

- Corn and Soybean Production in 2014 Cotton Production also Up from 2013
- ✓ August 14, 2014, Associated Press article, North Dakota residents joining Missouri River flood lawsuit
 - ✓ August 17, 2014, Omaha World Herald editorial: Feds should listen to concerns of ag
 - ✓ August 18, 2014, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Flood work a good-government example
 - ✓ August 18, 2014, Washington Co. Pilot Tribune article, NRD proposes same or lower tax levy for ninth consecutive year
 - ✓ August 23, 2014, Omaha World Herald article, 60-mile recreation trail from Nebraska to Kansas nearing completion
 - ✓ September 1, 2014, Omaha World Herald article, Neighborhood in Missouri Valley, Iowa, evacuated after levee break; cleanup in Denison
 - ✓ September 1, 2014 KTIV News story, Clean up begins in Dakota City
 - ✓ September 2, 2014, Sioux City Journal article, Conservation Dedication, Neb. Lake's namesake becomes comfortable with honor
 - ✓ September 7, 2014, Omaha World Herald Midlands article, A fun look at the importance of water
 - ✓ September 10, 2014, Omaha World Herald article, Omaha's Eppley Airfield set record with 3.43 inches of rain

August, 2014 Information/Education Report

Information

- Continued to prepare budget recommendations
- Began work on Fall 2014 Spectrum Newsletter
- Continued archiving slides and photo prints
- Updated Web site and Facebook Page
- Prepared news releases
- Continued work on 2014/2015 Information Campaign planning
- Continued responding to requests for information received thru web site and Facebook

Education:

August Programming Schedule:

- 8/1-** La Vista Library- Snakes- 63 kids (3-7)
8/4- Millard Public Library- Nocturnal Animals- 53 people
8/4- Creative Kidz Daycare – Insects- 25 kids (pre-K)
8/5- Just Like Home Preschool- Owls- 25 kids (5-10)
8/6- The Hills Montessori- Insects-35 kids- (pre-K)
8/7- Hamilton Heights Daycare- Insects/hike- 23 kids
8/8- Hamilton Heights Daycare- Geocaching/hike- 28 kids
8/21- Sump Library – Fun with Friends- Reptiles- 25 people
8/26- Rockwell Elementary- Bees/pollination- 64 students (2nd grade)

Planning:

- Fall Nature Nights
Fall Programming
Update MORE Nature Website
Job Posting to Papio-Missouri River NRD Web Site
Pictures to Erika at NARD for Conference
Give Away Items for Field Offices
Water Works 2015
Updates/Monitoring of Papio-Missouri River NRD Facebook Page

Meetings:

- World O! Water Planning Committee

**NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL LEGISLATURE
ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION
WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTERIM COMMITTEE HEARINGS
September 5, 2014**

Monday, September 8, 2014

Judiciary Committee

1:00 p.m. – Quality Inn, Ogallala, NE

LR520 (Davis) Interim study to examine the problems that law enforcement is encountering since the State of Colorado legalized the sale and recreational use of marijuana

Thursday, September 11, 2014

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

10:00 a.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR523 (Dubas) Interim study to examine alternative transportation options and recommend potential changes to Nebraska's statutes

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR523 (Dubas) Interim study to examine alternative transportation options and recommend potential changes to Nebraska's statutes

Open to the public, invited testimony only.

Monday, September 15, 2014

Department of Correctional Services Special Investigative Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1524, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Mental health treatment – Testifiers to be determined

Open to the public, invited testimony only.

Thursday, September 18, 2014

ACCESSNebraska Special Investigative Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Public hearing regarding ACCESSNebraska

Thursday, September 25, 2014

Agriculture Committee

1:30 p.m. – NorthStar Foundation, 4242 North 49th St., Omaha, NE

LR545 (Kolowski) Interim study to examine state-wide efforts that can be taken to improve Nebraska's access to local food supply and distribution networks

LR558 (Harr) Interim study to examine ways the state and municipalities can encourage the development of community gardens, including providing spaces for gardening on public lands

Friday, September 26, 2014

General Affairs Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR578 (Karpisek) Interim study to examine the various Nebraska agricultural products used in the production of craft beer and distilled spirits

Monday, October 6, 2014

Education Committee

1:30 p.m. - Gallup, 1001 Gallup Dr., Omaha, NE

Public hearing regarding a statewide vision for education in Nebraska as required by LB1103 (2014)

Tuesday, October 7, 2014

Transportation and Telecommunications Committee

1:30 p.m. – Room 1113, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR528 (Dubas) Interim study to examine issues surrounding financing the maintenance and replacement of county bridges

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

Education Committee

1:30 p.m. - Suite E, Lifelong Learning Center, Northeast Community College, 801 East Benjamin Ave., Norfolk, NE

Public hearing regarding a statewide vision for education in Nebraska as required by LB1103 (2014)

Thursday, October 16, 2014

Education Committee

1:30 p.m. - High School Auditorium, Broken Bow Public Schools, 323 North 7th Ave., Broken Bow, NE

Public hearing regarding a statewide vision for education in Nebraska as required by LB1103 (2014)

Friday, October 24, 2014

Health and Human Services Committee

9:00 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR533 (Crawford) Interim study to assess the enrollment of former foster youth in the new medicaid category for youth formerly in foster care up to age 26 in Nebraska under the new federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

LR539 (Campbell) Interim study to examine whether the maximum payment rate in the Aid to Dependent Children program, is adequate to meet the goals of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, including keeping children in their own home

1:30 p.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR592 (McGill) Interim study to examine various methods of behavioral health workforce development

LR596 (Watermeier) Interim study to evaluate the potential uses of Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment and out-of-hospital Do Not Resuscitate protocols

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

1:30 p.m. - Room 1507, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR527 (Bloomfield) Interim study to examine the reasons why emergency disaster payments made by or through the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are not made in a timely manner once awarded

LR582 (Crawford) Interim study to review the work of the Task Force on Unfunded Mandates created in 1996 and to study the impacts of unfunded and underfunded mandates on counties and county governments

LR581 (Avery) Interim study to examine issues under the jurisdiction of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Wednesday, October 29, 2014

Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

1:00 p.m. – Council Chambers, South Sioux City Hall, 1615 1st Ave. South Sioux City, NE

LR527 (Bloomfield) Interim study to examine the reasons why emergency disaster payments made by or through the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are not made in a timely manner once awarded

LR582 (Crawford) Interim study to review the work of the Task Force on Unfunded Mandates created in 1996 and to study the impacts of unfunded and underfunded mandates on counties and county governments

LR581 (Avery) Interim study to examine issues under the jurisdiction of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

Friday, November 14, 2014

Health and Human Services Committee and Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Development of policy recommendations towards transformation of Nebraska Health Care system, pursuant to LR422

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Education Committee

1:30 p.m. – Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

Hearing on potential uses of the lottery proceeds dedicated to education as required by LB497 (2013)

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee

10:00 a.m. – Room 1525, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR521 (Nordquist) Interim study to examine the public employees retirement systems administered by the Public Employees Retirement Board

Presentation of Actuarial Reports

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

Health and Human Services Committee

10:30 a.m. - Room 1510, State Capitol, Lincoln, NE

LR601 (Davis) Interim study to examine the impact of implementing, and the impact of failing to implement, medicaid expansion in Nebraska

If auxiliary aids or reasonable accommodations are needed for attendance at a hearing, please call the office of the Clerk of the Legislature at (402) 471-2271, or for persons with hearing and/or speech impairments, please call the Nebraska Relay System at (800) 833-7352 TTY or (800) 833-0920 Voice (24 hours notice is requested). Advance notice of ten business days is needed when requesting an interpreter.

The Interim Hearing Schedule is also available via the Internet at www.nebraskalegislature.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Zach Nelson, Project Manager

SUBJECT: Pigeon Creek Levee Emergency Repair Update

DATE: September 3, 2014

All major construction activities have been completed to repair the Pigeon Creek Levee Breach that occurred on June 15, 2014, including seeding of disturbed areas. Over the last month, District staff has worked to remove debris from the creek channel, farm field directly north of the breach and the offline storage area. There are still some large tree trunks located north of the breach area and in offline storage area that will need to be removed later this fall after crops have been harvested. Below is a summary of the costs incurred to date by the District.

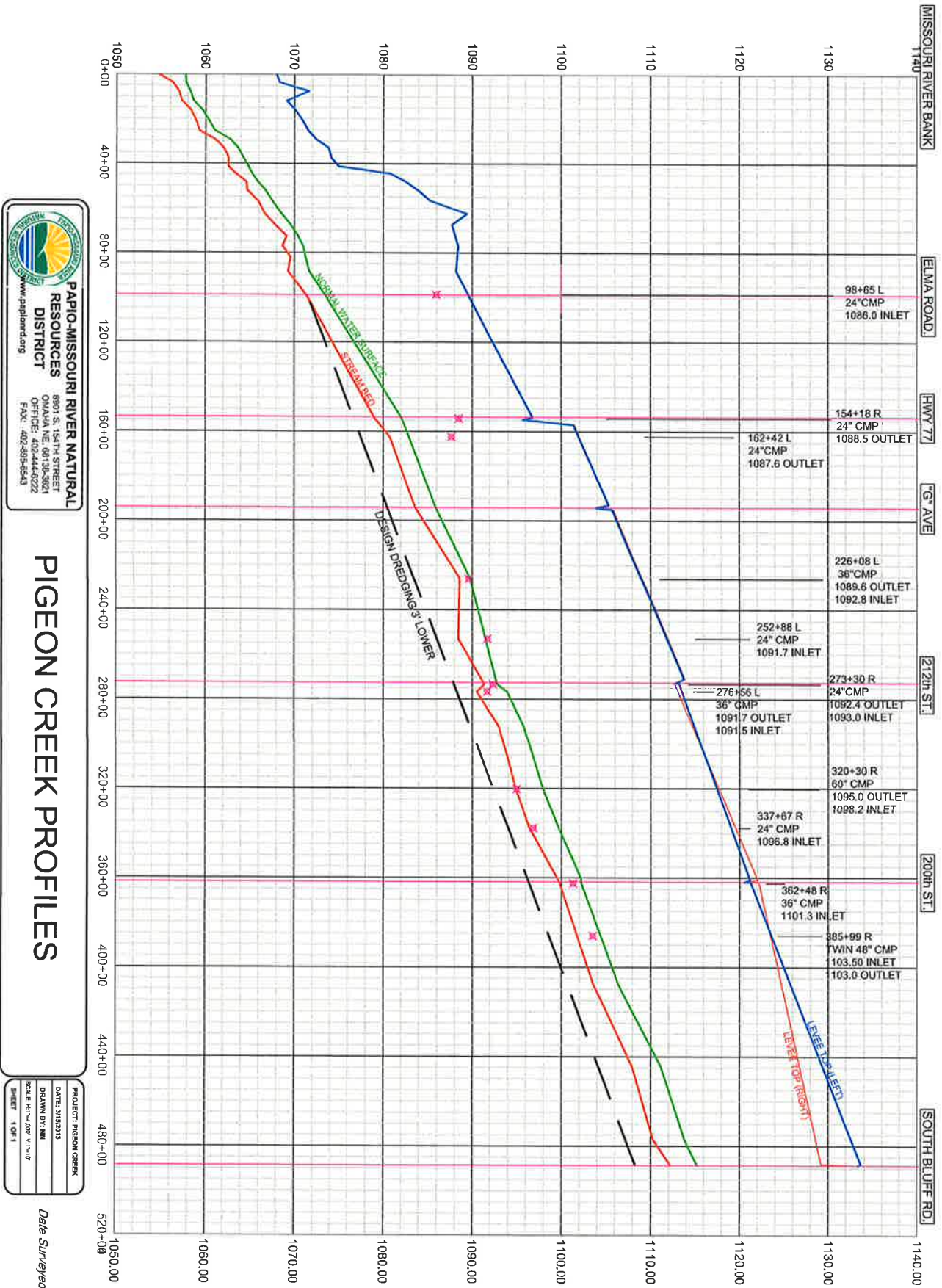
Lieber Construction - Initial breach repair on 6.17.2014	\$ 6,895.00
Oban Construction - Removal of trees/debris at 200th Street Bridge 6.17.2014	\$ 6,012.50
Oban Construction -Muck out culverts 7.10.2014	\$ 2,950.00
Roto Rooter - Jet Blast Culverts 7.9.2014	\$ 805.00
Steve Harris Construction - Notch and temp dam repairs 7.4.2014	\$ 19,895.00
Steve Harris Construction - Permanent repairs contract dated 7.11.2015, including change orders #1 and #2 to repair additional damaged areas along the right bank of the levee.	\$ 244,895.00
Cockburn Enterprises - seeding bid for 12.9 acres of seeding and 0.8 acres of erosion matting	\$ 22,308.96
BobCat Equipment Rental - Used to clean up debris in field	\$ 2,872.50
PMRNRD staff time coordinating repairs June and July	\$ 29,135.58
Total Costs Incurred	\$ 335,769.54

District staff has also worked with local contractors to remove debris and sediment from culverts that are used to drain water from adjacent farm land into the levee channel. Since the levee breach, three culverts that were previously obstructed, have been cleaned and are able to effectively drain water into the levee. There are still a number of culverts that cannot drain due to the elevation of the culvert inlet being buried in sediment as a result of the siltation that has raised the creek channel bottom. When the District took over maintenance of the Pigeon Creek Levee System, many of the culverts were buried under silt and did not function. Attached is a profile of Pigeon Creek as a result of a survey taken in 2011. Notes have been added to indicate the condition of the culverts in 1999 and which culverts were cleaned out this summer.

On August 27, 2014 District staff held a kickoff meeting with FEMA officials to review procedures and to establish a timeline to apply for funding. FEMA officials commended the District for the records and documentation that has been kept for the event. They also commended the District for the actions that were taken immediately in the days following the event to remove debris. Since action was taken to remove debris within 30 days, the District may be eligible for up to 85% reimbursement for such activities above the normal reimbursement level of 75%. District staff also provided documentation to FEMA officials for damage that occurred during the same storm event to the Pigeon Jones Weir Structure and Thurston County Rural Water lines that experienced significant erosion around them. Repairs for both locations may be eligible for FEMA funding as well. In addition to making repairs following an event, FEMA encourages mitigation measures/designs to areas affected. District staff is going to work

with FEMA to determine if long term plans for Pigeon Creek such as increasing the channel profile or dredging may be eligible for FEMA funding. In the coming weeks, the District will be assigned a representative from FEMA who will be responsible for working with the District to assign "PROJECTS" to each repair activity that was required due to the storm event. Since most of the repair work has been done, the reimbursement process should be expedited compared to the normal process.

Elevation:
Feet above mean sea level



PAPIC-MISSOURI RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

8801 S. 154TH STREET
OMAHA, NE 68148-8222
OFFICE: 402-483-6222
FAX: 402-483-6243
www.papicand.org

PIGEON CREEK PROFILES

PROJECT: PIGEON CREEK
DATE: 3/18/2015
DRAWN BY: JMN
SCALE: H=1"=20' V=1"=5'
SHEET: 1 OF 1

Date Surveyed: 9/9/2011

August, 2014

[illegible]

Updated: August 18, 2014

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

- **Little Papio:** (Cleveland)
- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
 - Interlocal Agreement with Papillion & La Vista & SIDs on Fricke Drainage (P)
- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
 - Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)
- **Western Sarpy Dike:** (Cleveland)
 - ★ Saunders County side ROW purchase agreements and easements (W)
 - NRDs/NE-ARNG Interlocal for Camp Ashland Property (P)
- **Floodway Purchase Program:** (Laster/Grint)
 - Iske Place Purchase Agreements (N)
- **Trail Projects:** (Williams)
 - Mo Pac (Springfield to Platte River) drainage repair easements (F)
 - ★ West Papio (90th – Giles) Construction Contract review (W)
 - ★ Hell Creek Bridge Stabilization Interlocal Agreement (N)
- **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 W-3 Access-Quiet Title Action (W)
 - Tek/Mud PL 566 Site 41A access (W)
- ★ Tek/MUD PL 566 Rehab Agreement w/NRCS (N)

- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Williams)

- ★ DS-15A purchase agreements, deeds and easements (W)
- ★ DS-15A Eminent Domain (Kuker) (N)
 - North Shore (WP-5) Easement Review (W)

- **Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Grint)

- **Missouri River R-613 and R-616 Levees:** (Cleveland/Henkel)

- **Rural Water Projects:** (Nelson)

- ★ Fort Calhoun Lawsuits on WCRW (W)
 - Curt Hofer - Hidden Acres Developer Agreement (N)

- **Other:**

- ★ Elkhorn River 240th Street Land Acquisition Documents (N) (Williams)

USDA Forecasts Record-High Corn and Soybean Production in 2014 Cotton Production also Up from 2013

WASHINGTON, Aug 12, 2014 –U.S. soybean producers are expected to produce a record 3.82 billion bushels in 2014, up 16 percent from last year according to the Crop Production report issued today by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Growing conditions were conducive for corn growers who are also expected to produce a record-high crop at 14.0 billion bushels of corn, up 1 percent from 2013 which was also a record at the time.

Today's report also included the first production forecast for U.S. cotton. NASS forecasts all cotton production at 17.5 million 480-pound bales, up 36 percent from last year's 12.9 million bales. Wheat production is forecast up 2 percent from the July forecast but down 5 percent from 2013.

NASS surveyed nearly 25,000 producers across the country in preparation for this report. The agency also conducted field and lab measurements on corn, soybeans, wheat and cotton in the major producing states, which usually account for about 75 percent of the U.S. production.

Other key findings in today's Crop Production report include:

Corn

- Corn planted area for all purposes is estimated at 91.6 million acres, unchanged from the June estimate but down 4 percent from 2013
- Area harvested for grain is forecast at 83.8 million acres, down 4 percent from last year
- August 1 objective yield data indicate the greatest number of ears on record for the combined 10 objective yield states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin)

Despite a late winter season delay in planting, more favorable spring conditions arrived allowing quick planting and largely favorable growing conditions that encouraged the record high production forecast.

Soybeans

- Area for harvest is forecast at a record 84.1 million acres, unchanged from June but up 11 percent from 2013.
- Despite a slow planting start, by June 1 fifty percent of the soybean crop had emerged, 21 percentage points ahead of last year's pace and 5 percentage points ahead of normal. Positive conditions in most soybean-producing areas of the country brought on strong percentages of the crop being rated good to excellent and the record forecast. The largest decline in condition rating was in Kentucky where dry conditions this year resulted in 61 percent of the crop rated as good to excellent, a drop of 26 percentage points.

- If realized, the forecasted yield will be a record high in Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Winter Wheat

- Production is forecast at 1.40 billion bushels, up 2 percent from the July 1 forecast, but down 9 percent from 2013.
- Based on August 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 43.1 bushels per acre, up 0.9 from last month but down 4.3 bushels from last year.
- Area expected to be harvested for grain or seed is 32.4 million acres, up slightly from last year

Cotton

- Area planted to Upland cotton is estimated at 11.2 million acres, up 10 percent from last year.
- Harvested Upland cotton area is expected to total 10.1 million acres, up 37 percent from 2013.
- Expected harvested area of Pima cotton at 175,900 acres is down 12 percent from last year.
- As of August 3, NASS rated 53 percent of all cotton acreage to be in good to excellent condition compared with 45 percent at this time last year.
- Record yields are expected in Arizona, Arkansas, Florida and Oklahoma.

With this report, NASS resumes apple, peach, pear and grape forecasts in the monthly Crop Production report. Numbers for these crops were not published last year due to sequestration.

NASS is gearing up to conduct its September Agricultural Survey, which will focus on wheat, barley, oats and rye growers. That survey will take place during the first two weeks of September.

The Crop Production report is published monthly and is available online at www.nass.usda.gov.

North Dakota residents joining Missouri River flood lawsuit

POSTED: THURSDAY, AUGUST 14, 2014 12:02 PM

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Some North Dakota residents have joined landowners from five other states in a lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over Missouri River flood damage from previous years.

More than 200 landowners from South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri filed the lawsuit in March over flooding from 2011 and other years when there was considerable damage. Additional residents from North Dakota are expected to join after informational meetings in Bismarck this week, Eddie Smith, one of the plaintiffs' attorneys, said Thursday.

Runoff continues to be above normal in the upper Missouri River basin after a wet early summer, but it isn't leading to any new flooding concerns.

People face a Sept. 19 deadline to join, said Smith, with the Polsinelli law firm in St. Louis.

The lawsuit does not seek a specific amount of damages for property owners who suffered damage but received no compensation from the federal government.

Peter and Judy Masset, who were forced from their rural Mandan home for about two weeks in 2011 and had to pump water continuously for three months to save the home, are one couple planning to join. Judy Masset said Thursday that the lawsuit isn't just about being compensated for damage, but also about getting the corps to make flood control a priority.

"It's about protecting landowners, farmers, businessmen, communities," she said. "We're all on the river. We need flood protection."

The federal government has said the corps should not be blamed for major flooding on the river because the management system does not guarantee a flood-free zone. The river is managed for a variety of uses, including barge traffic, hydropower, recreation and wildlife habitat.

Runoff above Sioux City, Iowa, this past July was 33 percent above normal, and runoff for the year is forecast at 29 percent above normal, according to the corps.

"Although July precipitation was below normal in the upper basin, high stream flows persisted in some areas due to very wet conditions in June," Jody Farhat, chief of the corps' Missouri River Water Management Division, said in a statement released Wednesday. "Runoff from the remaining high elevation mountain snowmelt also contributed to the above-normal July runoff."

The reservoir system still has three-fourths of its flood storage capacity available. Water in flood control zones will be released during the rest of the year to serve water supply needs and downstream navigation, Farhat said. The corps earlier announced a full-service, eight-month navigation season downstream. Full service means a channel 9 feet deep and 300 feet wide.

"Gavins Point Dam releases (in South Dakota) will be adjusted as necessary to meet full-service navigation targets and prepare the reservoir system for next spring's runoff," Farhat said.

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World-Herald editorial: Feds should listen to concerns of ag

POSTED: SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2014 1:00 AM

The country needs to protect the environment. It also needs a vibrant agricultural economy.

It should be possible to have both.

But farm and ranching organizations are voicing concerns about 371 pages of proposed federal water rules. The changes would require regulation of some types of small streams and ponds, roadside ditches, low-lying farm ground that floods at times and spots where water pools when it rains.

If the feds don't get this right, the result could be big complications for agricultural production and needless expense and delays for individual producers. The Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry says the proposal could impose new costs on other industries as well.

Regulators say the proposals exempt an array of "normal farming activities." Ag groups disagree, saying that because of looseness in the proposed language, permits could be required in some instances before farmers and ranchers could put in or change drainage ditches; put in small dams and terracing; apply fertilizer, pesticides and manure; and use stock ponds for watering animals.

Regulators say they intend no restraint on land use. The American Farm Bureau Federation counters: "If a farmer cannot redirect a ditch to improve drainage on his soybean farm, then that is regulating land use."

Business groups express concern, saying that businesses might need a federal permit before building in areas containing what the feds' proposal deems "ephemeral streams." Such requirements "can take longer than 12 months and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars," the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says. The same concerns apply to road building by state and local governments.

Reaching a workable solution will be possible only if regulators listen closely to the legitimate concerns being voiced by the private sector. Then the feds should nail down the regulatory language as tightly as possible to address specific problems.

The controversy began in March, when the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a sprawling package of regulations called “Waters of the United States.”

Regulatory authority over these bodies of water has long been unclear. In 2001 and 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court chided federal agencies for failing to provide clear boundaries for their authority. In 2006, the court said the EPA could regulate small bodies of water that are part of a “significant nexus” connecting them to navigable waters.

The EPA’s newest proposal aims at identifying those smaller bodies of water. The problem is defining which ones are part of that “nexus.” It’s more than semantics; there are real-world consequences for agriculture and industry if this issue is not handled responsibly.

Farm and ranching organizations say a host of activities would, for the first time, require federal permits that bring lengthy delays and added costs. Those critics note that even if regulators don’t require permits, loosely written rules could lead to lawsuits against farmers and ranchers.

John Winkler, top administrator for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, says there is “unanimous concern” among Nebraska’s 23 NRDs over the EPA plan. “I believe it would affect terracing, all soil and erosion programs, all small dams,” requiring them to receive federal permits for the first time, he said.

That’s a major concern, Winkler said, because it normally takes three to five years to get a federal permit under water regulations.

Then there is the regulators’ one-size-fits-all approach. “There’s no flexibility on anything they do,” he says, something Omahans know from the EPA’s refusal to provide any leeway on the city’s \$2 billion sewer separation project.

EPA officials say they respect ag concerns and will address them. An EPA water administrator wrote: “The proposed Waters of the U.S. rule does not regulate new types of ditches, does not regulate activities on land. ... The proposal does not change the permitting exemption for stock ponds, does not require permits for normal farming activities like moving cattle and does not regulate puddles.”

The EPA needs to live up to those reassurances by listening to critics and narrowing the new rules to reasonable, practical parameters.

Responsible environmental projection is sensible. Bureaucratic overreach and costly complications for agriculture and industry are not.

Omaha W-H Public Pulse 8-18-14

Flood work a good-government example

The Western Sarpy-Clear Creek flood control project, now expected to be finished next year after 15 years (Aug. 6 World-Herald), is how government is supposed to work.

The project has demonstrated teamwork, collaboration, coordination, resource-sharing and leadership among local, state and federal agencies and elected representatives. Although it appears the project could have been done faster and for less money, the benefits of protecting infrastructure — major bridges, well fields for two cities, a National Guard camp, homes and agricultural land — is priceless.

It would require millions of dollars, perhaps billions, to replace all of this in the event of a flood, not counting the disruption of lives and economic damage.

This was an example of the Nebraska way of doing things — everyone leaving behind their petty differences and single-minded agendas to work hand in hand for the common good.

Many thanks to all involved. I know who I am voting for come November.

George Nielsen, Omaha

NRD proposes same or lowered tax levy for ninth consecutive year

Washington County Pilot Tribune - Posted: Monday, August 18, 2014 2:54 pm

At its meeting Thursday, the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Board of Directors heard public comments and then voted to propose a fiscal year 2015 general operating budget that once again calls for no tax levy increase.

Following final review and budget adoption in September, this will be the ninth consecutive year that the NRD has held steady or reduced its property tax levy.

"It's getting harder each year to hold the tax levy in place," NRD General Manager John Winkler said.

We have a number of vital projects that need to be built for flood control throughout our six-county region while we continue to carry out activities to protect the water quality of our lakes and streams; construct extremely popular recreational trails; and provide cost sharing to rural landowners to build soil and water conservation projects and wildlife enhancement," he said.

The proposed budget calls for a FY 2015 property tax levy of .032753. This levy, identical to the previous year's levy, would mean that the owner of property valued at \$100,000 would pay a total of \$32.75 in property taxes next year to support NRD projects and other resources management activities. The levy is based on an estimated 2 percent increase in valuations across the district. The Papio-Missouri River NRD area includes all of Sarpy, Douglas, Washington and Dakota counties plus the eastern 60 percent of Burt and Thurston counties.

The budget calls for an estimated \$19.8 million in revenue from the NRD's property tax levy. Total spending is estimated at \$85.1 million.

Approximately 25 percent of the total NRD budget comes from federal and state cost sharing for specific projects. Other revenue includes bonds and income from Improvement Project Areas.

"One of the NRD's strengths is our ability to leverage federal and state cost sharing on projects such as the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Levee on the Platte River and improvements to Missouri River levees south of Bellevue," Winkler said. "These federal and state cost-sharing efforts save local taxpayers millions of dollars," he said.

The NRD Board of Directors will hold a public hearing to approve a final budget and set the tax levy at its Sept. 11 board meeting in Dakota City.

60-mile recreational trail from Nebraska to Kansas nearing completion

OMAHA WORLD HERALD, POSTED: SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, 2014 4:45 PM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A 60-mile-long recreational trail through southeast Nebraska and northern Kansas is nearing completion.

The Nebraska Trails Foundation has raised \$816,000 of the \$840,000 needed to build the final, undeveloped section from south of Beatrice to the Kansas border. The trail is a former right of way of the Union Pacific Railroad that will run from Lincoln, Nebraska, and Maryville, Kansas, according to the Lincoln Journal Star.

The foundation plans to raise the rest of the money required, plus \$150,000 more for maintenance, foundation vice president Ross Greathouse said.

With money and commitments secured, supporters will ask the Lower Big Blue Natural Resources District Board to assume ownership of the nearly 20-mile stretch, which will link to a 13-mile segment in Kansas.

A meeting is scheduled for this Thursday in Beatrice. The natural resources district board has moved the meeting from its offices to a larger space because a large crowd of supporters is expected.

The trail is a part a regional network that loops for 214 miles through Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa.

Greathouse said persuading the board to take ownership of the trail might be a hard sell, because the Lower Big Blue, unlike other NRDs in Nebraska, does not own any significant recreational trails.

He said the Beatrice-based district should own this piece of trail because state law gives responsibility for recreational trail development to NRDs. Also, no tax dollars would be required, because the foundation has raised most of the needed money.

Lower Big Blue board member David Clabaugh said the board has discussed the issue in the past with trail supporters but has not taken a position.

"It seems a lot of the board did not want to use any tax money for maintenance. That was the big thing," Clabaugh said.

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Neighborhood in Missouri Valley, Iowa, evacuated after levee break; cleanup in Denison

From staff and wire reports | Posted: Monday, September 1, 2014 12:38 pm

Residents of Harrison and Crawford Counties in Iowa dealt Monday with the aftermath of heavy rains and high winds from a storm Sunday night in which one man was struck by lightning near Denison.

About 70 people who live in southeast Missouri Valley, Iowa, were evacuated by noon Monday after the Boyer River levee broke, Missouri Valley Fire Chief Johnnie Walker said. The neighborhood has about a dozen houses.

“It’s not a dense population for Missouri Valley, but we are concerned for the residents in that area,” said Missouri Valley Mayor Clint Sargent.

The levee breach occurred about 7 a.m. two miles east of Missouri Valley near U.S. Highway 30, emergency dispatchers said.

An emergency shelter for displaced residents was set up at a community center.

“We’re continuing to monitor the situation to see whether we need to expand or contract the designated evacuation area,” Sargent said.

Missouri Valley is about 25 miles north of Omaha.

Boyer River levels near Logan and Dunlap, Iowa, had decreased by Monday afternoon, said Larry Oliver, director of Harrison County Emergency Management.

Several highways throughout western Iowa were covered with water at various points during Sunday’s storm. Fast-moving water broke through a farm retention dam in Denison, Iowa, flooding Iowa Highway 39.

In central Iowa, waist-high water flooded cars at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines.

More than 6,000 customers of MidAmerican Energy lost power in the storms.



Missouri Valley flooding

Flooding in Missouri Valley, Iowa, on Sept. 1. About 70 people who live in southeast Missouri Valley were evacuated by noon Monday after the Boyer River levee broke.

In Denison on Monday, residents cleaned up branches and trees toppled the previous night by heavy rain and high winds. The storm uprooted large trees in town and blew over campers' trailers at a park east of Denison.

Winds of 70 to 80 mph blew trees onto houses and vehicles, said Greg Miller, emergency management coordinator for Crawford County. No one was injured when five trailers blew over at Yellow Smoke Park. Campers had gone to a shelter at the park.

Outbuildings on two farms also were damaged in Crawford County, Miller said.

The North Boyer River near Denison was at the top of its banks late Monday afternoon but had not crested over. Other creeks in the region, however, did overflow, causing some flooding.

On Sunday, Denny Murphy, 49, and his son, Derrick, 22, were pursuing their hobby of storm chasing. They drove about 220 miles from their home in Hazleton to the Denison area, where weather radar indicated potential storms.

West of Denison, Denny Murphy said in a telephone interview with The World-Herald, the clouds combined into "the most amazing structured supercell that you'd ever want to see. We kept trying to stay out in front of it, and we got into (Denison) and we needed to go east of it."

They drove east of town, stopped in a valley and got out of the car, Murphy remembers taking photos while his son shot video on the other side of the car. Then a lightning bolt struck Denny, knocking him out. The concussion from the strike knocked Derrick over but didn't injure him.

"The next thing I knew somebody was trying to pick me up off my back," said Murphy, a forklift operator at a John Deere factory in Waterloo. "A lady was holding my hand, and my son was standing over me. Some other guys were there, and I saw the ambulance coming."

From the hospital in Denison, he was transferred to Mercy Medical Center in Sioux City.

"Ever since then, my arms and my neck and chest have been killing me," Murphy said. "They haven't been able to get things under control." The pain apparently is from the electricity causing his muscles to contract violently, he said, so it may take time for the muscles to recuperate.

Murphy, who calls in temperatures and other information to local broadcasters, said he'll continue his hobby.

"Something like this happens, you learn from it," he said. "You change your habits."

From now on, he's not getting out of the car.



Clean up begins in Dakota City

Posted: Sep 01, 2014 1:48 PM CDT

By Robert Lowe, Multimedia Journalist/ Weekend Anchor - email

DAKOTA CITY, NE (KTIV) - Dakota City, Nebraska officials were up at the crack of dawn on Monday, assessing the damage from Sunday's storm.

Houses, cars and campers were all destroyed, and trees were completely uprooted, posing a big problem for Dakota City.

"I actually stood at my door in my house and watched it blow by and I couldn't believe it," said Mayor Jerry Yacevich. "I've just never seen anything like that."

On Sunday, officials say uprooted trees resulted in the rupture of a two inch gas line.

Many community members evacuated because of a potential gas leak.

Officials say that issue has been resolved, and they are now turning their focus to cleaning up the debris and restoring power.

"We don't have power to three fourths of the town right now," said Yacevich.

Since 8 this morning, volunteers lined up in at the city's fire station to lend a helping hand.

"I've weathered a lot of storms through this town and it was just quite phenomenal to see it," said Pat Moore, a Dakota City resident. "We've never had one come through this area with such force."

With up to 90 MPH winds causing extensive damage throughout the town of nearly 2,000, Officials say they are fortunate only two people suffered minor injuries.

While, it will take weeks to clean up and restore normalcy in Dakota City, residents have no doubt the town will come back strong.

"We'll keep going forward, not a problem," said Yacevich. "We'll get this cleaned up and get our feet back under us again. We'll still be functioning. We're good."

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SIOUXLAND PEOPLE

CONSERVATION DEDICATION

HYTREK: Neb. lake's namesake becomes comfortable with honor

Lake's namesake becomes comfortable with honor



9 HOURS AGO • [NICK HYTREK](#)
NHYTREK@SIOUXCITYJOURNAL.COM

DAKOTA CITY | Look around a city of any size and you'll find buildings bearing the names of past leaders and dignitaries.

College campuses are filled with buildings named for donors and famous alumni.

Buildings, however, become outdated. Eventually, even the sturdiest need to be

torn down, the legacies of the people whose names are on the front often disappearing with them.

In other words, it's not a permanent honor to have a building named for you.

So imagine the honor that Vince Kramper felt a year ago when he learned that something much more permanent would bear his name.

As Kramper hosted a dinner for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board at his Dakota City farm last September, the board announced that a new recreational lake created nearby in Hubbard would be named Kramper Lake.

Attached to a lake, Kramper's name will live on for generations.

"I still can't believe it. It's just hard to believe. A lot of people worked on it. It wasn't just me," said Kramper, who still chokes up when talking about the honor.

The naming came as a conservation dam was completed and Jones Creek began backing up behind it. Now, after a summer of above-average rainfall, the 226-acre lake is filled.

The lake and accompanying 520-acre recreational area are scheduled to open next summer. At that point, Kramper's name will become familiar to visiting campers and fishermen throughout the area who might not know about his longtime dedication to conservation.

The lake and recreation area are just one part of a greater flood and erosion control project that covers 20,316 acres in Dakota County. Kramper worked on the project for 12 years as a member of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission, of which he was a member for 30 years before retiring not too long ago. He also spent more than two decades on Natural Resource District boards and some 25 years on the Nebraska Environmental Trust board.

It was a special project for Kramper, who knew nearly all of the affected landowners whose land would be needed for the lake and those whose land would be protected from future loss by the dam.

"We built dams all over the state and I never knew the people who benefited," he said.

Kramper pushed for the project, but said he was just one of many who were involved. Humbly, he said the lake could have been named after many other people or things. He'd even suggested opening up the naming of the lake and recreation area to the public.

"People would ask me 'What are you going to name it?' and I'd say, 'Give me some ideas,'" he said. "We kept saying let's put a contest out and let people name it. I had all kinds of ideas."

But he had no idea the Papio-Missouri River NRD board already had the name covered.

Kramper's gotten used to the idea of having his name attached to the lake and thinks it's pretty neat. A lake will last longer than a building, he said, and many people will get to enjoy the recreational area.

"It's going to be a great asset to the community, and hopefully it'll be out there forever," he said.

If the lake is anywhere near the community asset as the man it was named for has been, local residents are in for years and years of enjoyment.

A fun look at the importance of water

Families enjoy scuba demonstrations, kayaking and even snakes at World O! Water

By PAIGE YOWELL

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Even a Husker football game didn't stop hundreds of families from enjoying 70-degree weather at Chalco Hills Recreation area Saturday afternoon. Most were there for the 10th annual World O! Water event, a chance for people to learn about pollution prevention and the importance of clean and accessible water.

The free event included a nature hike, face painting, rock climbing, kayaking, canoeing, live animal show and science experiments involving water. It was put on by the Omaha Stormwater Program and the Upper-Missouri River Natural Resources District, Keep Omaha Beautiful, Nebraska Game and Parks and the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership.

"Today is a great day. Fortunately the game hasn't deterred many people," organizer Terese Pogge said. The event was drawn as many as 3,000 in years past, depending on the weather.

"We don't think people realize day-to-day how important water is," Pogge said.

Exhibitors included the Henry Doorly Zoo, the National Weather Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Greater Omaha Scuba Club, a social club that was showing off scuba gear and giving people a chance to breathe through a scuba mask.

"Most people don't think you can dive around here," said Mark Sidwell, vice president of the club. The group had planned to dive at Wehrspann Lake Saturday, but blue-green algae, which can be toxic, prevented it.

One of the more popular attractions was Lee Cheever, who had 10 snakes, some native to Nebraska, on hand for people to hold, touch and learn about.

Cheever and his wife, Pam, are hobbyists who provide educational opportunities through-



MARK DAVIS/THE WORLD-HERALD

People enjoy canoe rides at Wehrspann Lake Saturday for the 10th annual World O! Water event at Chalco Hills Recreation area. The event was intended to teach pollution prevention and the importance of accessible water.



At left, Caitlin Douglas, 8, of La Vista checks out her newly painted face Saturday. At right, Gramps the box turtle gives his audience a show during an animal demonstration.

out Omaha with their snakes.

"Overcoming a fear, that's really what it's about. People appreciate that these are part of nature," Lee Cheever said.

Sarah Wilhelm, 10, got to hold a bright orange and yellow corn snake, native to the southeastern

United States.

"She likes the animals and the rock climbing," said Sarah's dad, Andy Wilhelm.

It was the second year attending the event for Rosemary and George Wolford, who came with their great-granddaughter,

Shyanne Harms, 9.

"It's very interesting and it's very educational," George Wolford said as the family waited in line for rock climbing.

Rosemary Wolford added: "This is their future. It all depends on this."

COMING SOON!

Omaha's Eppley Airfield sets record with 3.43 inches of rain

By Alia Conley and Jay Withrow / World-Herald staff writers | Posted: Tuesday, September 9, 2014 5:13 am

The torrential rains that fell Tuesday on eastern Nebraska and western Iowa created havoc on some Omaha-area roads and set at least one local rainfall record.

About 3 to 5 or more inches fell in the Omaha metropolitan area when two storm systems blew through Tuesday afternoon and Tuesday night. By midnight, street flooding had subsided and officials were keeping a watchful eye on local creeks.

The National Weather Service said a record for Sept. 9 of 3.43 inches of rain fell at Eppley Airfield. The previous mark for Sept. 9 in Omaha was 1.24 inches set in 1912, the weather service said.

Also, unofficially 3.45 inches were reported in Elkhorn and more than 5 inches south of Blair, said Rick Chermok, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Valley.

Most of the metro area received anywhere from 3 and 3.5 inches to 1.5 and 2 inches in southern parts of the metro area, the weather service said.

The heavy rains were the result of an atmosphere saturated with moisture.

Much of that moisture came as remnants of a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico and another in the Pacific Ocean streamed into the region, according to Frank Strait of Accu Weather Inc., The World-Herald's weather consultant.

Chermok said the Midlands atmosphere contained more than double the amount of moisture normal for this time of year.



Van stuck in water

Two vehicles were stuck in the water under Dodge Street near Westroads Mall when flash flooding struck the area on Tuesday afternoon. A mother and three children were rescued from the van by the fire department. No injuries were reported.

He said stream and river flooding was possible in the region over the next few days as runoff works its way through various watersheds. Especially vulnerable are the Nishnabotna River in Iowa and its tributaries. There also is potential for flooding along the Missouri River south toward Missouri, he said.

Overnight, no streams or rivers in the Omaha area spilled over their banks, the weather service said Wednesday, and the Papio creek system held up well.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District said Wednesday that all river access sites in Douglas County are closed due to high water. The closed river access sites: Elkhorn Crossing near 252nd Street and Bennington Road, Graske Crossing at West Dodge Road and the NRD's West Maple Road site.

The National Weather Service said the Omaha area can expect cooler conditions, decreasing clouds and a low temperature in the mid-40s tonight.

Thursday looks to be partly sunny with a high in the upper 50s, and forecasters called for a low in the mid-40s and a 70 percent chance of showers Thursday night.

Rain remains in the forecast Friday, the weather service said, with a 60 percent chance of showers and a high in the upper 50s.

Friday night, the low is likely to dip into the upper 30s, forecasters said, before conditions warm up Saturday to the lower 60s and Sunday to the upper 60s.

The first round of rain occurred just as the Tuesday evening commute was getting under way in Omaha. Later in the evening, additional rains made flooding worse.

About noon Wednesday, OPPD said it had 108 customers without power; Otoe County had 83 customers without power and Douglas County had 17.

Those numbers were down from peaks Tuesday night when outage numbers fluctuated, OPPD said. As some circuits were repaired, OPPD said, new reports would come in as rain continued to fall.

The peak of more than 2,100 customers without service occurred around 7 p.m. CDT, OPPD said, and lasted about a half-hour.

The storm affected customers across OPPD's service territory in metro and rural areas. Damage included at least 14 poles in the south rural part of OPPD's territory.

Fallen tree limbs and heavy rainfall posed major challenges for repair crews that worked through Tuesday night, OPPD said. Crews were to continue making repairs Wednesday, OPPD said, until all customers were back online.

Also Wednesday morning, the National Weather Service said a flash flood warning was in effect for some sections of southwest Iowa. The Iowa Department of Transportation urged motorists Wednesday to be mindful of the warnings while traveling Iowa's roadways.

The weather service also issued a flood warning Wednesday for parts of Polk County south of Columbus and Saunders County just west of Douglas County.

And experts from the weather service were surveying damage Wednesday in Otoe County to help determine whether a tornado may have struck there Tuesday night.

The Nebraska Department of Roads said Wednesday that both directions of U.S. Highway 81 west of Osceola were closed because of flooding.

The rains also led to the cancellation of Wednesday's events at a Grand Island farm show. Officials said muddy conditions left parking near the Husker Harvest Days inaccessible.

High water late Tuesday afternoon trapped vehicles in some Omaha areas, including under the bridge near Westroads Mall at West Dodge Road and Regency Parkway. When Omaha firefighters arrived, they spotted a minivan in nearly 3 feet of water. Firefighters helped a mother and three children from their blue Toyota Sienna. A man in a nearby truck was helped, too.

Other vehicles had to deal with flooding at 96th and Q Streets, 84th and Cass Streets and 90th and Burt Streets. Saddle Creek Road was flooded under the Dodge Street bridge.

In Council Bluffs, flooding occurred on the west end, a Pottawattamie County dispatch supervisor said.

Towing companies were swamped with calls for help.

Auto 1 Towing had to turn down about 20 calls, said Kim Hobscheidt, an office manager. One of the vehicles the company towed was a 2013 Chevrolet Suburban that had been struck by lightning at 192nd Street and West Dodge Road, she said.

Runoff that overwhelmed the city's storm sewers caused manhole covers to pop off in several locations around the city.

In South Omaha, an awning fell at D and R Auto Sales at 45th and L Streets. The awning fell toward L Street but didn't strike any cars, said Ron Cumberledge, one of the owners.

In Iowa, golf ball-sized hail was reported in northern Taylor County. The hailstorm occurred about 5:15 p.m., according to an emergency dispatcher.

Large hail was also reported near Hamburg and Lennox.

Eastern Nebraska rainfall totals for 24 hours ending at 7 a.m. Wednesday:
Fremont: 2.45

Lincoln: 2.49

Nebraska City: 2.62

Offutt Air Force Base: 2.37

Eppley Airfield: 3.43*

Millard Airport: 1.55

Tekamah: 2.61

Valley: 2.31

** Record for Sept. 9*

Western Iowa:

Harlan: 1.27

Atlantic: 1.60

Council Bluffs: 1.60

Creston: 2.49

World-Herald staff writer Nancy Gaarder contributed to this report.

Contact the writer: alia.conley@owh.com

Video: Drivers rescued from flooded road

Hamburg, Iowa, took a beating, too.