

FROM: John Winkler, General Manager

- ✓ July 15, 2016, Washington Co. Pilot-Tribune & Enterprise article, Winkler: Japp's seat must be filled in 45 days
- ✓ July 15, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, NRD committee will look for Japp's replacement
- ✓ July 15, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Fred Conley has made no decisions on quitting
- ✓ July 18, 2016, WOWT 6 News article, See a helicopter flying low? Don't worry – it's for science

- ✓ July 19, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, After 75 years, Nebraska's Kingley Dam is likely more impressive than its founders ever imagined
- ✓ July 20, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Stothert's main goals with \$917M budget: lower property taxes, fix streets, keep people safe
- ✓ July 25, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Metro College board Chairman Fred Conley rejects calls to resign, says he'll finish out term
- ✓ July 26, 2016, Washington Co. Enterprise article, Rhea may see challenger for PMRNRD seat on ballot
- ✓ July 27, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Researchers to use helicopter to gather groundwater data in rural Sarpy County
- ✓ August 3, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Fred Conley resigns as chairman, but refuses to leave Metro board entirely
- ✓ August 3, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, Teen couldn't outrun train barreling down on La Vista tracks in popular hangout known as 'Oz'
- ✓ August 4, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, 50 kids ditch video games to clean up Omaha park as part of Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Campaign
- ✓ August 4, 2016, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, Aug. 4: Conley being treated unfairly
- ✓ August 11, 2016, Omaha World Herald article, NRD eyes just one candidate for vacancy left by Japp's death
- ✓ August 12, 2016, Douglas Co. Post-Gazette article, Ted Japp applies for NRD Board Subdistrict 1, hopes be on November ballot

July 2016 Information/Education Report

Information

- Continued work on Summer 2016 Spectrum Newsletter
- Continued work on redesign of NRD Web Site
- Updated/rewrote NRD Fact Sheet for use by NARD
- Distributed News Releases
- Arranged for groundwater survey helicopter demo for media
- Updated current web site
- Responded to numerous requests for information/materials received thru web site
- Monitored local media coverage of NRD-related stories
- Prepared Information program budget recommendations

Education

July Programming Schedule:

7/1- A.V. Sorensen Library- Squamata- 24 kids
7/5- Millard Branch Library- Reptiles- 38 people
7/7- Omaha Children's Museum - Booth- 150 people
7/11-7/13- Boy's Challenge Camp- 25 boys
7/13- Abrahams Library-Owls-75 people
7/14- The Hills Montessori- Owls- 85 kids
7/14- Countryside Community Church- Insects/Reptiles—75 kids
7/21- Omaha Children's Museum – Booth-150 people
7/26- Millard Branch Library- Owls- 35 people
7/27-7/29- NRD Girl's Adventure Camp- 22 girls

Planning:

Updates/Monitoring of Papio-Missouri River NRD Facebook/Twitter/Google+/Instagram Sites and Web Pages
General NRD Animal Care
2016 Camp Confirmation Correspondence with Parents and Camp Teachers
Outdoor Classroom Grants
Assist with Press Releases and Press Statements

Meetings/Trainings:

Safety Committee Meeting
Barn Owl Training
Social Media Training

July 26, 2016



Mr. John Zaugg
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District
Omaha Field Office
8901 S 154th St Ste 4
Omaha, NE 68138

JUL 29 REC'D

Dear Mr. Zaugg,

The Omaha Home for Boys has been able to grow for nearly 97 years and serve thousands of youth because of the thoughtfulness of friends like you. Your generosity is so greatly appreciated by all of us here at the Home.

We are thankful to have friends like you to support our mission to *Support and Strengthen Youth, Young Adults and Families* and keep our organization strong. The support you provide allows us to help each youth we work with build a foundation for a brighter future.

Thank you for your kind gift of \$1,811.85 for the Omaha Home for Boys tree planting project. On behalf of all of us - volunteers, staff and especially the youth - I want to thank you again for your support.

Sincerely,

Kelley Lewis
Development Department
Omaha Home for Boys

In accordance with the requirements outlined in section 170 (f) (8) of the IRS Code, no goods or services were given in consideration of this gift, therefore, the full amount of your gift stated above is tax deductible. If you itemize deductions on your tax return, retain this acknowledgment in your files to substantiate your charitable gift to the IRS.



COPY

Radisson 

RECEIVED

To Whom it May Concern:

Last Sunday we had someone run over some of our fencing by the entrance to our property.

They knocked down several steel fence posts and knocked into the end post that the water meter was attached to.

My wife and I want to thank Papio Missouri NRD for the fine work your guys - George Tillwick and his partner (I didn't catch his name) did to repair the damage.

They spent a considerable amount of time trying to fix the damage.

radissonblu.com

over →

Please know that we really
appreciated their efforts! You
have a couple of good employees
and we feel their work should
not go unnoticed. Sincerely,

Kori J. John Strohm



August 2, 2016

Papio-Missouri River Resource District
Attn: Nicole Gust
8901 S. 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138



Dear Nicole,

On behalf of Operation Gratitude and the heroes who receive our care packages, I thank you for your generous donation of letters, assorted items and 4 recyclable items. Your contribution will enable us to send over **200,000 'chock full' Care Packages** this year to the tens of thousands of brave men and women still deployed overseas in harsh and remote areas; to their children anxiously awaiting their return; and to Veterans, New Recruits, First Responders, Wounded Heroes and their Care Givers.

With the help of caring Americans like you, since our inception in 2003, we have sent more than **1.5 Million Operation Gratitude Care Packages** containing snacks, hygiene products, entertainment and hand-made items, and personal letters of appreciation. These expressions of love and concern from fellow citizens offer our Military & First Responders a much-deserved **"Thank You For Your Service"** and are always greeted with enthusiasm and great appreciation.

As one former Navy Sailor and current New York Police Department Officer recently wrote:

"Every box, every piece of paper, every cloth, every book, every pen, every pencil, every notebook, every brush, every tooth paste, every shower gel, every puzzle, every magazine, every letter, every piece of candy..... means a lot to us when we are away from home. It gives us Hope, Confidence, Happiness, Strength & Pride that somebody think about us, that someone is there for us. Thank You all. God Bless America."

To read all the current letters of thanks from our recipients and to see their photos with your Operation Gratitude care packages, please "Like" us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/OperationGratitude and "follow" us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/OpGratitude, Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/opgratitude> and Instagram: <https://instagram.com/opgratitude/>

In 2013, we celebrated the assembly and delivery of our One Millionth Care Package - all made possible by your support. Please continue to join us as we march to **Two Million Care Packages!**

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and wonderful patriotic spirit. Every single donation we receive furthers our mission of saying "Thank You" to those who serve. The recipients of your generosity will remember your kindness forever. And I will always be appreciative of your support and encouragement for Operation Gratitude.

Fondly,

Carolyn Blashek, President

Operation Gratitude has been granted non-profit status under Section 501 (c) 3 of the IRS Code. Your contribution to this organization is fully deductible in accordance with applicable law for federal income tax purposes as no goods or services were provided in exchange.



City of Omaha
Jean Stothert, Mayor

**Parks, Recreation &
Public Property Department**

Omaha/Douglas Civic Center
1819 Farnam Street, Suite 701
Omaha, Nebraska 68183-0701
(402) 444-5900
FAX (402) 444-4921

Brook Bench
Director

5 August 2016

Mr. John Winkler, General Manager
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

RE: South Omaha Trail Phase 2 – Project Update

Dear John:

Writing to provide an update on the South Omaha Trail Phase 2 project. Based on the revised schedule from the contractor (Change Order #T-5, dated 3-10-16) the project is on schedule. The section from Sta. 28+00 to Sta. 85+32 ("D" Street Crossing to Vinton Street) was substantially complete on June 1st. Remaining work along this section involves crosswalk striping and trail pavement painting, additional grading to create swales on each side of the I-80 to improve drainage, installation of the vehicle gate for the Anson property and tree planting.

Majority of the work is currently focused on the trail from the "D" Street Crossing to S. 45th and Dayton Streets. Retaining Wall #2, the large wall along the existing railroad tracks is complete as is the poured in place concrete wall. Retaining Wall #3 on the uphill side of the trail should be completed by the middle of next week. Most of the trail has been poured in this section with the exception of two areas. These are roughly between Sta. 11+00 to Sta. 15+50 and Sta. 20+50 to 24+00. Once Retaining Wall #3 is completed work will begin on the trailhead. Roughly 6 to 9 feet of soil and rubble is being excavated at this time in the vicinity of Retaining Wall #1. Once that work is completed work can begin the construction of Wall #1 and pour this section of the trail. Work from Sta. 0+00 to Sta. 28+00 is scheduled to be substantially complete by September 30th.

I've attached a few photos taken Thursday afternoon that show the work from the poured in place retaining wall to the excavation work in the vicinity of Retaining Wall #1.

Very truly yours,

Dennis E. Bryers, FASLA, PLA
Landscape Architect - Park Planner II

cc: Brook Bench, Director, PR&PP

DEB/

July, 2016

[illegible]

Updated: July 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)
 - ★ Design Plastics Easement document for culvert repair (W)
 - ★ Professional Services Contract with HDR on bank stabilization project (B)
- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
 - ★ Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)
- **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)
 - ★ West Papio Trail, Giles to Millard – Interlocal w/Omaha, La Vista (P)
- **Missouri River Corridor Project:** (Becic)
- **USDA PL 566 Projects, Silver Creek and Pigeon/Jones Watershed:** (Schumacher/Cleveland)

- ★ Papio W-3 Eminent Domain (Camden) (W)
 - Tek/Mud PL 566 Site 41A access (F)
 - Papio PL 566 Site W-2 Issues (F)
- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Williams)
 - ★ ROW Acquisition Documents for WP6 & WP7 – Thrasher Sed. Basins (W)
 - ★ WP6 Tract 1 Purchase Agreement (W)
 - ★ 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 (P)
 - ★ City of Omaha Interlocal Agreement for ZB-2 (W)
 - ★ Papio DS15A Sale of Surplus Property – deed/closing documents (W)
 - ★ WP6 & WP7 Interlocal Agreement with Papillion and Sarpy Co. (W)
- **Papio Creek Watershed Partnership (Stormwater):** (Grint)
- **Missouri River R-613 and R-616 Levees:** (Cleveland/Woodward)
 - Offutt AFB O&M Agreement (P)
 - ★ Interlocal Funding Agreement with Omaha, Bellevue and Sarpy Co. (W)
- **Rural Water Projects:** (Nelson)
 - ★ WCRW – Lakeland Estates Water Main Extension Developer Agreement and Easements (B)
 - WCRW – Amendment to Washington Count Interlocal Agreement (F)
 - ★ WCRW – Lakeland Estates Water Main Extension Construction Contract (B)
- **Other:**
 - ★ Southern Sarpy watershed Partnership Interlocal Agreement (W) (Laster)
 - ★ Erosion and Sediment Control Program Rules & Regulation Update (B) (Schumacher, Williams)
 - Lower Platte Weed Management Interlocal Agreement Amendment (W) (Woodward)
 - Lower Platte River Consortium Interlocal Agreement (B) (Woodward)

Winkler: Japp's seat must be filled in 45 days

- Washington County Pilot-Tribune & Enterprise/ Jessica Gibbs/July 15, 2016

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (PMRNRD) has announced that at its August board meeting, the district will fill the vacant seat left on its Board of Directors following the death of Subdistrict-1 representative Scott Japp.

General Manager John Winkler outlined the PMRNRD's process at the July 14 board meeting, which directors then approved 9-0.

Starting Friday, the district will formally notify the Nebraska Secretary of State's office of the vacancy and then begin advertising the open position.

"You cannot leave it unfilled," Winkler said.

Winkler explained that revised state statutes now require the district to fill vacancies within 45 days, unless doing so causes an "undue burden."

The district will accept applications until Aug. 1. A committee will review those applications and then submit recommendations to the Board of Directors at its August meeting.

The interim Subdistrict-1 director will be chosen from that pool of candidates through a vote of the board. They will serve for the remainder of Japp's term, which ends in December.

Winkler said that selecting the new director by the August board meeting will fill the seat 53 days after Japp's death, but the district and its legal counsel felt calling a special meeting to follow the 45 day deadline would create an undue burden on the district and its constituents.

Currently there is one name on the General Election ballot for the PMRNRD Subdistrict-1 seat. Bill Rhea, Jr. of Arlington will remain the sole candidate unless another individual petitions to be placed on the ballot.

The Board of Directors opened its meeting with a moment of silence for Japp. A PMRNRD constituent, Shawn Melotz, requested that the PMRNRD's field office in Blair be named after Japp, but the board took no action.

NRD committee will look for Japp's replacement

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer

7-15-16

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is moving forward with plans to appoint a replacement for Director Scott Japp, who died suddenly last month.

Meanwhile, the board began to discuss its 2017 budget at its Thursday night meeting. Under the draft budget, the district's property tax rate would remain the same and spending would dip slightly to \$67.2 million.

Japp's death left four rural NRD counties without representation on the board.

Board Chairman David Klug wrote a memo laying out how the board should fill the vacancy.

"With the multitude of factors related to this situation, I feel it is in the best interest of the district to thoughtfully and diligently fill this vacancy," he wrote.

Klug said he and fellow directors Tim Fowler, John Conley and Rich Tesar will serve as an executive committee to search for a new candidate.

He said the district would advertise for candidates. Applications would close Aug. 1 and the board would choose the new director at its Aug. 11 meeting.

Board members approved that plan 9-0 Thursday, with Klug not present.

The board also held a moment of silence for Japp. And one of his constituents, Shawn Melotz, suggested the district name its building in Blair after Japp.

That Aug. 11 meeting will also be the public hearing on the 2017 budget. The board is scheduled to vote on the budget and formally set the tax levy Sept. 8.

Under the first draft of the budget, the property tax rate remains at 3.8034 cents per \$100 of valuation. That is a \$57.05 annual payment on a home that's valued at \$150,000.

Melotz asked the board to lower the property tax rate, noting that the board raised the tax rate in the 2016 budget.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com

Fred Conley has made no decisions on quitting

- By Christopher Burbach and Emily Nohr / World-Herald staff writers

7-15-16

Fred Conley has made no decision about resigning from the Metropolitan Community College board, he said Thursday.

Conley, who commented following a Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board of directors meeting, declined to elaborate.

"At some future time and place I may make a comment," he said.

Conley is under pressure from to resign from his Metro Community College post because of potential fallout from a U.S. government order regarding Conley. State Sen. Ernie Chambers also has said Conley should resign from the Metro board.

The U.S. Department of Education is threatening to withhold federal funding from Metro if Conley remains on its board. That's because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued an order prohibiting Conley from participating in federal contracts for three years.

That order stemmed from a HUD finding that Conley had failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest while he was a member of the Omaha Housing Authority board. He has filed a federal lawsuit seeking to overturn the HUD action against him.

Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom called Thursday for Fred Conley to be removed from the Papio-Missouri NRD.

Conley currently serves as an elected member of both the Papio-Missouri NRD and Metro Community College boards.

Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom bird-dogs the NRD but doesn't keep as close an eye on Metro.

The advocacy group's president, Doug Kagan, said Thursday that Conley should leave the NRD board because his OHA board actions were unethical, and because his presence on the NRD board could jeopardize the district's federal funding.

"We feel his reputation has been tainted," Kagan said.

Kagan tried to address the issue during budget-related testimony at Thursday's Papio-Missouri NRD meeting, but the presiding chairman told him to keep his comments relevant to the budget.

Kagan said Conley's presence on the NRD board could affect its eligibility to receive federal funds, as it could Metro's.

John Winkler, the NRD's general manager, said lawyers for the district are looking into the matter, but no federal partners have notified him about Conley's presence on the board being a problem.

He said the NRD's situation is "totally different" from Metro's.

"Until we have something to act on ... that is something we're not going to address," Winkler said.

Kagan halted his testimony, and returned to the audience.

Conley was not discussed further during the meeting.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1057, christopher.burbach@owh.com, twitter.com/chrisburbach

See a helicopter flying low? Don't worry - it's for science



By WOWT 6 News |

Posted: Mon 4:28 PM, Jul 18, 2016



SARPY COUNTY, Neb. (WOWT) -- Residents in Sarpy County could see a low-flying helicopter with a strange device underneath it in the coming weeks, but don't be alarmed! It's flying low in the name of science.

Starting in early August, a helicopter with instruments mounted below it will be making low-level flights over mostly rural parts of Sarpy County. The spider web-shaped instruments will be used to collect information about buried ground water aquifer materials such as glacial sand, gravels, and sandstone.

This information can help improve "understanding of ground water resources and potential ground water/surface water connections in an area of the state made more complex by the presence of glacial deposits."

Data collected by the helicopter can explore what lies up to 600 feet below the surface. The area of western Sarpy County being studied, including from 96th Street west to the Platte River, is expected to have isolated areas of sand and gravel as well as a bedrock aquifer made up of Dakota Sandstone. Those aquifers are the source for drinking water for local public water and domestic wells.

"Understanding the extent and make-up of these isolated aquifers will greatly improve management decisions to protect them and safeguard them as a source for drinking water," said Paul Woodward, an Engineer for Papio-Missouri River NRD Ground Water Management.

After 75 years, Nebraska's Kingsley Dam is likely more impressive than its founders ever imagined

- By David Hendee / World-Herald staff writer 7/19/16
- KEITH COUNTY NEWS

On July 22, 1941, about 2,000 people turned out in scorching heat for the Kingsley Dam dedication ceremony. Inspiration for the project came in 1910, and after gaining legal rights and financing, work began in 1936. It was the world's second-largest earthen dam at the time.

OGALLALA, Neb. — The big boy that holds back Big Mac is an active 75 years old.

Kingsley Dam, the world's second-largest earthen dam when it was completed in 1941 on the North Platte River in western Nebraska, will be the backdrop to two days of festivities at Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala this week.

Lake McConaughy is the big reservoir — the state's largest, with 76 miles of shoreline along its 22-mile length — sprawling behind the dam. Lake Ogallala is the little reservoir below the dam.

The early 20th century dreamers behind the behemoth dam would be amazed, surprised and pleased not only at how the project turned out, but how hard the water works, said Don Kraus, general manager of Central Public Power and Irrigation District in Holdrege. Central owns and operates the dam and reservoir.

"It's a little different than what the founders of the project were thinking about," Kraus said.

Among the founders were Charles McConaughy, a Holdrege businessman and civic leader, and George P. Kingsley, a Minden banker.

McConaughy's inspiration to irrigate out of the Platte River with canals came in about 1910. Kingsley heard about it two years later and became the project's biggest promoter and financial supporter. They spent most of the rest of their lives gaining the legal rights and financing to create the dam and reservoir that would carry their names.

Work on the dam started north of Ogallala in 1936. The scale of the project was staggering for the time, according to historian Robert Richter's account in "Lake McConaughy: A Geographic Portrait."

The dam would be almost a quarter mile wide at its base. It would rise 162 feet above the river to a top width of 28 feet and contain 26 million cubic yards of fill. It would stretch 3.1 miles across the valley floor.

To make room for the reservoir, 33 miles of Union Pacific track was relocated, along with stations, sidings and stockyards. Twenty miles of oil pipelines, 39 miles of state and federal highways, 22 miles of county roads, and telegraph and telephone lines were moved.

And the entire town of Lemoyne was moved to higher ground on the north shore because it was sacrificed for the lake.

Construction of the dam ran at peak capacity through 1938 with more than 1,000 men working in the field and more than 30 engineers, draftsmen and office workers on site.

There were accidents and injuries, but no deaths during construction.

One of the seriously injured was Neale Petersen, who moved to Ogallala from Bloomington, Nebraska, to work on the dam in 1939.

Petersen was a mechanic on the project, repairing anything that needed work, said his son, Duane Petersen of Oshkosh, Nebraska.

A hydraulic key used to raise and lower the gates on the outlet tower (the smaller of the two towers at the dam) malfunctioned. The steel key, about 3 or 4 inches long, blew out of place and lodged in Petersen's left eye.

The family lived in a little house in a workers complex near the spillway known as Kingsleyville. Lorie Oneal of Ogallala said her grandmother drove her injured grandfather to the Ogallala hospital.

"It was the first time she had ever driven a car," Oneal said.

The doctor sent Petersen on a train to Omaha for special treatment that night. Petersen lost the eye.

"But dad got along pretty well the rest of the years," Petersen said.

Maggie Headrick of Highlands Ranch, Colorado, said her father, Howard Brown, is credited with rescuing another worker when both were high on the outside of one of the two towers at the dam.

"Jobs were hard to come by during the Depression," she said. "Dad farmed and was a mechanic in Grant, but he wasn't making a living."

Brown applied at the dam, but the foreman wasn't hiring. Brown sat on the bank and watched the men work. The next day he showed up with a shovel and started working. The foreman reminded Brown that he hadn't been hired.

"Dad said, 'I wanted to show you how hard I work,'" Headrick said. "He was hired."

One day Brown and another worker were on platforms suspended by ropes on a tower far above the riverbed. A windstorm hit and one of the ropes on the other worker's platform broke, threatening to launch the man to the ground.

"Dad somehow swung his basket over and saved the man," Headrick said.

Brown didn't tell his family of the incident because his wife didn't know he was working high above the ground to earn extra wages, Headrick said. A newspaper story of the rescue the next week spoiled the secret. Headrick's mother insisted her husband stop working at the dam.

By May 1941, final work at the top of the dam was underway and the reservoir was filling with spring floodwater.

A crowd of 2,000 people turned out in 100-degree heat July 22, 1941, for the Kingsley Dam dedication ceremony. Neither Kingsley nor McConaughy lived to witness the completion of their dream.

Most Nebraskans and the thousands of Coloradans and others who make summer pilgrimages to the lake to boat and fish — or camp on the white-sand beaches — know McConaughy as a playground.

Lake McConaughy State Recreation Area records about 1 million visitations a year, generating more than \$44 million in retail sales. The annual economic impact is more than \$73 million and supports more than 950 jobs in Ogallala and Keith County, according to the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

"The tremendous recreational aspect is much greater than ever envisioned," Kraus said.

But Kingsley Dam primarily was built to store water for south-central Nebraska farmers to irrigate their crops. Most of it is delivered via 575 miles of canals and pipelines to 110,000 acres of cropland mostly on the south side of the Platte River between North Platte and Minden.

The reservoir is more than just a source of water for Nebraska's largest irrigation district.

The water stored behind Kingsley Dam cools the state's largest power plant at Sutherland. It's part of a system that is a source of water for four of Nebraska's five largest cities: Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and Kearney.

It provides flows for habitat critical to endangered species. It recharges the south-central Nebraska aquifer from water oozing out of the canals. And, since 1984, a hydroplant on the dam generates electricity.

The estimated annual economic benefits of the dam and lake for irrigation, hydropower generation and recreation range from \$556 million to \$806 million, according to a study by the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

"We have a responsibility to manage that resource for multiple purposes," Kraus said. "That's the reality of today."

Contact the writer: 402-444-1127, david.hendee@owh.com

Kingsley Dam 75th anniversary

Friday

Morning kickoff at Lake McConaughy Visitor and Water Interpretive Center

Saturday

6 a.m. — Inaugural Lake Mac Bicycle Ride. Starts at Martin Bay.

7:30 a.m. — Rotary Dam Run

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — Outdoor volleyball at Lake Ogallala

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Kayaking and paddleboarding events at Lake Ogallala

11:30 a.m. — Rededication ceremony

Noon — Free barbecue at Lake Ogallala (limited to first 1,500)

2 p.m. — Children's activities

6 to 9:30 p.m. — Bluewater Blues Fest at 17 Ranch Winery, Lewellen

8 to 9:30 p.m. — Boat parade at Lake McConaughy. Boats begin at Spillway Bay and proceed to Martin Bay along the dam. Viewing from turnout near south end of dam, or from the beach at Martin Day at north end.

Colored lights on hydro plume at Lake Ogallala

*Times and events tentative. Check ilovelakemac.com, explorekeithcounty.com or facebook.com/LakeMcConaughyNE for updates.

Stothert's main goals with \$917M budget: lower property taxes, fix streets, keep people safe

○ By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer / 7/20/2016

Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert gained some tentative support on the City Council Tuesday for her proposal to cut the city's property tax rate by 2 percent next year.

If approved, it would be the second property tax cut of Stothert's administration.

Stothert, who took office in 2013, said her 2017 budget proposal addresses the three main issues she hears about from Omahans: lowering property taxes, fixing the streets and keeping people safe.

"I never forget whose money we're spending," she said. "It's not ours, it's the taxpayers.' "

Stothert presented her proposal to the council Tuesday. The council will vote on the budget and any possible changes next month.

Most council members said they like the idea of a tax cut.

"It sounds palatable," Councilman Garry Germandt said. "Now the council has 30 days to check out the ingredients."

Councilman Franklin Thompson said he likes the mayor's priorities. "It seems like a solid budget. I am thankful that she's putting money into roads."

Councilman Rich Pahls said he believes the tax cut will be well received. "I think that's what people are searching for."

The council members said they'll be looking at the details to make sure the city can fulfill all its obligations with the tax cut.

Councilman Chris Jerram said the council will "go through the budget with a fine-toothed comb."

Councilman Pete Festersen said he likes the mayor's focus on streets and public safety. "The council typically has productive suggestions that make the end product even better, and I'm sure we'll have some this year."

Council President Ben Gray, however, said he would rather fund more street resurfacing and a better diversity and inclusion program for city contracts.

He said if the city is going to try to cut taxes, it should wait until its "house is in order."

And "it's obvious today that our house is not in order," he said.

Gray said he's not sure if he'll vote against the cut in the city tax rate. "The tax cut would help you get a couple Big Macs, a couple fries, maybe a milkshake," he said.

Stothert's proposed property tax rate is 47.922 cents per \$100 of valuation, one cent lower than this year. If approved, the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 would pay \$719 annually for city property taxes — \$15 less than this year.

The City of Omaha's tax rate is one piece of an Omahan's property tax bill; the county, school districts and other governmental entities make up the rest.

And many Omaha valuations are likely to increase this year, which would mean a higher property tax bill.

The Nebraska Tax Equalization and Review Commission has ordered Douglas County to increase the valuations of more than 75,000 properties in central and west Omaha by 7 percent and decrease the valuations of about 20,000 other properties in northeast Omaha by 8 percent.

Under Stothert's plan, the city's overall budget would be about \$917 million.

Of that, \$370 million is for day-to-day operational spending, keeping spending growth just under Stothert's target of 3 percent.

The rest of the \$917 million budget includes money for items such as capital improvements and payments on most city debts.

On the spending side, highlights include:

» Grant funding for new portable radios for the Omaha Fire Department as well as Douglas County's volunteer fire departments.

» About \$2 million more for street resurfacing, \$100,000 more for brick street repair and additional employees to work on streets and snow removal.

» Five new police officers, plus four more if her annexation package is passed, bringing the full sworn strength to 860.

» Funding for the library to implement a new system of tracking and checking out books.

» An additional housing inspector and \$100,000 more for demolitions.

» More money for the city's two reserve funds, which would bring the total to \$12 million by the end of 2017.

On the revenue side, Stothert recommended that the restaurant tax rate remain unchanged at 2.5 percent. The city is expected to bring in about \$31.1 million next year from the restaurant tax, up slightly from this year.

Stothert — who opposed the restaurant tax when she was a City Council member — said she wouldn't have been able to get rid of the tax and still fund her spending priorities. She noted that an estimated 30 percent of people paying the restaurant tax are from outside Omaha.

Asked why she chose cutting property taxes over eliminating the restaurant tax, the mayor said, "I wanted to do something that was really going to benefit the citizens of Omaha."

If the property tax cut is approved, city budget officials project that Omaha would bring in \$149.7 million from property taxes, about \$200,000 less than was budgeted for this year.

That projection assumes that the State Tax Commission prevails in its order that Douglas County adjust valuations for many of the county's residential properties.

The county has sued to block that ruling. If the state's order stands, it's estimated to generate an additional \$3.7 million in revenue for the city.

Of that money, \$3 million would go toward Stothert's proposed tax cut. The rest, she said, would help pay for street resurfacing.

This is Stothert's second recommended 1-cent property tax reduction. The first was in 2015, when she successfully pushed the council to reduce the tax rate from 49.922 cents per \$100 of valuation to 48.922 cents.

The 2017 budget is Stothert's last of her first term, and she said she's happy with the changes she has made in the past 3½ years.

The mayor, who has said she plans to seek re-election, noted that when she took office in 2013, the city had a projected deficit of \$13 million for that year and a projected shortfall for 2014 of \$19 million.

She said she thinks Omahans want to see that the city is managing its money well.

The preliminary draft of the budget proposal doesn't include spending increases resulting from Stothert's annexation package, which would bring seven unincorporated areas and 6,000 people into the city. If the council approves that proposal, the budget would be amended to reflect the changes.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com

5 key numbers from Mayor Jean Stothert's 2017 budget proposal

— 47.922: The property tax rate, which is about a 2 percent decrease from this year. That means the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 would pay about \$719 annually in city property taxes, about a \$15 decrease from this year. (That doesn't include property taxes for other governmental entities, such as school districts.)

— Nearly \$11 million: Stothert's proposed street resurfacing budget, which is \$2 million more than the 2016 budget.

— 860: The number of sworn police officers, an increase of nine officers, which includes the mayor's annexation proposal.

— 2.5 percent: The restaurant tax rate, which remains unchanged.

— \$917 million: The total budget, with \$370 million in general fund spending for operations.

Breakdown of general fund spending, by city department

General government: \$15.4 million (up 4% from 2016)

Planning: \$9.1 million (up 3%)

Police: \$133.5 million (up 2%)

Fire: \$99.8 million (up 3%)

Parks and Recreation: \$21.3 million (up 6%)

Convention and Tourism: \$1 million (up 25%)

Public Works: \$22.9 million (up 6 %)

Library: \$12.9 million (up 8%)

The general fund pays for day-to-day operations. It does not include items such as debt payments and capital improvements. Some departments, such as the Omaha Public Library, receive funding from other governmental entities, which are not part of the general fund budget.

Metro College board Chairman Fred Conley rejects calls to resign, says he'll finish out term

- By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer / 7.25.2016

Metro Community College Chairman Fred Conley rejected calls to resign on Monday morning, saying he will serve out the remainder of his term.

Conley did say at a press conference Monday that he would withdraw from the November election, taking his name off the ballot for re-election.

His decision to stay on the board comes as fellow members of Metro's board and others have called for him to step down because of potential fallout from a federal government order.

The U.S. Department of Education threatened to withhold federal financial aid funding from Metro if Conley remained on the board. That's because the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued an order prohibiting Conley from participating in federal contracts for three years.

That controversy stemmed from a HUD finding that Conley failed to disclose a potential conflict of interest while he was a member of the Omaha Housing Authority board.

Conley has said he did nothing wrong and is challenging the HUD order in federal court.

Still, some on the Metro board, which meets this week, planned to vote on a resolution censuring Conley and asking him to resign. State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, whose district covers Metro's north Omaha campus, also called for his resignation.

Metro received \$32.7 million in Title IV funds -- the main source of federal student aid -- in 2014-15.

Conley has served on Metro's board since 2005. He's also a member of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board, though the NRD has said it hasn't been notified by federal partners that Conley's presence on the board is an issue.

Rhea may see challenger for PMRNRD seat on ballot

- Jessica Gibbs / Washington Co. Enterprise / 7-26-16



Ted Japp, who lives east of Kennard and worked as a chiropractor in Blair for eight years, has announced he hopes to run for the Subdistrict-1 seat on the PMRNRD Board of Directors. Japp is collecting signatures to petition for his name to be on the November ballot.

A distant relative of former Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (PMRNRD) director Scott Japp has begun collecting signatures for a petition that could place his name on the November ballot.

Kennard resident Ted Japp, who said his father was a first cousin to Scott Japp's father, has applied to fill the vacant seat on the PMRNRD Board of Directors. The vacancy was left by the death of Scott Japp, an Arlington resident who was killed in a machinery accident June 19.

However, Ted's his main priority is getting on the November ballot. He'll need 1,900 signatures by Sept. 1 to make that happen, he said.

The only candidate currently on the ballot for the PMRNRD Subdistrict-1 seat is Bill Rhea, Jr. of Arlington. Rhea was set to face off with Scott Japp before his death. Scott was seeking his third term on the PMRNRD board.

Ted Japp hadn't run in the primary election — not while Scott was in office, he said.

"I thought he represented the interests of this district very well," Ted said.

Ted's platform will sound similar to Scott's.

The PMRNRD has an "enormous budget," Ted said. Its management would be one of his top priorities as a director. He's also staunchly against large dams or water retention devices.

"They would disrupt the lives of many, many families," he said.

He believes he can understand both the rural and urban perspectives to the PMRNRD's missions. Ted grew up on a dairy farm near Kennard and lives east of Kennard.

He also worked in Omaha for 15 years as a chiropractic doctor, which he says helps him understand the urban views.

Ted's approach would be quite different from Scott's, he said. He describes himself as a calm, analytic person, and he has a University of Nebraska-Lincoln Cornhuskers analogy ready for people who ask how he compares to the impassioned previous director.

If Scott Japp was Bo Pelini, Ted said, he is Mike Riley.

While he opposes dams, Ted said he believes in the basic mission of the PMRNRD and respects their efforts to providing quality drinking water, trails and lakes.

"They do some very good things," he said. "We need to emphasize those good things."

Rhea could not be reached for comment.

Researchers to use helicopter to gather groundwater data in rural Sarpy County

- By Hailey Konnath / World-Herald staff writer / 7-27-16

Researchers will use a helicopter to gather information about groundwater in rural Sarpy County next month.

Instruments mounted under the helicopter will collect and record geologic measurements, according to a Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District press release. The goal is to learn more about buried groundwater aquifer materials, such as sand, gravels and sandstone, the release said.

The helicopter will fly in a gridlike pattern over parts of western Sarpy County from about 96th Street to the Platte River. The scientific equipment will be towed about 100 feet below the helicopter and is designed to map geologic structures beneath the earth, the release said.

This area of Sarpy County is underlain by isolated areas of aquifers that provide drinking water to local public water supplies and domestic wells.

The information gathered will help improve management decisions to protect the aquifers, said Paul Woodward, the NRD's groundwater management engineer, in the release.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD and other members of the Eastern Nebraska Water Resource Assessment planned the flights with grant assistance from the Nebraska Water Sustainability Fund.

Fred Conley resigns as chairman, but refuses to leave Metro board entirely

- By Christopher Burbach / World-Herald staff writer 8-3-16

Fred Conley resigned his position Tuesday as chairman of the Metropolitan Community College Board of Governors. But he continued to resist calls to leave the board entirely.

Conley took the step at a special meeting of the board. Six of the board's 11 members had introduced a resolution to strip Conley of the board chairmanship.

He gave up the position voluntarily before the resolution could be considered. The board amended the resolution to accept the resignation. It then elected Vice Chairman Roger Garcia as the new chairman and Ron Hug as vice chairman.

Conley said after the meeting that he had come Tuesday night resolved to resign the chairmanship. He said that in discussions with his attorney, David Domina, he had become concerned that being chairman could present added complications with the U.S. Department of Education.

But Conley said he remains unconvinced that the federal government would actually withhold funding from Metro anytime soon. Conley remains determined to complete the last five months of his four-year term.

He said the government still has not issued "a letter that said if Mr. Conley has not resigned by such and such a date you're in jeopardy of losing your funds. ... For people to start preaching doom and gloom right now, I just don't think that's imminent."

Conley said he had withdrawn his name from the November ballot, as he said he would.

Last week, the board passed a resolution calling for Conley to resign and censuring him if he doesn't. College attorneys have said the board does not have the power to forcibly remove a member.

"We've done everything that's in our own power as a board, from asking him to resign, to censuring him, to removing him as chair," Garcia said.

Conley, he said, should resign "and not play chicken with the federal government."

Asked what he would say to people who say he's playing chicken with the government, Conley said, "I would say the federal government is playing chicken with me."

Contact the writer: 402-444-1057, christopher.burbach@owh.com

Teen couldn't outrun train barreling down on La Vista tracks in popular hangout known as 'Oz'

- By Emily Nitcher / World-Herald staff writer 8-3-16



Tyler Chong saw three teenagers walking on the railroad bridge more than 30 feet above the Papillion Creek on Monday night.

About 5 minutes later, around 8:30 p.m., Chong heard the train coming.

The three started running. But not all of the teens made it to a place where they could jump safely from the bridge.

Hit by the train, one of the teens flew through tree branches before landing in the Papillion Creek below, Chong said. Chong, 15, and a friend rushed to help him, but Chong said it was too late.

Nicholas Wilson, 19, of Papillion was declared dead below the railroad tracks south of 118th and Harrison Streets, La Vista police said.

Another of the teenagers, Dillon McHenry, 18, was flown by helicopter to the Nebraska Medical Center in serious but stable condition, said La Vista Police Capt. Bryan Waugh.

A third teenager, Edward Zielinski, 18, of Papillion, was not injured, police said.

Jeff Johnson, principal of Papillion-La Vista South High School, shared the news of Wilson's death Tuesday morning with parents.

Wilson and McHenry graduated from the school this year, according to Johnson's statement.

"This is a sad time for our South Titans," Johnson said. He said counselors were available Tuesday afternoon for those who needed them.

Later Tuesday, Johnson released another statement.

"Nicholas was a 2016 graduate who was very personable and came from an amazing family," the statement said. "Our hearts break for them."

Papillion Mayor David Black expressed his sympathies to the Wilson family in a Facebook post Tuesday evening.

He said Nicholas Wilson's mother, Jackie Wilson, is an active community member, who serves on the city's library board. He said Wilson's father, Wayne Wilson, has hired and mentored many young adults as head of a local Runza.

"The Wilson's represent Papillion," he wrote.

St. Columbkille Church held a prayer and rosary for Wilson and his family on Tuesday night.

Three or four groups of people were in the area — called "Oz" by some teenagers — fishing, taking senior photos and hanging out Monday night, said La Vista Police Chief Bob Lausten.

Tuesday morning, there were beer cans, water bottles, a used fire pit, graffiti and a discarded mattress and box springs on the path leading up to the area of the accident.

Patrick Tulagan, 19, who witnessed the accident with Chong, said almost everybody he knows is familiar with the area. Some people refer to it as the Waterfalls, he said, and mostly teenagers go

there to relax. Tulagan said those who do go on the tracks normally put up a train bar that warns when a train is coming by vibrating.

Chong said few people go up on the tracks.

John Winkler, general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, said his agency owns some property along the creek but he had no idea people went to the area.

"This is the first time we were ever notified it was any place anybody even went or hung out," Winkler said.

The NRD will work with the City of La Vista and other adjoining property owners to see if access to the area can be restricted to prevent similar incidents, Winkler said.

Lausten said Tuesday morning that he had already made some calls to work on increasing awareness about the dangers in the area.

Andy Williams, a spokesman for BNSF Railway, said "no trespassing" signs are posted on that specific bridge. The railroad also works with Operation LifeSaver to promote rail safety, and its railroad police enforce trespassing laws.

"Last night's incident is a tragic reminder that trespassing on railroad property is extremely dangerous, often with deadly or life-changing results," Williams said in an email. "Trains can't swerve or stop quickly. To stay safe, people need to stay away from train tracks."

Carol Daley, Operation Lifesaver Nebraska's executive director, said trespassing on railroads is illegal. And, she said, continuous welded rails have made trains quieter, so people can't always hear one coming.

Daley said her organization plans to reach out to Papillion-La Vista Community Schools about talking to high schoolers about the dangers of being on railroad tracks.

"One life is too much," she said. "One life destroyed a family. And also destroys the train crews it happens to."

In 2008, a then-54-year-old Herbie Jenney was hit by a train on the same bridge. He estimates that he walked across the trestle 100 times before that.

In the 1960s, Jenney and his friends hunted and hung out in the rural land surrounding the railroad tracks. It's been a natural playland for decades, he said.

"It was just kind of a cool area for inquisitive kids to go check out," Jenney said.

In December of 2008, Jenney was hunting coyotes in the area. He was walking across the trestle and didn't hear or feel anything unusual. Jenney said it was a gut feeling that made him turn around and look.

A train was coming toward him.

Jenney said he tried to run to a place where he could safely jump off the trestle. He almost made it. The train hit Jenney when he jumped and threw him several hundred feet.

"Life is precious," Jenney said. "Just a split second. If I wouldn't have taken one more step I wouldn't be here."

When first responders found him, Jenney's leg and an arm were barely hanging on but doctors reattached them. The Springfield man was forced to retire from his job as a heavy equipment operator for Kiewit.

"People are just people, and we make mistakes all the time and do the wrong thing sometimes," Jenney said. "I feel sorry for them and their parents. This is going to be tough."

On Tuesday evening, a number of people paid respects and visited a spot under the train tracks where Wilson died. Members of a youth group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Omaha placed white, red, purple and yellow flowers at the base of a graffiti-covered column supporting the tracks. The six teenagers played worship songs to honor Wilson, who was not part of the youth group.

A few of them had classes with him, like 18-year-old Sydney Yost.

Yost said she had math and English classes with Wilson. They weren't close friends, she said, but she remembers him as a sweet and nice person whom everybody liked, with a good sense of humor to boot.

"He always made everyone laugh," she said.

She said he'd bring in snacks and got her into trying her first energy drink.

"I'm obsessed with flaming hot Cheetos," she said. "And he always would like share my food and eat it with me."

Three 18-year-old women from Papillion sang as part of the youth group Tuesday. They said it's a popular hangout spot for teenagers, as well as a frequent worship place for the youth group. Hayley Conway, one of the three, explained her and her friends considered the area dangerous before Wilson's death. She said they came in groups and had precautions when they came, like never walking alone.

"I don't know if I would hang out here again," said Sonora Foresman, one of the group members.

Just before 7 p.m., a woman placed a cross with the words "May God protect our children" down near the site.

About 7 p.m., a mom and her daughter came to see the place for the first time. The pair had just gotten back from the rosary ceremony in Wilson's name at St. Columbkille Church. The mom, a 47-year-old La Vista resident, said her nephew was near "Narnia" — another name for the site — but a bit away from the train tracks at the time of Wilson's death Monday. He told her he heard a train as he was leaving one of the area's many paths about 8:30 p.m., when officials said the train struck Wilson and McHenry.

"I'm just glad he wasn't anywhere near this one," the woman said.

The woman said it was a beautiful spot but she wished more safeguards like railings could be installed to protect the kids who visit it.

"I have younger kids, too," she said, "and I don't want them to come down here."

The members sat at the base of the pillar and strummed and sang "Even When it Hurts," by Christian rock group Hillsong United.

Yost said it's a song about how God is still there for support, even in times of pain and mourning. She said coming to worship in Wilson's honor was something the group had to do.

"It's kind of horrible to think about how he had like his whole life ahead of him," Yost said, "and yet, it's just gone."

World-Herald staff writers Hailey Konnath and Michael Shoro contributed to this report.

50 kids ditch video games to clean up Omaha park as part of Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign 8.4.2016

Eleven-year-old Ted Luedes took a look around Omaha's Fontenelle Park and matter-of-factly noted that it needed more flowers. Flowers attract birds seeking pollen, he explained. Birds eat mosquitoes and other pests that can ruin a fun day at the park.

"I plant flowers with my mom, so I know how to do it," said Ted, who lives in Blair.

Ted was among about 50 youths from around the metro area who helped make improvements to the park Wednesday as part of first lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign. Omaha was one of 50 cities selected to participate in the program.

The idea is to get kids away from their computer screens, video games and phones, and give them the opportunity to be outside working, learning and playing, said Sally Jewell, the U.S. secretary of the interior. She was in Omaha alongside Mayor Jean Stothert to announce the program.

"For most young people, technology is a part of their everyday lives," Jewell said. "We have this growing disconnect between children and outdoor playing."

Omaha is receiving \$64,000 from the American Express Foundation, the charitable arm of the corporation, to pay for two positions that will coordinate the program for the next two years. Program expenses — supplies, transportation and food for the kids — will be covered by other nonprofits and government agencies.

Most of the children Wednesday were from the YMCA of Greater Omaha.

Ted, his friend Easton Chafee and other kids planted flowers to encourage pollination. They also pulled weeds — Easton said he enjoys that most — picked up trash and installed bluebird houses and bat boxes in trees.

Tom Cox, a refuge manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Nebraska and Iowa, was there to educate the kids as they worked. He taught them how to build the bird boxes and bat houses.

"It's great for them to be able to learn about nature like this," Cox said.

Stothert said Omaha is fortunate to have more than 200 parks in the city that provide opportunities for children "to play, exercise and explore."

"Healthy families and healthy children are important assets to Omaha, and we are thrilled to be selected as a priority community. ... I encourage all Omaha families to participate in Let's Move and set a good example for other communities," Stothert said.

Contact the writer: 402-444-3100, maggie.obrien@owh.com

The Public Pulse, Aug. 4: Conley being treated unfairly

LAURA INNS / THE WORLD-HERALD

Save

Conley being treated unfairly

For those of you who have not given Fred Conley the benefit of the doubt in regard to his position on the Metro Community College board, you should ("Conley still on board, but no longer chairman," Aug. 3 World-Herald).

He has filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services over its order prohibiting the federal government from doing business with Conley. It is also worth noting that even if a federal agency is barred from doing business with an individual, it doesn't necessarily mean an organization with ties to that person — Metropolitan Community College — would automatically be barred. Conley serves on the Metro Board of Governors.

Conley is a proven civil servant to this community and has done a wonderful job in many, many ways.

Jim Thompson, Omaha

NRD eyes just one candidate for vacancy left by Japp's death

- By Roseann Moring / World-Herald staff writer 8-11-16

The Papio-Missouri Natural Resource District board will likely consider only one candidate to temporarily fill the vacancy left by the death of Scott Japp.

The board's executive committee voted 3-0 Tuesday to forward one finalist to the full board: Bill Rhea of Arlington, who is a candidate in the November election.

The committee passed over six other applicants, including a frequent critic of the district, a former board member and one of Japp's relatives.

The full board is set to appoint a new director for subdistrict 1 at its monthly meeting at 7 p.m. today.

The executive committee was tasked with forwarding one or more candidates as a finalist to the full board.

At the meeting, the board will consider Rhea's nomination. A board member also could nominate one of the other applicants.

Voters will select a candidate in November. The appointee will serve until the new director takes office in January.

Japp, 60, died in a farm accident in June.

Rhea and Japp advanced after the May primary. Japp will not appear on the ballot.

Candidates have until Sept. 1 to file a petition to appear on the ballot. A spokeswoman for the Nebraska Secretary of State's Office said the office had received inquiries but no candidate has filed paperwork.

Subdistrict 1 includes the NRD's four rural counties as well as a part of Douglas County.

The other applicants were:

» Ted Japp of Blair, who is a relative of Scott Japp and said he's gathering signatures to appear on the ballot

» Vince Kramper of Dakota City, a former NRD board member

» Shawn Melotz of Bennington, an accountant and frequent critic of the NRD

» Brian Smith of Kennard, who said he's a conservationist who wouldn't seek the position full-time

» Tanna Wirtz of Arlington, the former Washington County planning and zoning administrator

» Dennis Zolck of Arlington, a retiree who formerly worked at the Omaha Public Power District and the Omaha Police Department

The board also will hear public testimony today about its proposed budget for the 2017 fiscal year. Under the latest draft of the budget, the district would spend \$70 million.

The proposal keeps the district's property tax rate at 3.8034 cents per \$100 of valuation. That's a \$57.05 annual payment on a home valued at \$150,000.

Contact the writer: 402-444-1084, roseann.moring@owh.com



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Ted Japp applies for NRD Board Subdistrict 1, hopes be on November ballot

by Mary Lou Rodgers

A relative with the same last name has applied to fill the interim position on the NRD Board that was held by Scott Japp of Washington County. Japp died in a machinery accident on his farm in June.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District has asked for applicants to fill his vacant position on the Board, representing Subdistrict 1, which includes Washington and Dakota counties and portions of Thurston, Burt and Douglas counties. One of those applicants is Ted Japp, whose father is a cousin of Scott Japp.

Ted Japp, a retired chiropractor who lives in Washington County, said that several members of the Papio Valley Preservation Association suggested that he run for the position. The Board of Directors will choose the interim director, but in November only one name remains on the ballot – Bill Rhea, Jr., of Arlington.

Ted Japp's name could be added to the ballot if he gets 1,900 valid voters' signatures. Members of the PVP Association and others are busy collecting signatures now.

Ted Japp is a Bennington High School graduate. His mother, Joann, taught sixth grade in Bennington for 20 years. He is interested in the work of the NRD since his family has owned land along the Papio Creek area for over 100 years. He is a fifth-generation Washington County resident and landowner. He and his wife, Lori, raised three children – Katie (Mitch), Nolan and

Hannah.

Japp has a Doctor of Chiropractic degree from Northwestern University of Health Sciences, and he had a successful private practice for over 33 years in both rural and urban settings. He had offices in Wahoo for 10 years, in Omaha for 15 years and in Blair, close to where he lives, for eight years before retiring last year. He is a past president of the Lions Club and has served on numerous boards and committees with the Nebraska Chiropractic Physicians Association and his church.

Japp said he has always been interested in the NRD, but never considered running for it while Scott Japp was serving. Now that he is retired, however, it seems like a good opportunity.

"I have the time, the inclination and the disposition to do a good job," Ted Japp said. "Given the opportunity, I would look forward to serving the people of Subdistrict 1."

Japp said he believes in the basic mission of the NRD, protecting ground and surface water, reducing flood threats, slowing the effects of soil erosion, and creating and enhancing wildlife habitats.

"The NRD does some very good things, like the trails around lakes, that create quality of life opportunities," he noted.

He is, however, strongly opposed to the large dams or retention devices proposed along the Papio and Bell Creeks in Washington County.

"I think there are different ways to achieve flood control," Japp said.

Japp believes he will be able to work well with other Board members, describing his demeanor as composed and analytical.

Scott Japp frequently had conflicts with other Board members. Ted Japp said their goals are similar, but they have different approaches. He compared Scott and himself to Husker coaches Bo Pelini and Mike Riley.

"Bo was impassioned and wore his emotions on his sleeve," Japp

mission of the NRD in a very cost-effective manner, staying within a limited budget to contain or reduce the tax burden.

The NRD required those interested in the interim position to submit their applications by August 1.

Ted Japp, however, is focused more on another deadline. September 1, the date to turn in signatures to get on the November ballot and possibly be elected for the next four-year term. Many volunteers are gathering signatures for him, and some businesses are helping out, too. Neal and Janet Finken have petitions at their CPA office in Bennington, and the petitions will also be available at the Washington County Fair. Japp said voters may also contact him, Shawn Melotz or Bill Bohn about signing a petition.

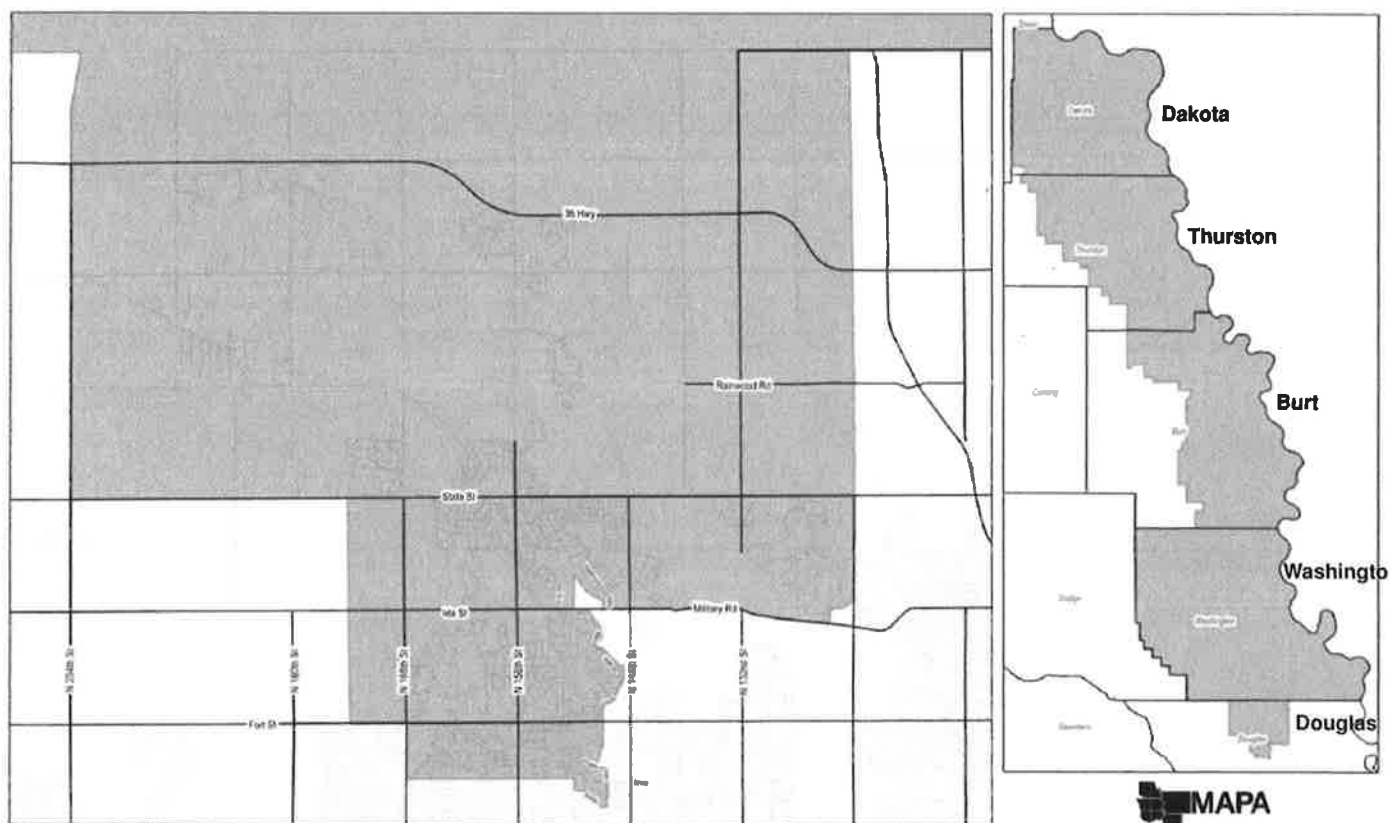


Dr. Ted Japp

said. "Scott is more like that. The difference between us is like the difference between Bo Pelini and Mike Riley."

Japp's goal is to accomplish the

Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District - Sub-District 1 (2011)



This map shows the entire Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources Subdistrict 1 at right, which includes Dakota, Thurston, Burt, Washington and Douglas counties. The larger map shows a close-up of the portion of Douglas County that is in Subdistrict 1, which includes all of the Bennington School District, plus a little more.