

MEMORANDUM

TO THE BOARD:

SUBJECT: General Manager's Report

DATE: September 10, 2013

FROM: John Winkler, General Manager

A. **INFORMATION/EDUCATION REPORT:** The Information & Education Report detailing their activities for the month of August, 2013 is attached for your review.

B. **PERSONNEL/MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:**

1. **Gerry Bowen**, Natural Resources Planner, has informed me that he plans to retire from his position on November 29th, 2013. Gerry started with the District in February of 1984. He will be missed by all.

2. The Heartland Active Transportation Summit for 2013 is being held on Friday, September 27, 2013 at the Swanson Conference Center at the Metropolitan Community College's Fort Omaha campus. A copy of the conference agenda is attached for your review.

3. There will be a Household Hazardous Waste Collection on Friday and Saturday, September 13th and 14th. The collection is open to residents of Washington, Burt, Cuming, Dodge, Thurston, and Dakota Counties. The event flyer is attached for your review.

4. The Scrap Tire Collection held last August a big success! The official volume of tires collected is 410.7 tons. While we didn't break our state record for volume collected, we did break our record of participation with 435 loads. Thanks go out to Deb Ward, Program Assistant in Tekamah, and to all staff members that were involved in this event!

5. Information on the Bond Debt Service is attached for your review. The total interest cost is \$28,856,789, which is \$2,667,924 greater than the actual bond interest. The TIC is 4.6477% verses actual of 4.2615%, or an increase of 20.62 bps.

6. Governor Heineman has announced the 2013 recipients of the Governor's Wellness Award. The Papio-Missouri River NRD is one of 50 Nebraska employers that will be honored for their successful efforts in promoting workplace wellness. Special thanks to the District's committee members Penny Burch, Kelly Fravel, Amanda Grint, Terry Keller, Terry Schumacher, and Heather Borkowski! The Governor's letter is attached for your review.

C. **REPORT ON PURCHASES – CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY:** Pursuant to Board direction, attached is a

report indicating construction services, professional services and personal property purchases from the month of August, 2013. Please review this report and contact me if you have any questions.

D. **CURRENT AND ON-GOING PROJECTS – P-MRNRD LEGAL COUNSEL:** Attached is a copy of the current and on-going projects for District Legal Counsel, Paul Peters, as of August 12, 2013. I would ask each Director to review this listing. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

E. **PAPILLION CREEK WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP REPORT:** The PCWP report for the month of August, 2013 is attached for your review. The next Partnership meeting is scheduled to be held on September 26, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. at the NRC.

F. **NEWS CLIPS:**

- ✓ August 6, 2013, Douglas Co. Post-Gazette article, Poll shows most Rural Nebraskans support spending on public services
- ✓ August 8, 2013, Dakota Co. Star “Special Editorial to the Star,” The Papio-Missouri River NRD proposes major property tax increases
- ✓ August 9, 2013, Omaha World Herald editorial, Seeking balance in use of water
- ✓ August 9, 2013, Facebook posting by Tom Arnott
- ✓ August 13, 2013, Washington Co. Pilot-Tribune article, Fort Calhoun files lawsuits to stop water district merger
- ✓ August 13, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, No increase for Papio-Missouri River NRD tax levy
- ✓ August 13, 2013, Washington Co. Pilot-Tribune article, Fight not over
- ✓ August 14, 2013, Burt Co. Plaindealer article, NRD forwards budget with steady tax rate
- ✓ August 14, 2013, Gretna Breeze and Bellevue Leader article, Proposed NRD budget keeps taxes flat
- ✓ August 14, 2013, Bellevue Leader article FEMA funds slash city’s cost to demolish riverfront properties
- ✓ August 22, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, Flush with new spending room, NRD putting it to the test
- ✓ August 25, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, NRD questions member’s ties to company
- ✓ August 26, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, Papio-Missouri NRD has invested wisely
- ✓ August 27, 2013, Douglas Co. Post-Gazette article, Spending out of control; priorities misplaced
- ✓ August 30, 2013, Omaha World Herald Public Pulse, NRD provides bang for taxpayers’ buck
- ✓ September 4, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, Millard schools’ tax levy to rise by 2 cents
- ✓ September 4, 2013, Gretna Breeze article, Gretna board member worried about NRD bonds
- ✓ September 5, 2013, Omaha World Herald article, Water to be celebrated at special festival
- ✓ September 5, 2013, Dakota County Star Opinion, Papio NRD spending out of control, priorities misplaced
- ✓ September 10, 2013, Douglas County Post-Gazette article, Financial planning keeps NRD tax levy steady

August, 2013 Information/Education Report

Information

- Continued work on photo archiving
- Updated Web pages and Facebook
- Scheduled NRD Information Campaign spots to be viewed at Aksarben Theater (ten screens) , Marcus 20 Grand (19 screens) and Midtown Crossing (5 screens). One of our videos will be shown before each movie screening.
- Began work on Fall, 2013 Spectrum Newsletter.
- Continued work on interpretive signs for river access sites on Platte and Elkhorn River
- Mailed news releases
- Selected item to be donated to NARD Annual Conference auction
- Assisted field offices in promotion of Scrap Tires Collection event.

Education:

Programming Schedule:

- **8/1-** Hamilton Heights- Hike and Snakes- 24 children (4-7 year olds)
- **8/2-** Hamilton Heights- Hike and Owls- 16 children (8-13 year olds)
- **8/7-8/9-** Girls in the Wild Camp- 22 girls (8-13 year olds)
- **8/26-** Lauritzen Gardens- Gardening Workshop

Meetings:

- Live Well Omaha Kids (LWOK)
- City of Omaha Gardening Workshop
- Bessey Nursery
- NGPC Archery
- MORE Nature
- World O! Water
- CNN Grassroots Leaders Conference Call
- Garden Get- Together
- GPP meeting re: 2014

Planning:

- MORE Nature Meetings & Nature Nights
- NRD Summer Day Camp Confirmation E-mails
- MORE Nature Web Site
- National Envirothon
- Hired Archivist/Scanner (also sent out letters to all applicants/fielded phone calls)
- Advertising Garden Get-Together
- Cultivation Newsletter
- School year Day-Camps

PARKING FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

HOW A COMMUNITY'S PARKING DECISIONS IMPACT MODE CHOICE

7:30 **REGISTRATION & BREAKFAST**
MCC Institute of Culinary Arts

8:30 **WELCOME ADDRESS**
GREG YOUELL Director, Metropolitan Area Planning Agency
BOB STUBBE Director, City of Omaha Public Works

9:00 **MORNING KEYNOTE**
CASEY JONES International Parking Institute

10:15 **PARKING VS. TRANSIT PASS: AN OMAHA CASE STUDY**
CRAIG MOODY Principal, Verdis Group

10:45 **OMAHA PARKING UPDATE**
KEN SMITH Parking Manager, City of Omaha Public Works
RACHEL YOKA Vice President, Strategic Business Planning and Sustainability, TimHaahs

11:45 **LUNCH KEYNOTE**
JEFF SPECK Author of Walkable City

1:30 **DEVELOPMENT PANEL**
MICHAEL ALLEY Principal, Alley • Poyner • Macchietto Architecture
MIKE MOYLAN Principal, Shamrock Development Incorporated

2:45 **REIMAGINING OMAHA'S PUBLIC SPACE**
DAVID NELSON Transportation Associate, Project for Public Spaces

3:30 **CLOSING**
BOB STUBBE Director, City of Omaha Public Works
RECEPTION Sponsor



7.0 CM HAS BEEN
REQUESTED

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Friday & Saturday

September 13th & 14th

Free of Charge



Open to residents of Washington, Burt, Cuming, Dodge, Thurston, and Dakota counties.

Accepting: Paint, Pesticides, Herbicides, Oil, Cleaning Chemicals, Yard Chemicals, Anti-Freeze, Fluorescent Bulbs, Car Batteries
(Household Quantities Only)

Will NOT Accept: tires, electronic equipment, appliances, PCBs, Picric Acid, Science Lab materials, radioactive materials, or biological hazards.

Blair- Friday – Sept. 13th 3 - 6 pm

@ Washington County Recycling Center

(440 S 3rd. from Grant St turn South on 1st St., west on Colfax, enter from Colfax)

PENDER – Saturday –Sept. 14th 9:00-12:00 pm

@ Bowling Alley Parking Lot (415 S. 4th Street)

(from 3rd St. turn west on Logan)

DODGE – Saturday – Sept. 14th 1:30 – 3:30pm

@ Parking Lanes West Of City Auditorium

(from water tower on 2nd St. turn north on Linden and follow signs)

Funded through a grant from the Nebraska Dept. of Environmental Quality

For Info:

Deb Ward — Papio Missouri River NRD

Ph: (402) 374-1920 ext. 101 (or) E-mail: deborah.ward2@ne.nacdnet.net

Sponsors: Nebraska Loess Hills RC&D Council, Papio-Missouri River NRD, and the communities of Blair, Pender, & Dodge



BOND DEBT SERVICE

**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA
FLOOD PROTECTION and WATER QUALITY ENHANCEMENT BONDS, SERIES 2013B
S&P AA- Rated, Non-BQ, Max. Par \$42.6M, 2033 Maturity, 5-yr Call (7/26/18)
Alternative Pricing: added difference in MMD between 7/15/13 and 8/22/13**

			Dated Date 07/26/2013		
			Delivery Date 07/26/2013		
Period Ending	Principal	Coupon	Interest	Debt Service	Annual Debt Service
12/15/2013	620,000	3.000%	763,448.33	1,383,448.33	
06/15/2014			979,338.13	979,338.13	
06/30/2014					2,362,786.46
12/15/2014	485,000	3.000%	979,338.13	1,464,338.13	
06/15/2015			972,063.13	972,063.13	
06/30/2015					2,436,401.26
12/15/2015	540,000	3.980%	972,063.13	1,512,063.13	
06/15/2016			961,317.13	961,317.13	
06/30/2016					2,473,380.26
12/15/2016	680,000	3.930%	961,317.13	1,641,317.13	
06/15/2017			947,955.13	947,955.13	
06/30/2017					2,589,272.26
12/15/2017	790,000	3.970%	947,955.13	1,737,955.13	
06/15/2018			932,273.63	932,273.63	
06/30/2018					2,670,228.76
12/15/2018	905,000	4.070%	932,273.63	1,837,273.63	
06/15/2019			913,856.88	913,856.88	
06/30/2019					2,751,130.51
12/15/2019	1,025,000	** %	913,856.88	1,938,856.88	
06/15/2020			893,820.63	893,820.63	
06/30/2020					2,832,677.51
12/15/2020	1,155,000	3.125%	893,820.63	2,048,820.63	
06/15/2021			875,773.75	875,773.75	
06/30/2021					2,924,594.38
12/15/2021	1,295,000	5.290%	875,773.75	2,170,773.75	
06/15/2022			841,521.00	841,521.00	
06/30/2022					3,012,294.75
12/15/2022	1,455,000	5.270%	841,521.00	2,296,521.00	
06/15/2023			803,181.75	803,181.75	
06/30/2023					3,099,702.75
12/15/2023	1,625,000	5.280%	803,181.75	2,428,181.75	
06/15/2024			760,281.75	760,281.75	
06/30/2024					3,188,463.50
12/15/2024	1,810,000	5.300%	760,281.75	2,570,281.75	
06/15/2025			712,316.75	712,316.75	
06/30/2025					3,282,598.50
12/15/2025	2,005,000	5.330%	712,316.75	2,717,316.75	
06/15/2026			658,883.50	658,883.50	
06/30/2026					3,376,200.25
12/15/2026	2,215,000	5.340%	658,883.50	2,873,883.50	
06/15/2027			599,743.00	599,743.00	
06/30/2027					3,473,626.50
12/15/2027	2,425,000	** %	599,743.00	3,024,743.00	
06/15/2028			544,160.50	544,160.50	
06/30/2028					3,568,903.50
12/15/2028	2,650,000	4.380%	544,160.50	3,194,160.50	
06/15/2029			486,125.50	486,125.50	
06/30/2029					3,680,286.00
12/15/2029	2,870,000	4.380%	486,125.50	3,356,125.50	
06/15/2030			423,272.50	423,272.50	
06/30/2030					3,779,398.00
12/15/2030	3,115,000	4.690%	423,272.50	3,538,272.50	
06/15/2031			350,225.75	350,225.75	
06/30/2031					3,888,498.25
12/15/2031	4,305,000	4.690%	350,225.75	4,655,225.75	
06/15/2032			249,273.50	249,273.50	
06/30/2032					4,904,499.25
12/15/2032	4,605,000	4.690%	249,273.50	4,854,273.50	
06/15/2033			141,286.25	141,286.25	
06/30/2033					4,995,559.75
12/15/2033	6,025,000	4.690%	141,286.25	6,166,286.25	
06/30/2034					6,166,286.25
	42,600,000		28,856,788.65	71,456,788.65	71,456,788.65

BOND PRICING

**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
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Bond Component	Maturity Date	Amount	Rate	Yield	Price	Yield to Maturity	Call Date	Call Price	Premium (-Discount)
Serial Bonds:									
	12/15/2013	620,000	3.000%	0.400%	101.001				6,206.20
	12/15/2014	485,000	3.000%	0.520%	103.420				16,587.00
	12/15/2015	540,000	3.980%	0.880%	107.303				39,436.20
	12/15/2016	680,000	3.930%	1.180%	109.100				61,880.00
	12/15/2017	790,000	3.970%	1.570%	110.132				80,042.80
	12/15/2018	905,000	4.070%	2.020%	109.702 C	2.152%	07/26/2018	100.000	87,803.10
	12/15/2019	525,000	2.690%	2.828%	99.197				-4,215.75
	12/15/2019	500,000	5.190%	2.270%	113.728 C	2.825%	07/26/2018	100.000	68,640.00
	12/15/2020	1,155,000	3.125%	3.260%	99.117				-10,198.65
	12/15/2021	1,295,000	5.290%	2.680%	112.137 C	3.600%	07/26/2018	100.000	157,174.15
	12/15/2022	1,455,000	5.270%	2.920%	110.859 C	3.878%	07/26/2018	100.000	157,998.45
	12/15/2023	1,625,000	5.280%	3.090%	110.074 C	4.080%	07/26/2018	100.000	163,702.50
	12/15/2024	1,810,000	5.300%	3.260%	109.342 C	4.256%	07/26/2018	100.000	169,090.20
	12/15/2025	2,005,000	5.330%	3.440%	108.614 C	4.419%	07/26/2018	100.000	172,710.70
	12/15/2026	2,215,000	5.340%	3.590%	107.944 C	4.541%	07/26/2018	100.000	175,959.60
	12/15/2027	500,000	5.370%	3.790%	107.135 C	4.682%	07/26/2018	100.000	35,675.00
		<u>17,105,000</u>							<u>1,378,491.50</u>
Term Bond due 2029:									
	12/15/2027	1,925,000	4.380%	4.580%	97.708				-44,121.00
	12/15/2028	2,650,000	4.380%	4.580%	97.708				-60,738.00
	12/15/2029	<u>2,870,000</u>	4.380%	4.580%	97.708				<u>-65,780.40</u>
		<u>7,445,000</u>							<u>-170,639.40</u>
Term Bond due 2033:									
	12/15/2030	3,115,000	4.690%	4.890%	97.432				-79,993.20
	12/15/2031	4,305,000	4.690%	4.890%	97.432				-110,552.40
	12/15/2032	4,605,000	4.690%	4.890%	97.432				-118,256.40
	12/15/2033	<u>6,025,000</u>	4.690%	4.890%	97.432				<u>-154,722.00</u>
		<u>18,050,000</u>							<u>-463,524.00</u>
		<u>42,600,000</u>							<u>744,328.10</u>

Dated Date	07/26/2013	
Delivery Date	07/26/2013	
First Coupon	12/15/2013	
Par Amount	42,600,000.00	
Premium	744,328.10	
Production	43,344,328.10	101.747249%
Underwriter's Discount	-468,600.00	-1.100000%
Purchase Price	42,875,728.10	100.647249%
Accrued Interest		
Net Proceeds	42,875,728.10	

BOND SUMMARY STATISTICS

**PAPIO-MISSOURI RIVER NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA
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Dated Date	07/26/2013
Delivery Date	07/26/2013
First Coupon	12/15/2013
Last Maturity	12/15/2033
Arbitrage Yield	4.264786%
True Interest Cost (TIC)	4.647674%
Net Interest Cost (NIC)	4.589764%
All-In TIC	4.662562%
Average Coupon	4.711287%
Average Life (years)	14.378
Duration of Issue (years)	10.253
Par Amount	42,600,000.00
Bond Proceeds	43,344,328.10
Total Interest	28,856,788.65
Net Interest	28,581,060.55
Bond Years from Dated Date	612,503,333.33
Bond Years from Delivery Date	612,503,333.33
Total Debt Service	71,456,788.65
Maximum Annual Debt Service	6,166,286.25
Average Annual Debt Service	3,505,170.17
Underwriter's Fees (per \$1000)	
Average Takedown	
Other Fee	11.000000
Total Underwriter's Discount	11.000000
Bid Price	100.647249

Bond Component	Par Value	Price	Average Coupon	Average Life	PV of 1 bp change
Serial Bonds	17,105,000.00	108.059	5.012%	8.863	7,854.30
Term Bond due 2029	7,445,000.00	97.708	4.380%	15.513	8,412.85
Term Bond due 2033	18,050,000.00	97.432	4.690%	19.136	22,743.00
	42,600,000.00			14.378	39,010.15

	TIC	All-In TIC	Arbitrage Yield
Par Value	42,600,000.00	42,600,000.00	42,600,000.00
+ Accrued Interest			
+ Premium (Discount)	744,328.10	744,328.10	744,328.10
- Underwriter's Discount	-468,600.00	-468,600.00	
- Cost of Issuance Expense		-63,900.00	
- Other Amounts			
Target Value	42,875,728.10	42,811,828.10	43,344,328.10
Target Date	07/26/2013	07/26/2013	07/26/2013
Yield	4.647674%	4.662562%	4.264786%



Dave Heineman
Governor



P.O. Box 94848 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4848
Phone: (402) 471-2244 • gov.heineman@gov.ne.gov

August 26, 2013

Heather Borkowski
Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138

Dear Ms. Borkowski:

Congratulations! I am pleased to inform you that your application for the Governor's Wellness Award has been approved at the Grower level.

The Grower Award recognizes that your organization "grows the seed of wellness" for your employees. By meeting the standards for this award, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District demonstrates leadership in worksite health promotion. Most importantly, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District has provided an opportunity for your employees to live a healthy life and improve the quality of life for Nebraskans.

Your designation is valid for three years beginning 10/16/2013. You may reapply for the Grower Award in three years and I encourage you to keep this certification current.

I would be pleased to present the award to you in person at the Workwell with Nebraska Safety Council banquet on 10/16/2013, or you can receive the award in the mail. Please indicate your preference by emailing Tonya Vyhlydal, TVyhlydal@nesafetycouncil.org or return the enclosed prepaid postcard by August 30, 2013. You will be contacted in the near future as plans for the banquet take shape. We ask you not to issue your own announcement on the award prior to the date of presentation.

I hope Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District will continue to offer wellness services and programs for your employees. I applaud your commitment to a healthy lifestyle and hope to celebrate with you at the Lincoln banquet this fall.

Sincerely,

Dave Heineman
Governor

Updated: August 12, 2013

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 = PFP's Portion Completed

- **Little Papio:** (Cleveland)

- **Big Papio:** (Cleveland)
 - Interlocal Agreement with Papillion & La Vista & SIDs on Fricke Drainage (N)

- **West Branch:** (Cleveland)
 - Land Exchange with Sarpy Co. (96th St.) (P)

- **Western Sarpy Dike:** (Cleveland)
 - Saunders County side ROW agreement and easements (F)
 - NRDs/NE-ARNG Interlocal for Camp Ashland Property (P)

- **Floodway Purchase Program:** (Laster)
 - ⊛ Agreement with MAPA for King Lake Management (W)
 - ⊛ Agreement with MAPA for Sarpy Co. Missouri River Buyouts (N)

- **Trail Projects:** (Bowen)
 - ⊛ Mo Pac (Springfield to Platte River) drainage repair easements (W)
 - ⊛ West Papio Trail Interlocal Agreement with Papillion/La Vista (W)

- **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)
- ✦ Exchange Agreement with Wachter for PJ-15 ROW (N)

- **Papio Watershed Dam Sites:** (Grint/Laster/Bowen)
 - ✦ Interlocal agreement with Douglas County for DS-15A (W)
 - ✦ Zorinsky Basin #1 – Heine/Fitzpatrick property easement agreement and closing (W)
 - ✦ Exchange Agreement with Eurich’s for WP-5 ROW (W)
 - ✦ DS-15A purchase agreements, deeds and easements (W)
 - ✦ Review Stormwater Facilities easement w/SID 292 on WP-5 Property (W)

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

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

- **Rural Water Projects:** (Nelson)
 - ✦ Fort Calhoun Lawsuits (N)

- **Other:**

MONTHLY UPDATE

August 2013



A Partnership meeting was held on July 22, 2013 at 10am at the NRC Building. Minutes are updated regularly on the Partnership's website: www.papiopartnership.org.

Implementation Plan Update

Lyle Christensen, HDR Engineering, Inc., was in attendance to discuss the progress of the Implementation Plan Update.

Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) had volunteered to allow the Partnership the use of the population projection data they are compiling as part of the Heartland 2050 project. This data is also being used by Omaha, Sarpy County, and other agencies for other planning efforts. In order to keep planning efforts consistent throughout the metro area and to keep costs low, this is the best plan.

However, staffing changes at MAPA have put the population projections behind schedule. This could delay the schedule as the Implementation Plan should be completed by the end of 2013. The population data is imperative in determining which project areas may be threatened by development and to determine possible amount of Watershed Fees that might be collected.

HDR will continue to work with MAPA to develop population projections; however, the projections may not be as detailed as originally planned. A draft report is anticipated for September. Based on the draft report, the Partnership will need to look at project priorities and possible funding sources for the next implementation plan.

MS4 Stormwater Management Plan

The City of Omaha has submitted a draft Stormwater Management Plan to Department of Environmental Quality. Omaha's MS4 permit will expire in October. The draft stormwater management plan is modeled from the City of Lincoln's plan and is less prescriptive in permit activities. Omaha has not yet received comments on their draft plan.

The Phase II communities' MS4 permit will expire next year. Their draft stormwater management plan will need to be submitted to NDEQ along with their annual report in April.

The proposed Stormwater Management Plan will focus more on monitoring of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) than stream monitoring as in the past.

Other Items of Interest

World O! Water is scheduled for Saturday September 7th at Chalco Hills Recreation Area. It will last from noon to 4 pm. Jim Kee has flyers available for posting.

Next Meeting:

The next Partnership meeting will be September 26, 2013 at 10 am at the NRC building.



Poll shows most Rural Nebraskans support spending on public services

Most rural Nebraskans support continued or even increased spending on a variety of public services ranging from public broadcasting to roads, education and safety, according to the 2013 Nebraska Rural Poll.

The 18th annual University of Nebraska-Lincoln poll was sent to 6,320 households in Nebraska's 84 non-metropolitan counties in March and April. Results are based on 2,317 responses.

Among the issues this year's poll explored were rural Nebraskans' opinions about spending on various major public services. It found that most rural Nebraskans would like to see no change in the level of spending for the following public services: public safety (police, fire, etc.), 69 percent; hospitals and health care, 64 percent; natural resources, parks and recreation, 63 percent; corrections and rehabilitation, 61 percent; housing and community development, 61 percent; workforce training, 60 percent; public broadcasting services, 59 percent; roads and bridges, 56 percent; and medical assistance to the poor, 53 percent.

The only public service for which a majority of respondents, 51 percent, supported less public spending was unemployment compensation.

Thirty-eight percent of rural Nebraskans supported increased spending on roads and bridges, and 35 percent supported more spending for education. No other public service garnered more than 21 percent support for an increase in public spending.

The poll did not ask Nebraskans to make choices about which public services they would choose to fund over others, noted Eric Thompson, director of UNL's Bureau of Business Research and a member of the Rural Poll team. Still, the poll's findings could be interpreted as belying rural Nebraskans' reputation for being stingy with public funding, he added.

As for the one category for which a majority supported less public spending, unemployment compensation, that could be interpreted as a desire there was less need for it, Thompson said. Another interpretation could be that the issue does not resonate much in Nebraska, as a historically low-unemployment state.

Many of the demographic differences in answers were logical, Thompson said. For example, the 19-29 age group was more likely than those 65 and up to support more spending for education - 47 percent to 21 percent. People with jobs in agriculture were more likely to support more spending on roads and bridges than other demographic groups.

Overall, 94 percent of respondents supported the same level or more spending for roads and bridges, the largest total in the survey. And, indeed, that is now occurring, thanks to legislation passed by the Nebraska Legislature.

Younger respondents also were more likely than older ones to prefer less spending on unemployment compensation - 66 percent compared to 42 percent - and more likely to say no public funds at all should be used for medical assistance to the poor. About 32 percent of those in the 19-29 group felt that way, compared to 12 percent of those 65 and older.

"For the young, healthy and employed, it can be difficult to find support for such public spending. A lifetime of experiences may eventually sway how they feel," said Brad Lubben, UNL public policy specialist.

The poll also asked respondents

to imagine the state is rethinking how to fund certain major public expenditures. Forty-two percent supported funding primary and secondary education with property taxes, one-third supported funding it with sales tax and 27 percent supported using income taxes.

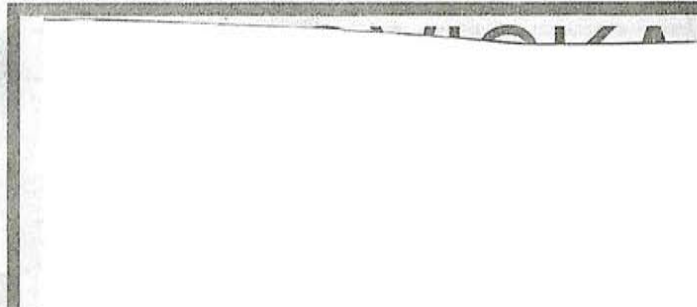
Thirty-five percent said user fees, tuition in this case, should be used to fund higher education, with about 20 percent saying no public funds should be used for higher education.

The funding question addressed major spending categories including education, public safety, roads and bridges, and medical assistance to the poor. While multiple responses were allowed, most respondents checked just one choice for funding sources for each category. The resulting mix of funding sources is reflective of the current mix of funding for public services in Nebraska.

"As the state considers potential tax reform, the funding sources, the spending priorities and the matchup of sources to uses will be a complex equation to solve," Lubben added.

The Rural Poll is the largest annual poll of rural Nebraskans' perceptions on quality of life and policy issues. This year's response rate was about 37 percent. The margin of error is plus or minus two percent. Complete results are available online at <http://ruralpoll.unl.edu>.

The university's Center for Applied Rural Innovation conducts the poll in cooperation with the Nebraska Rural Futures Institute with funding from UNL Extension and the Agricultural Research Division in the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



The Papio-Missouri River NRD proposes major property tax increases

Special Editorial to the Star

As your duly elected Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Director, being fiscally responsible with taxpayer funds is my top priority. While an elected representative should support the funding for necessary services, I believe anything beyond that is a "want" - not a "need" (necessary service). The PMRNRD's purpose is managing the natural resources within the district - not providing lucrative economic benefits to special-interest developers. As an elected official, I will continue to follow Nebraska State Statutes and the PMRNRD policy manual. Furthermore, I will try my very best to ensure that staff and employees diligently adhere to both these statutes and the policy manual.

That being said, this month's hot topic is the merger of the rural water districts. To my consternation, it appears that the proposed merger of the two water systems in Washington County does not follow state statutes or the PMRNRD's policy manual. State statute allows for the formation of a water district only if it is feasible. I have learned that, at the time of initial formation of Washington County Rural Water District No. 2, the PMRNRD Board approved a water system consisting of approximately 20 miles of water lines for 160 actual applications at an estimated cost of about \$1.5 million.

"join me by voicing your opposition to the out-of-control tax increases specified in the proposed budget"

However, the PMRNRD staff built a system with approximately 36 miles of water lines for a cost of about \$2.5 million - without PMRNRD Board approval.

Due to this increased cost, funds from a different water district's account have been systematically siphoned off to cover the expenses of the struggling Washington County Rural Water District No. 2. At the time, PMRNRD staff reports indicated that the Washington County Water District No. 2's system would be viable. However, as we sit here now, the situation has greatly changed.

Today, WCRWD No. 2 needs a bailout. So, in keeping with its recurrent theme of bamboozling the hardworking taxpayers, staff has recommended, and the majority of the PMRNRD Board has approved, a merger. This merger is unconscionable in my opinion. Instead, I believe the best method to properly serve both water districts is for the PMRNRD to loan the funds to WCRWD No. 2. The PMRNRD Board should stand up and be held accountable for their errors and approve such a loan. This type of funding has been approved and utilized by other Natural Resources District Boards throughout

the state. So, why won't the PMRNRD staff and other board members support this type of funding?

On another front, the PMRNRD's imprudent spending to promote minuscule flood control, while providing cushy real estate enhancements for developers, has now caught up with us; and the property tax bill is coming due. In the past, staff and board members supporting dams have wrongly asserted that the cost to build dams or issue bonds to build dams would not cause a property tax increase.

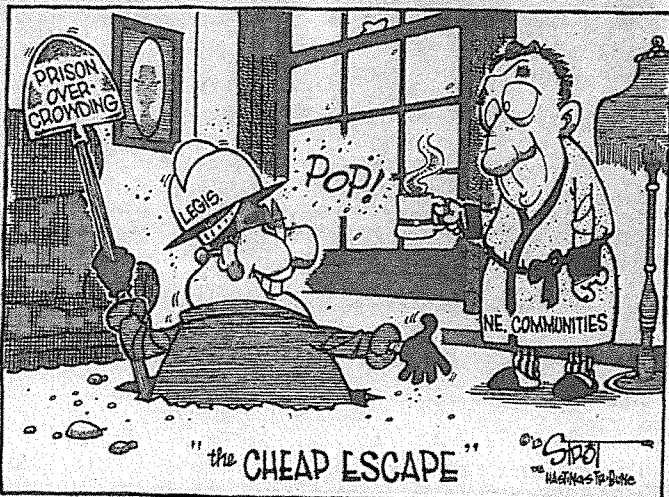
Well folks, the inevitable has happened. At the July, 2013 PMRNRD Board meeting, staff presented the proposed FY 2014 budget. What was brought to the PMRNRD Board for approval, as option No. 1, was a budget that included a 35 percent increase

in property taxes. Landowners/farmers who comprise a vast area of the sub-district I represent need to be concerned with a 35 percent increase in the PMRNRD mill levy plus a potential 20 percent increase in valuations. With this proposal, they can anticipate up to a 55 percent increase in their PMRNRD property tax bill.

Maybe Sub-District 1 taxpayers should start asking themselves about the benefits they are actually receiving for this property tax increase. More radio and television commercials and bike trails?! These are not necessary services in my opinion.

Nonetheless, if you are tired of consistently getting the runaround from some NRD staff and elected officials, be sure to attend the August 8, 2013 PMRNRD Board meeting and join me by voicing your opposition to the out-of-control tax increases specified in the proposed budget.

Scott Japp
Sub-District 1 Director
sjapp@abbnebraska.



Let your voice be heard

Dakota County Commissioners

Dakota City Council

South Sioux City Council

Stephanie Dahl
1805 5th Avenue

Papillion Creek Watershed mentioned:

PUBLISHED FRIDAY, AUGUST 9, 2013 AT 1:00 AM / UPDATED AT 4:09 PM

World-Herald editorial: Seeking balance in use of water

The Legislature's examination of Nebraska's tax system is getting a lot of attention right now. But there's another issue being studied that also is significant for the state's long-term future.

Water.

Nebraska sits atop a deep reservoir of accessible groundwater that could allow residents to delay difficult decisions about water use. But over the years, state lawmakers, local policy-makers and responsible citizens have continued to press for needed action and long-term vision.

After a decade-plus of steps to link the management of groundwater and surface water, attention shifts now toward the best ways to guarantee sustainable water use.

That's a fancy term for using no more water than falls on or flows into Nebraska in an average year. It's a simple principle that State Sen. Tom Carlson of Holdrege compares to personal bank accounts.

He says Nebraska has a sizable account from which irrigators, industry and residents draw, mainly by gift of river flows and the Ogallala Aquifer.

But, as Carlson explains, the state's water users annually withdraw more water from this account than gets replenished by rains and other inflows.

This deficit is a problem. It already has cost taxpayers millions in interstate compact disputes with Kansas. Fighting the deficit has forced cities, towns and residents to drill new wells and to enforce water restrictions on watering crops and city lawns.

Balancing the water checkbook will require more.

"We're trying to get to where we're not consistently running a deficit," Carlson says. "If you're putting in \$12,000 and taking out \$14,000, no matter how big your account is, eventually, you're bankrupt."

Fresh water is likely to grow scarcer as time goes on, and every Midlander needs water, whether for crops or drinking, for jobs or power.

Because of that, all Nebraskans have a stake in the work this year toward a 20-year plan for sustainable water use by a group of 34 people representing rural and urban water interests.

Eventual implementation of that plan will no doubt require at least some state funding to complement the local contributions of property taxpayers through various natural resources and irrigation districts.

This money will help fund a multitude of projects, from new reservoir construction to weed abatement in threatened streams. It will likely help localities enforce water restrictions more strictly.

Seeking better balance between the use of water as an economic tool and the acknowledgment of its limited quantities is a decades-old concern.

Thanks to state law changes and steps at the local level in recent years, more data, rules and the means to enforce them are in place or are being put in place to make the goal of balance achievable.

This has not been easy in places like southwest Nebraska, where water restrictions have forced painful cuts on irrigators.

And no doubt, some Capitol observers rolled their eyes when the Legislature decided to study water again. It has looked at the issue often.

But this panel is asking an important question: “How do we sustain our water supply while allowing agriculture and other industries to grow?”

It aims to hone the state’s role, a mix of regulation, refereeing and money. There almost certainly will be some distance between what the panel would like and what state taxpayers are able to pay.

One recent study estimated the need for state water funding at about \$50 million a year, a number the state budget cannot support without significant cuts elsewhere or significant new fees or taxes.

“Some would be general fund dollars. Some would be other sources,” Carlson said. “We really have to study other sources, what they are.”

People who have examined the needs see projects as varied as repairing old reservoirs or building new ones to hold back water for dry years as insurance against water compact litigation and drought.

They see a need to aid flood control efforts in places like the Papillion Creek watershed.

Some money would likely go toward the monitoring required to enforce irrigation limits. Yet irrigators needn’t fear that senators are out to cut off their water. During the 2012 drought, irrigated agriculture added \$11 billion to Nebraska’s total economic output. Those crops are just as important in Omaha as they are in McCook.

The next step in the state’s water approach, toward sustainability, has to be something the wider Legislature can swallow. Whatever they decide will require all of the state’s water users to be smarter and more efficient with how they use this precious resource.

So all should pay attention to what this latest water task force discusses and weigh in at some of the public meetings being scheduled statewide.

Because money is no more plentiful in Nebraska than water, and when legislators talk about one, they’re talking about both.

Tom Arnott There are a lot of projects on hold or unfunded that may not seem overly important but need funding consideration. It's admirable to not raise taxes, but for the betterment of the water sheds, holding taxation steady for 8 years shouldn't be met with celebration. With all the new construction in the Omaha area, new creeks and run-offs must be built and additional water testing and increased labor by NRD must be considered.

Facebook Posting

8/9/2013

Washington County Pilot Tribune 8-13-13

Fort Calhoun files lawsuits to stop water district merger

Posted: Monday, August 12, 2013 1:05 pm | Updated: 1:07 pm, Mon Aug 12, 2013.

Fort Calhoun files lawsuits to stop water district merger By Teresa Hoffman Washington County Enterprise and Pilot Tribune | **0 comments**

The City of Fort Calhoun isn't giving up its fight to stop the merger of two Washington County rural water districts.

Last week, two lawsuits were filed in Washington County District Court on behalf of the City of Fort Calhoun and Mayor Mitch Robinson against the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District (NRD).

The first lawsuit is alleging the NRD didn't follow proper procedure when it decided to merge Washington County rural water districts 1 and 2, and the second one seeks an injunction to stop the merger from happening.

The City of Fort Calhoun, which is a customer of District 1, is being represented by attorneys Benjamin Belmont and Wm. Oliver Jenkins of Brodkey, Peebles, Belmont and Line of Omaha.

The Fort Calhoun City Council approved the hiring of the firm at its July 15 meeting at \$250 per hour.

The suit comes nearly a month after the NRD board of directors gave final approval of the merger.

Robinson said Monday it's "unfortunate" the issue has gotten to this point, but he said he and the council saw no other options.

"We decided to move forward because of the actions of the NRD," he said. "We offered to sit down with them and find solutions and find alternatives, but they refused to do so."

The merger issue was first brought up in April and a decision has been tabled several times before final approval was given despite objections from the city and several other District 1 customers.

Robinson said, although it was tabled several times, he believes the issue was a "done deal" from day one.

"There were no other options they were going to look at," Robinson said, despite efforts by him, council president David Genoways and Councilwoman Carrie Halford, to discuss their ideas with NRD staff.

The merger was proposed because District 2 was not performing as well financially as the NRD had hoped when it was built in the early 2000s. Initial projections for the number of customers has not become a reality.

Fort Calhoun officials said they are against the merger because they think it is a way for the NRD to pay off debt incurred in District 2, which he said is not fair to the residents of District 1 since they already paid off the debt of their own district. They said that could lead to an increase in water rates.

"We should not have to take on million dollars of debt for that project because it is no benefit to us," Robinson said.

The mayor said he believes the handling of District 2 matters "has been mismanaged from day one."

NRD General Manager John Winkler said, while he couldn't offer specific comments about the lawsuit, he does believe it's unfortunate the district has to spend resources to go through the defense of it.

"We will defend ourselves vigorously," he said.

Winkler said that time can be better spent addressing other issues with Fort Calhoun, such as a second water source that can be used in emergency situations, an issue the city has been looking to address for a couple of years.

"Unfortunately, we have to spend our time and energy responding to this when we should be working toward helping residents with water pressure issues and getting a second connection for emergencies," Winkler said.

Winkler also pointed out that, under a proposal approved by the NRD board last week, rates will not increase in District 1 for the 2014 fiscal year, which began in July.

Rates for District 2 customers, however, will increase 15 percent, effective Oct. 1. District 2 rates would have gone up 98 percent if the merger wasn't approved.

PUBLISHED MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 2012 AT 1:00 AM / UPDATED AT 1:10 AM

No increase for Papio-Missouri River NRD tax levy

By *Kevin Cole*

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

The budget for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District contains no increase in the tax levy for the sixth consecutive year, but holding the line is becoming harder, the general manager warned.

John Winkler said the elimination of state aid and a reduction in federal funding are squeezing the NRD. The board will hold a public hearing and vote on a final budget at its Sept. 13 meeting in Dakota City.

“If the district is to continue to construct projects which protect life and property and enhance the quality of life of our constituents, the district will find it necessary to seek additional revenues, delay critical flood control improvements or eliminate vital infrastructure,” Winkler said.

The proposed budget calls for a property tax levy of .032753 for the 2013 fiscal year. That means that the owner of property valued at \$100,000 would again pay \$32.75 in annual property taxes to support NRD projects.

The budget identifies an estimated \$87.4 million in spending. Of that amount, \$17.2 million in revenue would be generated by property taxes in Sarpy, Douglas, Washington and Dakota Counties plus the eastern 60 percent of Burt and Thurston Counties.

Contact the writer:

402-444-1272, kevin.cole@owh.com



Fight not over

Fort Calhoun files lawsuits to stop water district merger

BY TERESA HOFFMAN
 features@enterprisepub.com

The City of Fort Calhoun isn't giving up its fight to stop the merger of two Washington County rural water districts.

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Mitch Robinson



John Winkler

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SEE FIGHT, 3

FIGHT: Fort Calhoun files lawsuits over merger

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NRD forwards budget with steady tax rate

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Board of Directors heard public comments and then voted to propose a fiscal year 2014 general operating budget that calls for no tax levy increase.

The NRD Board of Directors will hold a public hearing to approve a final budget and set the tax levy at its Sept. 12 board meeting in Dakota City.

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

"Someone would be hard pressed to find another government entity that has accomplished that feat," said NRD General Manager John Winkler in a statement released Friday. "Holding the line on our property tax levy is extremely challenging considering the current stagnation of property tax valuations. Continuing reductions in federal funding to support natural resources management efforts is also putting more pressure on local governments."

The proposed budget calls for a FY 2014 property tax levy of 3.2753 cents per \$100 of valuation. This 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 to reduce the threat of flooding, improve water quality in area lakes and streams, construct recreational trails and carry out programs to cost share with rural landowners on soil and water conservation practices and the creation of wildlife habitat.

The budget calls for an estimated \$17.4 million in revenue from the NRD's property tax levy. Last year the levy provided \$17.2 million. NRD revenue includes the tax levy, bonds, federal and state cost sharing for specific projects and income from Improvement Project Areas. The levy is based on an estimated .75 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.

However, some property owners could see a much different picture.

Although final numbers from Burt County were not available Friday, County Assessor Joni Renshaw said some valuations could increase by as much as 20 percent.

Assuming every other taxing entity keeps the same tax rate, that would mean a 20 percent increase in property taxes.

Four people testified at Thursday night's public hearing. All four said the expense side of the ledger was too high and offered ideas of where cuts could be made. The budget proposal showed \$92.7 million in total spending,

(Continued from Page 1)
 up from \$87.4 this year. Budget figures also showed the NRD has actually spent just under 60 percent of its budget.

Omahan Doug Kagan, who heads the watchdog group Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom, said the NRD's spending was out of control. He said the board needs to acknowledge its indebtedness and, "think in terms of needs, not wants."

Shawn Melotz, president of the Papio Valley Preservation Association, asked the board to reinstate funding for conservation programs, saying over \$1 million is being sought by farmers wanting to use the programs.

The board responded by moving \$200,000 intended for repairs to the trails at the Chalco Hills Recreation Area and putting it back into the conservation program.

Director Patrick Bonnett said increasing conservation work on farms doesn't increase opportunities for public use.

"There are other conservation measures," he said. "Dams do conservation work."

Director Scott Japp, who represents all of the district's property owners in Washington, Burt, Thurston and Dakota counties, said conservation work, such as terracing, saves money for every taxpayer in the counties where conservation practices are used because it helps save money on road maintenance.

"The NRD needs to continue building projects to protect life and property from flooding and enhance the quality of life of our constituents," Winkler said Friday. "Delaying critical flood control improvements or eliminating the maintenance of vital infrastructure, such as dams and levees, is not an option we want

BREEZE

GREYHOUND, Nebraska

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LEADER

BELLEVUE, Nebraska

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Proposed NRD budget keeps taxes flat

By Scott Stewart
Breeze Managing Editor

Taxes are expected to remain flat for the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District.

The NRD Board of Directors proposed a fiscal year 2014 budget that keeps the property tax levy at 3.2753 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. For the owner of a typical \$150,000 house, that translates to \$49.13 in property taxes.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD represents all of Sarpy, Douglas, Washington and Dakota counties and the eastern portions of Burt and Thurston counties.

The district performs flood mitigation, manages water quality, builds recreational trails and works on conservation and wildlife.

Sarpy County makes up

about one-fifth of the district's property valuation base. The budget calls for \$17.4 million in revenue, with total spending of \$92.7 million from taxes, bonds, federal and state cost sharing and income from improvement project areas.

If the board approves the budget, this will be the eighth year that the NRD has held steady or reduced its property tax levy.

"Someone would be hard pressed to find another government entity that has accomplished that feat," NRD General Manager John Winkler said in a press release.

The budget and tax request will be voted on Sept. 12 in a board meeting held in Dakota City.

More information, including a complete copy of the district's budget, is available at papionrd.org.



FEMA funds slash city's cost to demolish riverfront properties

By Eugene Curtin
Leader Staff Writer

The final figures are in and the cost to Bellevue of removing the remaining residences along the Missouri River will be much less than forecast.

Marlin Petermann, assistant general manager of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, said grant funds totaling \$1.7 million have been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

That figure represents 75 percent of the total project cost of \$2.3 million, leaving \$565,320 to be split between the City of Bellevue, Sarpy County and the NRD.

Additional grants cut that figure by more than half, reducing Bellevue's contribution to \$90,887, down from the \$250,000 the city was initially expected to pay.

Petermann said the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency has been contracted to appraise the value of the 42 homes remaining in the riverfront communities of Iske Place and Elbow Bend and to negotiate their sale.

He said it could be another 18 months before the flood-racked homes are finally demolished and removed and the riverfront restored to a pristine condition.

The financial good news for Bellevue came courtesy of two grants, one from the Nebraska Environmental Trust and another from Back to the Riverfront, Inc.

The Nebraska Environmental Trust grant reduced the remaining \$565,320 by half, to \$282,660, and the Back to the Riverfront grant knocked \$10,000 off that.

When all the gifts had been applied, just \$272,660 remained to be covered by the three local agencies.

The payments will end a long battle to remove hundreds of residents from 163 houses in three communities that had grown up along the Missouri River south of the Bellevue city limits. The residents for years fought the effort but in 2011 agreed to settle after enduring three major floods in 19 years.

A 1993 buyout closed down the Holub's Place community when residents agreed to sell all 74 riverfront properties to the NRD. But only 27 of 44 properties in Elbow Bend were sold, and none of the 45 residences in Iske Place.

That buyout cost just over \$5 million.

Since 1993, the number of residents occupying riverfront homes has dwindled even further, with about 30 homes remaining in Iske Place and about 12 in Elbow Bend.

OWH
8-22-13

Flush with new spending room, NRD putting it to the test

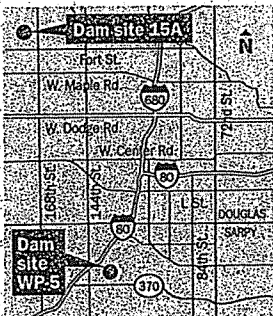


MATT MILLER/THE WORLD-HERALD

A dam near Werner Park in Sarpy County is one of six projects that the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District has issued bonds for, racking up \$71.5 million in debt in three years, after receiving bonding authority from the Legislature. Critics worry that the expenses have gotten out of hand, though officials say the projects are needed.

Over 4 years, projects use up almost all of its authorized debt

BY CODY WINCHESTER • WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER



THE WORLD-HERALD

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District has a new credit card, and the local agency has wasted no time using it.

Just four years after the Legislature gave the district bonding authority, the agency is close to maxing out its ability to go into debt.

In three years, the district

has issued \$71.5 million in bonds for six projects, including two major dam sites: one under construction near Werner Park in Sarpy County and another at 168th and Fort Streets.

Since receiving bonding authority, its annual budget has more than doubled thanks to new debt, even as the district's full property tax levy has

dropped.

The growing debt worries some, including board member David Klug of Gretna.

Using so much bonding authority in such a short time, he said, "paints us in a corner." Soon, taxpayers could face the prospect of higher taxes, reduced services or both, he said.

See Dams: Page 2

"It's like we've got Daddy's credit card,
and we're going to max it out and deal with the consequences later."

David Klug, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board member

Over

Dams: NRD says 6 projects, at \$71.5 million, are needed

Continued from Page 1

"It's like we've got Daddy's credit card," he said, "and we're going to max it out and deal with the consequences later."

District officials have argued that changes in the floodplain are driving the need for these dams: As the metro area develops, paving over ground that would absorb stormwater, the risk of a catastrophic flood is increased. The district is running a marketing campaign hammering on the theme, raising the specter of past floods: "It could happen again."

In 2006, the NRD approved a plan that called for as many as 29 dams costing \$282 million to minimize that flooding risk. Then in 2009, the district got legislative approval for its bonding authority; it is able to use 1 cent of its property tax levy to raise revenue to pay off bonds.

Based on its current debt and property values in the six-county district, NRD officials figure they could take out only about \$10 million more in bonds.

After that, if the district wanted to take on more debt, it would have to ask voters to

approve using more of its taxing authority for bonds.

Had the district not gone to the Legislature for bonding authority, General Manager John Winkler said, project costs would skyrocket because of inflation and competition with developers for land.

If the district had to save up the money on the front end, he said, "you're looking at, what, 15 to 16 years before you could even start construction?"

Critics, however, question whether the dam sites are even necessary.

Although 11 cities and counties joined the NRD in a regional watershed pact, Douglas County pulled out around the same time the district started issuing bonds. It opted instead to develop its own stormwater plan with neighboring Washington County, where residents had fiercely opposed dams that would have flooded dozens of farms.

The bonding legislation gave each county in the district final say over any reservoir project that falls within its exclusive zoning jurisdiction. So far, only Sarpy County has had that

chance with the dam site near Werner Park.

Shawn Melotz, a farmer, accountant and president of the Papio Valley Preservation Association, a group that formed to oppose the dams, said going this deep into debt "burdens taxpayers for generations."

"These expenses must be addressed and controlled," she told the district's board.

To pay off the bonds, the district is using part of its tax levy that previously would have been set aside in a sinking fund.

The new arrangement gives the district flexibility to reduce property taxes or keep them the same each year, Winkler said. He's proud that the district has cut its overall tax levy by 3 percent in recent years.

"You'd be hard-pressed to find another government entity with that track record," he said.

And he noted that the district has no intention of building every project in the original watershed plan.

For instance, although the big dams upstream in Washington County would provide a lot of flood control downstream,

Winkler said, "we're never going to build those. Ever. It's just a political thing now."

Winkler said debt financing will slow down as the district awaits the results of an HDR Inc. study of the watershed plan. Among other things, HDR will look at how — and whether — to finance the dozen other reservoirs planned for the metro area.

"Some of those might just fall off the list," Winkler said.

Dam Site 15A at Fort and 168th Streets is the only new bond issue in the district's 2014 budget, and at \$42 million, it's the largest yet.

The total cost to pay outstanding bond debt this year will be \$4.58 million, according to a \$92.7 million budget the board has recommended approving.

That's 6 percent larger than the 2013 budget — an increase driven by bond payments — but it keeps the overall tax levy the same.

The board will meet Sept. 12 in Dakota City to approve the final budget and set the tax levy.

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NRD questions member's ties to company

Japp Bros. Grading, co-owned by Scott Japp's brother, has profited from a board program.

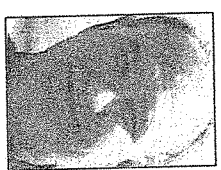
By CODY WINCHESTER
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Some members of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board have raised questions about a colleague's association with a grading company that has received \$2.1 million

ONLY IN THE WORLD-HERALD

from a district-funded conservation program.
As the NRD wrangled over its 2014 budget, a few board members tried unsuccessfully to cut funding for the conservation assistance program, which helps farmers pay for terraces and other conservation projects.
Since 2003, Japp Bros. Grading has received \$2.1 million for terrace work under the program, second highest

among the participating contractors, according to NRD data.
The company is co-owned by Matt Japp, the brother of NRD board member Scott Japp.



Scott Japp

But Scott Japp, who represents Washington County and parts of Burt, Thurston and Dakota Counties, said he saw the attempt to reduce the program's budget as a polit-

ical message.

He said he sees no conflict because he has never owned shares in the company and would recuse himself from any vote involving the company. In addition, his brother holds a minority share, and he pointed out that farmers — not the agencies that fund the program — select the contractor.
The farmers can apply to the NRD for funding.

"I (do) part-time work for numerous construction companies. Numerous
See NRD: Page 2

NRD: Board member says he doesn't benefit from contracts

Continued from Page 1

construction companies benefit from different programs of the NRD," Scott Japp said. "However, I have never worked for a construction company on their particular project that has benefited from the NRD. I stay away from that."

Matt Japp is the registered agent for Japp Bros. Grading, but the company's majority shareholder is Brenda Wolf, Matt Japp's girlfriend and business partner. The two share an address near Kennard, Neb.

The Japp brother who makes the company name plural is Lonnny Japp, said Wolf, whose shares she bought out in 2007.

Wolf said Scott Japp's role in the business doesn't amount to much.
"He runs a dozer," she said.

"Part time."

For years the two-term NRD board member has quarreled with district staff and other board members, who censured him earlier this year for what they called a pattern of rude, abusive and alienating behavior.
Board treasurer John Conley, who wanted to cut the conservation program's funding by one-quarter, said his move was purely a fiscal consideration.

But Conley also mentioned that Scott Japp collects a paycheck from Japp Bros.
At a board meeting in April, Conley flagged a Japp Bros. bid and asked Scott Japp to "explain your association, if any, with that bid."

Scott Japp's reply, according to an audio recording of the meeting: "Nothing to do with it.

Common last name."

He later told a reporter he meant he didn't have anything to do with the bid, which was submitted without his knowledge.
District officials also have raised questions about a request he made in 2011 for the names, sign-up dates and contract amounts for farmers who participate in the conservation assistance program.

Scott Japp said he wasn't trolling for a list of potential customers for Japp Bros, but rather was trying to ensure that the first-come, first-served program was being administered correctly and that no one was jumping the line.

The NRD denied his request for information.
Most of the conservation program work involves install-

ing terraces, which are earthen structures that reduce farmland erosion and runoff. This provides flood control and improves downstream water quality — more so than the big metro-area dam projects favored by members of the regional watershed pact, Scott Japp said.

A typical terracing project costs \$30,000 to \$50,000, and the district's cost-share is 40 percent to 75 percent, depending on whether the federal government chips in, NRD General Manager John Winkler said.

This year, farmers in the district already have submitted applications for about \$1.3 million worth of terrace work, a figure that typically rises each fall, Scott Japp said.

Contact the writer:
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Papio-Missouri NRD has invested wisely

I was an elected official with the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District board of directors from 2008 to 2012. Throughout those years, most of the time, my vote went toward the approval of many of the projects listed in an Aug. 22 World Herald article.

Our country was in the throes of the Great Recession. All of us had to do our part to get the economy moving in the right direction. Jobs were created for the projects themselves and the immediate adjacent areas. Businesses were borrowing, and banks were lending.

Economic development for the Omaha metropolitan area was very important. Not to mention, we were being progressive on flood protection and the safety and well-being of the citizens.

The tax base has grown and will continue to grow in the areas of the new projects; that repayment for the life of the bond will be solid.

I am proud to say that I did my small part in sustaining and enhancing economic growth while providing flood protection to the people of eastern Nebraska during my tenure on the NRD board.

Larry Bradley, Omaha

OJH
8-26-13

Spending out of control; priorities misplaced

Concerned taxpayers need not focus on Washington, D.C., to witness wasteful spending and fiscal mismanagement. They can get an even better view of it here in Nebraska via the Papio NRD Board's decision to, once again, throw them under the bus – something that this director finds absolutely appalling.

At the August Papio NRD Board meeting, a majority of the Board inconceivably voted to approve yet another six-percent budget increase. Since 2009, when the Papio NRD was granted authority to issue bonds, budget spending has increased by a whopping 230 percent, and taxes have increased by nine percent.

Due to the massive amount of borrowing, we currently spend 30 percent of our tax revenue to service bond debt. Now, in its infinite wisdom, a majority of the Board has voted to issue an additional \$72 million in taxpayer-funded bonds, with the thought that taxpayers won't recognize the act for what it truly is – a huge tax increase. This type of cheap chicanery may fly in Washington, D.C., but I guarantee you it is something that most hard-working Nebraskans will not tacitly accept or, in the matter of future elections, forget.

That being the case, the issuance of bonds is just another delay in paying the bills and deferring expenses onto the next generation. The result of paying with bonds – versus paying-as-you-go (PAYGO) – invariably causes project postponements and cost overruns. This is because funds that could be available for shovel-ready projects must now be spent on interest payments and other fees.

As an example, the NRD Board proposed cutting the funding for conservation programs by 25 percent from last year's budget. This is on top of the 60-percent reduction that conservation programs have already taken since 2008.

Overall, the result of issuing bonds has reduced funding for one of the

Papio-Missouri River NRD Update

by Scott Japp, District 1



NRD's seminal missions to less than one percent of the total budget. In this regard, rural constituents should find a comment made by Director Patrick Bonnett to be especially disturbing. Mr. Bonnett apparently despises the NRD's written mission so much that he went out of his way to call for the full-scale termination of the conservation program. And, as hard as it might be to believe, he even had the support of other Board members on this issue.

Another topic that should concern rural constituents is the situation regarding the Papio Creek Dam Plan. Since the implementation of the Papio Creek Dam Plan, tax valuations have increased by six percent in the partnership area and by 46 percent in the rural counties.

By comparison, last year's changes in real property value for Douglas and Sarpy Counties were among the lowest percentage increases in the state. Rural taxpayers should be livid that an NRD board, which is predominantly controlled by Omaha, would vote to increase the burden on them for the costs of parks and recreation, while developers and other special interests ride off into the proverbial sunset without having to pay so much as a wooden nickel. Where is the accountability? If urban residents experienced a 25-percent annual increase in their share of NRD property taxes, it would be an outrage. Are Curt Frost and I the only directors on the Board who care about such matters?

NRD Board members are elected to manage the natural resources of

the entire area. Yet, this present Board is unfairly utilizing the increased revenue from the rural area to support economic development projects explicitly designated for the Omaha metropolitan area. Rural constituents also have needs that should not be ignored. However, this is what inexorably happens when all of the NRD Board's representation comes from the Omaha metropolitan area.

Writing as a rural resident myself, why do we need this NRD district if only one percent of the budget is allocated for conservation and ground water management programs? The cities in the area already have economic, planning, and parks and recreation departments.

Finally, the shameful decisions made last month by a majority of the Papio NRD Board have resulted in more legal action. To this end, the City of Fort Calhoun has filed multiple lawsuits opposing the merger of Washington County Water District #1 and Washington County Water District #2. This is just another example of how the urban representatives on the NRD Board have exerted their substantial authority, thereby pitting rural residents against one another in an effort to crown veritable winners and losers in an area urban Board members have little knowledge of and consider as an afterthought to their own special-interest agendas.

Scott Japp,

Papio NRD Director #1
sjapp@abbnebraska.com

8-30-2013 Omaha World Herald Public Pulse

NRD provides bang for taxpayers' buck

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is doing it right.

This government entity has reduced its tax levy by 3 percent over eight years and still provides flood control, wildlife habitat and free public recreation opportunities while reducing soil erosion, all for an average cost of \$32.75 a year for the owner of a \$100,000 home. As a taxpayer, I could only hope other local, state and federal governments could do the same.

Some of our cities and counties are raising their tax rates higher this year alone than the NRD can even tax. No question, the best value in government anywhere is the NRD.

George Nielsen, Omaha

Millard schools' tax levy to rise by 2 cents

By [Joe Dejka](#) / *World-Herald staff writer*

Property owners in Millard Public Schools will pay higher taxes next year as payback starts on a bond issue laden with new security projects.

The total school district tax levy will rise from \$1.21 to \$1.23 per \$100 of property valuation under the 2013-14 budget approved unanimously by school board members Tuesday night.

The extra 2 cents were applied to the bond levy in Nebraska's third-largest district.

Voters last May approved a \$79.9 million bond issue, more than a third of which will pay for improved security districtwide.

The bond issue will also pay for additional classrooms and to replace what district officials say are deteriorating and failing infrastructure, including mechanical, electrical and lighting systems, roofing, paving and general maintenance.

Board member Mike Kennedy said the budget reflects the board's commitment to manage tax money wisely and prioritize goals.

"I think the taxpayers will be happy we kept true to our promise," he said.

He said every local government faces the challenge of keeping up with expenses in the face of slow-growing property values.

Property valuations in the Learning Community, as well as in the district, showed only meager gains last year, said Ken Fossen, the district's chief financial officer.

The general fund budget, which pays teacher salaries and operating expenses, will be \$213.7 million next year, up about 2.7 percent.

The Millard budget reflects the 95-cent common general fund levy of the Learning Community, which forms the property tax base for each of the 11 member districts.

Construction projects authorized under the bond referendum have already started in Millard, with front-door security on the fast track, officials said.

New buzz-in entrances are scheduled to be installed at elementary schools by late October, with middle and high school entrances completed by December, officials said.

Gretna board member worried about NRD bonds

World-Herald News Service

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District is close to maxing out its ability to go into debt just four years after the Nebraska Legislature gave it bonding authority.

The growing debt worries board member David Klug of Gretna. Using so much bonding authority in such a short time, he said, "paints us in a corner."

In three years, the district has issued \$71.5 million in bonds for six projects, including a major dam site under construction near Werner Park in Papillion. The district's annual budget has more than doubled, even as the district's property tax levy has dropped.

Soon, taxpayers could face the prospect of higher taxes, reduced services or both, he said.

"It's like we've got Daddy's credit card," Klug said, "and we're going to max it out and deal with the consequences later."

District officials have argued that changes in the floodplain are driving the need for these dams. As the metropolitan area develops, paving over ground that would absorb storm water, the risk of a catastrophic flood is increased.

In 2006, the NRD approved a plan that called for as many as 29 dams costing \$282 million to minimize the flooding risk. Then in 2009, the district got legislative approval to levy 1 cent per \$100 of assessed valuation to raise revenues to pay off bonds.

Had the district not gone to the Legislature for bonding authority, General Manager John Winkler said, project costs would skyrocket because of inflation and competition with developers for land.

Omaha W-H 9-5-2013

Water to be celebrated at special festival

The World O! Water Festival will run from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District's Wehrspann Lake, 8901 S. 154th St. The event is free and fun for families.

The annual event aims to educate the public about water conservation, quality and recreation. Some of the activities will be science experiments, games and canoeing.

Opinion

Papio NRD spending out of control, priorities misplaced

Concerned taxpayers need not focus on Washington, D.C. to witness wasteful spending and fiscal mismanagement. They can get an even better view of it here in Nebraska via the Papio NRD Board's decision to, once again, throw them under the bus - something that this Director finds absolutely appalling.

At the August Papio NRD board meeting, a majority of the board inconceivably voted to approve yet another six percent budget increase. Since 2009, when the Papio NRD was granted authority to issue bonds, budget spending has increased by a whopping 230 percent, and taxes have increased by nine percent.

Due to the massive amount of borrowing, we currently spend 30 percent of our tax revenue to service bond debt. Now, in its infinite wisdom, a majority of the board has voted to issue an additional \$72 million in taxpayer-funded bonds, with

the thought that taxpayers won't recognize the act for what it truly is - a huge tax increase. This type of cheap chicanery may fly in Washington, D.C., but I guarantee you it is something that most hard-

working Nebraskans will not tacitly accept or, in the matter of future elections, forget.

That being the case, the issuance of bonds is just another delay in paying the bills and deferring expenses onto the next generation. The result of paying with bonds

Special Editorial to the Star

- versus paying-as-you-go (PAYGO) - invariably causes project postponements and cost overruns. This is because funds that could be available for shovel-ready projects must now be spent on interest payments and other fees.

As an example, the NRD board proposed cutting the funding for conservation programs by 25 percent from last year's budget. This is on top of the 60 percent reduction that conservation programs have already taken since 2008.

Overall, the result of issuing bonds has reduced funding for one of the NRD's seminal missions to less than one percent of the total budget. In this regard, rural constituents should find a

comment made by Director Patrick Bonnett to be especially disturbing. Mr. Bonnett apparently despises the NRD's written mission so much that he went out of his way to call for the full-scale termination of

the conservation program. And, as hard as it might be to believe, he even had the support of other board members on this issue.

Another topic that should concern rural constituents is the situation regarding the Papio Creek Dam Plan. Since the implementation of the

Papio Creek Dam Plan, tax valuations have increased by six percent in the partnership area and by 46 percent in the

rural counties. By comparison, last year's changes in real property value for Douglas and Sarpy Counties were among the lowest percentage increases in the state.

Rural taxpayers should be livid that an NRD board, which is predominantly controlled by Omaha, would vote to increase the burden on them for the costs of parks and recreation, while developers and other special interests ride off into the proverbial sunset without having to pay so much as a wooden nickel. Where is the accountability? If urban residents experienced a 25 percent annual increase in their share of NRD property taxes, it would be an outrage. Are Curt Frost and I the only directors on the board who care about such matters?

NRD board members are elected to manage the natural resources of the entire area. Yet, this present board is unfairly utilizing the increased revenue from the rural area to support economic development projects explic-

itly designated for the Omaha metropolitan area. Rural constituents also have needs that should not be ignored.

However, this is what inexorably happens when all of the NRD board's representation comes from the Omaha metropolitan area. Writing as a rural resident myself, why do we need this NRD district

"Now, in its infinite wisdom, a majority of the board has voted to issue an additional \$72 million in taxpayer-funded bonds, with the thought that taxpayers won't recognize the act for what it truly is - a huge tax increase"

if only one percent of the budget is allocated for conservation and ground water management programs? The cities in the area already have economic, planning, and parks and recreation departments.

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a majority of the Papio NRD board have resulted in more legal action. To this end, the City of Fort Calhoun has filed multiple lawsuits opposing the merger of Washington County Water District No. 1 and Washington County Water District No. 2. This is just another example of how the urban representatives on the NRD board have exerted their substantial authority, thereby pitting rural residents against one another in an effort to crown veritable winners and losers in an area urban board members have little knowledge of and consider as an afterthought to their own special-interest agendas.

Scott Japp
Papio NRD Director #1
sjapp@abbnebraska.com

Joe Heller
2025-2026 MRNRD

Financial planning keeps NRD tax levy steady

As a member of the Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District Board of Directors, I am extremely proud of the conservative approach being taken by the NRD Board in keeping your property tax levy the same or lower for eight consecutive years. A lot of misinformation about the NRD and its budget is being spread by some whose goal is to disrupt our operations and prevent us from serving our constituents. This is a sad and spiteful approach. Despite this misguided and often untruthful effort, the NRD will continue to pursue a wide variety of effective solutions to meet natural resources problems in our six-county area and to save lives and protect property.

Have you heard that the NRD is raising taxes nine percent? That's nonsense, and here are the facts. At our August Board of Directors meeting, the Board heard public comments and then voted to propose a fiscal year 2014 general operating budget that once again calls for no tax levy increase.

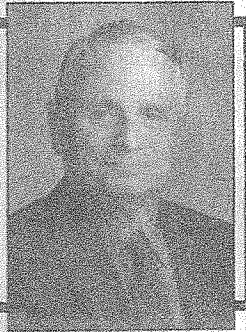
Have you heard the NRD Board has voted this year to issue an "additional \$72 million" of bonds and the result of paying with bonds invariably causes project postponement and cost overruns? Again, total nonsense, and here are the facts. The total amount of all bonds issued since 2009 is \$71.5 million. By issuing bonds, the project funding is immediately available. One method employed by the NRD to keep our local property tax levy steady is for the District to use its bonding authority to build several large capital improvements and other critically needed flood control projects while the current economy provides for the lowest interest rates in history on bonded loans, favorable inflation and unusually low bids from construction companies in need of work in a slow economy.

A prime example being the NRD cost sharing with the Village of Waterloo on the reconstruction of its levee system, which was completed at approximately 50 percent of the original engineering estimate. Common sense dictates that if the District were to ignore this positive financial environment, project costs would skyrocket during the next 15 to 20 years due to inflation, higher interest rates and increased costs for property.

It would certainly be unfortunate to use land that is required for life-saving flood control structures for housing projects - further increasing the

Papio-Missouri River NRD Update

by Rich Tesar, District 5



stormwater runoff that leads to devastating floods.

Now is the time to act. To pay off the bonds, the District is using a portion of its tax levy that previously had been held in a sinking fund (savings account) designated for flood control projects. This is sound financial management, proactive thinking and strategic planning.

Have you heard the NRD ignores its rural counties and agricultural interest of the District? Once again, preposterous, and here are the facts. Even though the NRD tax levy amounts to less than two percent of your total property tax bill and the vast majority, 95 percent, of the District's property tax funding comes from urban areas of Douglas and Sarpy Counties, we remain committed to offering many programs and projects designed for rural interests. We remain committed to sharing the costs of soil and water conservation practices, tree planting, rural wildlife habitat, stream bank stabilization, drainage improvements, and groundwater quality and quantity.

Figures show that the District spends five to seven times more money in rural areas than it receives from property taxes in those areas. The fact is while a reduction in one rural program was proposed, but failed to pass, cuts were a reality for a few urban programs, which were drastically reduced in this budget in order to fully fund other project priorities. The simple truth is the rural areas exponentially benefit from being part of the urban tax base.

The NRD is promoting a plan to enrich developers? Once again, this is absolutely false. The locations chosen for our flood control reservoirs were in no way determined by future private development planning. These locations were determined years ago based on flood control needs and priorities.

The NRD is not working alone in our quest to protect lives and property

and to protect our vital natural resources and environment. We are working hand-in-hand with many other government entities that are also concerned about the likelihood of flooding. The NRD is not only supported in our efforts by The Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership, a consortium of governments in Douglas and Sarpy Counties that have agreed to work together for common resource management, but also entities like Dakota City, Dakota County, South Sioux City, City of Blair and many others.

Finally, a very disturbing issue, and what should be a big concern to taxpayers, is that the same member of our Board of Directors, who claims he is "protecting" the taxpayer is, in fact, a part-time employee of a family-owned land grading business realizing considerable financial benefits from their work on projects cost-shared by the NRD.

Also, NRD General Manager John Winkler has estimated that the cost of this director's requests for information are now in excess of \$200,000 since he was first elected about five years ago. These are unnecessary costs incurred by incessant demands on staff and defamatory accusations of wrongdoing to the Nebraska Attorney General and State Auditor's offices, which have been proven baseless. This shameful situation still exists after numerous public reprimands and a resolution of censure by the full Natural Resources District Board of Directors.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD remains firm in its resolve to protect lives and property and to continue to protect our natural resources for generations to come. I thank you for your support.

Rich Tesar
P-MRNRD Board Member
Sub-District 5