the University of Nebraska's agriculture and natural resources programs.

The appointment of Michael Boehm to lead the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources and to become the University of Nebraska vice president for Agriculture and Natural Resources will require Board of Regents approval.

Boehm, 51, is scheduled to start Jan. 1. He replaces Ronnie Green, who was named chancellor of UNL.

UNL's Ron Yoder has been serving in the position on an interim basis.

Green said Boehm's background in research and teaching, his experience leading initiatives at Ohio State and his national expertise in plant pathology were among the factors that made him a good fit for the job. Boehm is a professor of plant pathology and vice provost for academic and strategic planning at Ohio State. He is considered an authority on turfgrass diseases and has expertise on fungal diseases. He holds five U.S. and 15 international patents related to his work on Fusarium head blight of wheat.

In Nebraska, Boehm will oversee the Rural Futures Institute, the Daugherty Global Water for Food Institute, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture at Curtis, the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, the Agricultural Research Division and Nebraska Extension. This work encompasses more than 1,600 full-time employees, nearly 40,000 acres of land and a \$215 million budget.

# Section of West Papio Trail in Sarpy Co. to close temporarily

- By Jay Withrow / World-Herald staff writer/10-26-16

A section of the West Papio Trail along the West Branch Papillion Creek in Sarpy County will close temporarily Thursday and reopen Wednesday.

The closing, for creek-channel repair work, is between South 96th Street and Giles Road in Papillion, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District said.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD is completing a creek-bank repair project that will include temporary placement of soil over the trail between 96th Street and Giles Road, officials said.

# Editorial: Papio NRD on right track

- World-Herald editorial/10-28-2016

Voters have a lot on their minds this year, but they should make a little time for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

The actions of an NRD help keep homes and businesses safe from flooding, safeguard water quality, protect more farms from soil erosion and provide public recreation.

The Papio-Missouri NRD has pursued a series of major projects in recent years.

It has issued more than \$70 million in bonds for large, flood-protection projects that are nearing completion. Some offer recreational opportunities, but more importantly, they protect lives and property.

Officials with the NRD have worked with other local governments, the Legislature and Nebraska's congressional delegation to secure funding for new levees to protect Offutt Air Force Base, a key regional asset.

The district's governing board recently approved a long-range plan that will cut spending nearly in half over the next five years, as it should, since the NRD's state-granted bonding authority is lapsing. The board has some difficult budget decisions to make.

But there's a plan in place to continue building dams and flood-fighting structures as needed, which is the district's most important job.

There are six competitive races for NRD seats this year, all involving incumbents. We find the incumbents to be capable individuals deserving support.

Our recommendations:

>> In Subdistrict 1, which covers Dakota County, most of Thurston County, part of Burt County, Washington County and north-central Douglas County, Bill Rhea Jr. demonstrates impressive abilities in a short stint on the board. He's a no-nonsense cattleman who ran to unseat the controversial Scott Japp on the premise that he could be a more effective representative for the NRD's only rural district. After Japp died in a farm accident, the NRD board appointed Rhea to the post in August. Early reviews of his work are promising. He's asking questions, studying hard and speaking up when he has something to add.

>> In Subdistrict 3, which encompasses much of northeastern Douglas County, Curt Frost is the choice. Frost is willing to speak out against spending by the district when he thinks it strays too far from its core missions of flood control, water quality and fighting soil erosion. His approach helps the board think through individual projects.

>> In Subdistrict 5, which spans western Douglas County and a sliver of northwest Omaha, Rich Tesar is the pick because of his experience. He represents the board on the state organization for all of Nebraska's NRDs. He has been an effective board member. He's still focused on flood control and water quality, with a dash of recreation, a solid mix of priorities.

>> In Subdistrict 7 in central Omaha, Patrick Leahy is the choice. Leahy, whose grandfather Gene Leahy is a former Omaha mayor, served in the Army and Army Reserve. He has pushed hard to restrain new dam building, sticking to the district's plans and not straying beyond them. And Leahy appears to have a keen eye for NRD budget discipline.

>> In Subdistrict 9, covering southwest Douglas County and northwest Sarpy County, the pick is Patrick Bonnett. This board member is following through on seeing the completion of Dam Site 15A. The 220-acre flood-control lake, surrounded by 475 acres of parkland, lies northwest of 168th and Fort Streets. His next mission: rethinking the budget after bonding authority sunsets.

>> In Subdistrict 11 in eastern Sarpy County, the choice is Ron Woodle. He has owned a hardware business, a western store, a laundromat, a moving business and stables. He knows numbers. But



he's proudest of helping with the Offutt Air Force Base levees. Woodle's goal for what he says would be his final term in office is worthy: limiting flooding potential as the rest of Sarpy County develops.

Each of these races has a solid incumbent. The board is headed in a sound direction.

We recommend that Papio-Missouri NRD voters in Subdistrict 1 select Bill Rhea Jr. in Subdistrict 1; Curt Frost in Subdistrict 3; Rich Tesar in Subdistrict 5; Patrick Leahy in Subdistrict 7; Patrick Bonnett in Subdistrict 9; and Ron Woodle in Subdistrict 11.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### **Rhea making more progress than NRD predecessor**

To the editor,

I have had the opportunity to listen to the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District's (NRD) September board meeting. Ironically, Director Bill Rhea was able to accomplish more for his district in one meeting than his predecessor was able to accomplish in eight years.

By convincing his fellow elected board members to transfer \$142,000 dollars from an urban program to begin a rural dredging project that was long neglected under the past "reign of terror." This was done with no increase in the budget and passed unanimously by the board.

Actually, the former director was able to accomplish nothing in his tenure on the NRD board. He did not prevent tax increases, he did not prevent the construction of dams — in fact they accelerated. While overall spending by the NRD increased more than 50 percent in his eight years, spending in his sub-district decreased during this failed time and his constituents suffered as he squandered hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money in legal fees and wasted staff time responding to all of his nonsense.

Our rural areas need smart and experienced representation at every level of government. For the past eight years, we have witnessed what doesn't work. It is now time to make up for all the lost opportunities.

**Phil H. Hammel**  
Springfield, Ill.  
(former Washington County resident)

## **West Papio Trail will connect to southwest Omaha after \$450,000 expansion**

- By Hailey Konnath / World-Herald staff writer/Updated Nov 5, 2016

The West Papio Trail is set to get a \$450,000 expansion that will connect the trail to southwest Omaha.

The extension will begin at the existing trail on the south side of Giles Road in La Vista, go under the Giles bridge and continue along the Papillion Creek to 132nd and Q Streets in Omaha.

Construction will begin in spring 2018, and the trail is scheduled to open by the end of that year, said Eric Williams, natural resources planner with the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

The trail is on the original transcontinental railroad line and will include the “historic” Hill Creek Bridge, which is currently being rehabilitated, he said.

La Vista, Omaha and the Papio-Missouri River NRD have entered into an interlocal agreement to get the work done. The Papio-Missouri River NRD has agreed to be the project’s lead agency, the agreement said.

The NRD will pay 60 percent — up to \$270,000 of the project — and La Vista and Omaha will split the remaining 40 percent, each paying \$90,000.

# Water issues await at least two incumbents, likely newcomers on Papio-Missouri River NRD board

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer  
11-9-16 Updated 7 hrs ago

It appears that voters sent some new faces to the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board.

The district is tasked with flood prevention and other water issues in Douglas, Sarpy, Washington, Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties.

The new officials will help oversee a \$70 million budget and shape new dam projects.

Tuesday night, incumbents Rich Tesar and Patrick Leahy fended off challengers.

Tesar serves in several leadership positions with the NRD, and his colleagues often turn to him for institutional knowledge. Leahy has said that he plans to do more of the same in his second term, and that he would oppose any potential tax increases.

Patrick Bonnett, who represents Subdistrict 9, also had pulled ahead of challenger Mark Gruenewald, though the two were within 100 votes Tuesday night.

Bonnett said that he wants the district to focus its spending on acquiring land for new dam projects.

Other incumbents, though, trailed their opponents in races that were still too close to call.

Subdistrict 1 includes the parts of Washington, Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties that fall within the NRD as well as a small part of northern Douglas County. In that race, Ted Japp was slightly ahead of Bill Rhea Jr. Rhea was appointed to the board earlier this year after board member Scott Japp died in a farm accident.

In far northeastern Douglas County Larry Bradley, an adjunct professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, led the race for Subdistrict 3. Bradley served on the board from 2008 to 2012 and is challenging his successor, Curt Frost.

And board member Ron Woodle trailed in Subdistrict 11 to business owner John Wiese.

# 8 of 14 legislative candidates supported by Ricketts win, giving the Unicameral a more conservative bent

By Martha Stoddard and Emily Nohr / World-Herald staff writers/11-9-16

The Nebraska Legislature appears likely to be more friendly to Gov. Pete Ricketts' political agenda after Tuesday's election.

Eight of the 14 candidates he supported, either with money or an endorsement, won their races. The result will be a more conservative Republican majority.

Three candidates backed by the governor ousted more moderate Republican incumbents, while a fourth defeated a moderate Republican opponent.

But the two Ricketts-backed candidates who went up against incumbent Democrats were handily defeated. Democratic candidates also unseated two Republican incumbents.

In all, Democrats picked up three seats in the officially nonpartisan body but remain in the minority.

The class of 2016 also will bring in three more women and the second Latino state senator.

## **District 3**

Bellevue City Councilwoman Carol Blood, a Democrat, ousted incumbent Sen. Tommy Garrett, a Republican in their second election matchup. The two met in the 2014 election, shortly after Garrett had been appointed to the Legislature.

## **District 5**

Mike McDonnell, a former Omaha fire chief and political newcomer, won easily over Gilbert Ayala, a grocery store and restaurant worker. McDonnell will follow Sen. Heath Mello in representing midtown Omaha.

## **District 7**

Tony Vargas sailed to a victory over John Synowiecki in the race featuring two Democrats. An Omaha Public Schools board member, Vargas will be the second Latino to serve in the Legislature, the first to represent South Omaha.

## **District 9**

Incumbent Sen. Sara Howard claimed a landslide victory over challenger Larry Roland. He was unable to gain traction in the strongly Democratic district, which previously elected Howard's mother, Gwen Howard, for two terms.

## **District 11**

Voters returned Sen. Ernie Chambers to the Legislature for another four years, extending a legislative career that has outstripped all others in Nebraska. He handily defeated political newcomer John Sciara in north Omaha.

## **District 13**

Creighton University professor and political newcomer Jill Brown held a thin victory margin over attorney and Omaha Public Schools board member Justin Wayne for the northeast Omaha seat. The Democrats battled to replace Sen. Tanya Cook.

## **District 31**

Voters sent incumbent Sen. Rick Kolowski back to Lincoln for four more years. Kolowski won the competitive race to represent southwest Omaha over newcomer Ian Swanson, who was backed by the governor.

## **District 39**

Veteran Republican activist Lou Ann Linehan defeated Bill Armbrust, an Elkhorn-area farmer, to take the western Douglas County seat. Linehan had support from the governor.

## **District 45**

Incumbent Sen. Sue Crawford of Bellevue pulled away to an easy win against political newcomer Michael J. Cook. Crawford came in a close second to Cook, who had backing from Ricketts, in the primary election.

## **Legislature should see 17 new faces; 5 incumbents appear ousted**

ZACH PLUHACEK Lincoln Journal Star/11-9-16

Prepare for an influx of fresh faces at the Capitol.

It appears 17 new lawmakers will join the Nebraska Legislature next year, including five challengers who were poised to unseat incumbent senators as of early Wednesday.

Ballots were still being counted in some parts of the state, but sitting Sens. Tommy Garrett of Bellevue, David Schnoor of Scribner, Jerry Johnson of Wahoo, Les Seiler of Hastings and Al Davis of Hyannis were losing in unofficial results.

Barring major swings, Democrats were expected to flip five districts in their favor in the officially nonpartisan Legislature. Republicans were likely to flip two. And at least four conservatives led in districts currently represented by more moderate Republicans.

"Right now, it looks like the people of the United States are wanting a government that listens to the people," said Suzanne Geist, who claimed victory in District 25, which includes east Lincoln and Lancaster County. "And I think the average citizen has risen up and said they're tired of politics as usual, and it's time to do this differently.

"I think this is going to be the beginning of a new era."

Geist, a Republican, defeated Democrat Jim Gordon in one of two hotly contested Lincoln-area races. In the other, Republican Mike Hilgers defeated Democrat Larry Scherer to represent District 21.

"I'm very humbled by the results," said Hilgers. "People in northwest Lincoln and Lancaster County just wanted a voice, and I'm honored that they chose me to be their voice."

Geist and Hilgers will replace Sens. Kathy Campbell and Ken Haar, who are leaving the Legislature due to term limits.

In other Lincoln-area races, Democrat Anna Wishart repeated her overwhelming primary performance to claim victory over Republican Dick Clark in District 27, west Lincoln and Lancaster County. Incumbent Sen. Kate Bolz, whose only opponent suspended her campaign after the primary, sailed to victory in central Lincoln's District 29.

"I feel great," Wishart said. "It's just been an incredibly positive experience for the past almost two years of campaigning."

Challengers who appeared to defeat incumbent senators included Democrats Carol Blood of Bellevue (Garrett) and Lynne Walz of Fremont (Schnoor), and Republicans Bruce Bostelman of Brainard (Johnson), Steve Halloran of Hastings (Seiler) and Tom Brewer of Gordon (Davis).

Johnson, Seiler and Davis were each targeted by conservatives due to their moderate records. And Bostelman and Halloran were among the 14 legislative candidates who received financial backing from Gov. Pete Ricketts.

Ricketts, whose family owns the World Series-winning Chicago Cubs baseball team, batted .500 himself in legislative races where he contributed money to a candidate.

Hilgers, Geist, Bostelman and Halloran each received campaign cash from the governor, as did apparent winners Joni Albrecht of Thurston, John S. Lowe Sr. of Kearney and Lou Ann Linehan of Elkhorn.

Based on unofficial results, Ricketts' losing picks appeared to be Schnoor, Clark, Ian Swanson of Omaha, Michael Cook of Bellevue, Karl Elmshaeuser of Ogallala and Gregg Neuhaus of Grand Island, in addition to Sen. Nicole Fox of Omaha, who lost in the primary.

At least one legislative race was almost certainly bound for a recount. Dan Quick held a lead of less than 1 percent over Neuhaus in unofficial results for Grand Island-area District 35.

"That was really close, huh?" Quick said over the phone.

He thanked his wife and expressed optimism about the recount process.

"We're pleased. We just worked really hard on this campaign."

Brewer was still waiting on results from the Alliance area in his race against incumbent Sen. Davis in Sandhills-based District 43.

However, Brewer said, "I'd rather be in my shoes right now than his."

*Reach the writer at 402-473-7234 or [zpluhacek@journalstar.com](mailto:zpluhacek@journalstar.com).*

# 2 incumbents picked for Papio-Missouri River NRD board

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer

11-9-16

Four board members on the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board likely won't be returning next year.

Of six seats that were up, voters chose two incumbents, Rich Tesar and Patrick Leahy.

They chose former board member Larry Bradley over current board member Curt Frost, though the margin was small enough to trigger an automatic recount.

In rural Subdistrict 1, Ted Japp won easily over board member Bill Rhea Jr.

The board appointed Rhea to the seat earlier this year when former board member Scott Japp — a cousin of Ted Japp — died in a farm accident.

Two first-term board members also lost.

In the Millard area, Mark Gruenewald advanced beyond Patrick Bonnett.

And in Bellevue, John Wiese won over Ron Woodle.

The board is made up of 11 members overall.