

SPRINKLES & SPLASHES

VOLUME 16, ISSUE 3 :: SUMMER 2006

The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Middle Republican Natural Resources District

District Students convene at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada, for Prestigious Competition

Wauneta – Palisade High School students represented Nebraska at the 2006 Canon Envirothon held at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Canada.

More than 250 teenagers from 44 U.S. states and eight Canadian provinces attended the 2006 Canon Envirothon, North America's largest high school environmental education competition. Students competed for \$75,000 in college scholarships and other prizes.

Each team's knowledge was tested under the supervision of foresters, soil scientists, wildlife specialists and other natural resource professionals. Teamwork, problem solving and presentation skills were evaluated as each team offered a panel of judges an oral presentation containing recommendations for solving the specific challenge that is presented during the competition.

The Wauneta – Palisade team did an outstanding job on their Oral

presentation, ranking 7th out of 52 teams. Overall, they finished in the top 20 teams.

The Canon Envirothon is the culmination of a series of competitions that began during the past school year and involved more than 500,000 teenagers throughout North America. In written tests and oral presentations, five-member teams from schools and organizations compete for the distinction of representing their state or province at the Canon Envirothon. The Wauneta-Palisade team qualified by winning the Nebraska State Envirothon held May 6, 2006 in Hastings Nebraska. The Nebraska Envirothon is sponsored by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts and Nebraska's Natural Resources Districts.

This is the 10th year that Canon U.S.A. has been a sponsor of this annual competition. Canon works to protect the environment through the award-winning Canon Clean Earth Campaign that



THE TEAM INCLUDES, FROM LEFT, BRENNAN KEISER (16), LUKE WRIGHT (17), STACEE WRIGHT (16), KATIE ERICKSON (16), & JESSE SKELTON (16), TEAM ADVISOR TERESA HAYES.

encompasses the development of energy-efficient office products, equipment remanufacturing and materials reuse, the protection of endangered species and the encouragement of environmental education through the company's corporate social responsibility efforts and employee volunteerism. For more information: www.usa.canon.com/environment.

Congratulations to the Wauneta Palisade Nebraska Envirothon Team!! Great Job!

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From Dan's Desk

Year two of our first three-year allocation is complete. Pumping levels exceeded those of 2005, with many producers indicating they pumped almost twice as much water in the 2006 crop year. The average usage in 2005 was 9 inches per acre. Nebraska has been overusing their allocation with the compact and continues to use more water than its share. What is the impact from this situation? It is difficult to say. Kansas may well go back to the courts and demand that Nebraska comply with the settlement. They may also recognize that Nebraska has tried to comply and do nothing. I imagine their action will be somewhere between these two extremes. The settlement requires arbitration between the states before anyone goes back to the courts. We should know Kansas' intended course of action by May of 2007. At the recent Republican River Compact Administration meeting in Kansas they indicated that they recognized Nebraska efforts to comply but that they were still being shorted on water. I also expect the state of Nebraska to make some effort this winter to get the NRDs to reduce pumping or acres. The Middle Republican NRD has indicated a commitment to retain our base allocation of 39 inches over three years to give our producers the opportunity to learn to irrigate with less water. Discussion will start in the summer of 2007 about

the new allocation for 2008 and beyond. I'm sure we will discuss whether allocations can be lowered but no decision or action has been taken that would change the remaining allocation for 2007.

What has been done and what is being done to try to achieve compliance? Nebraska purchased surface water from Nebraska Bostwick and Frenchman Valley Irrigation Districts and Riverside Irrigation Company in the 2006 crop year. The Middle Republican NRD provided funding for the purchase of water from Riverside.

Incentive programs to retire irrigated acres are ongoing. Nearly 9,000 acres have been enrolled in the CREP program in the MRNRD. This is a temporary retirement program that allows irrigators to enroll their acres for ten or fifteen years. Enrollment is continuous and there has been a steady flow of applications although they have slowed from last year. Producers should be aware that there is a remote possibility that this program could be closed when the new farm bill is adopted. Any producer that has given serious thought to enrolling in CREP may want to make sure they take that action before the new farm bill comes into play for 2008. Two different EQIP programs have been used in the basin. The first one in

2005 idled almost 10,000 acres for four years. The most recent provided for the permanent retirement of irrigated acres.

Funding was limited to 2,640 acres basin-wide. Nearly 1,200 of those acres were enrolled in the MRNRD. In this program a conservation easement will be filed to permanently retire

"Kansas may well go back to the courts and demand that Nebraska comply with the settlement. They may also recognize that Nebraska has tried to comply and do nothing."

irrigated acres for a payment of \$675 per acre over three years. Federal, state and district funds were used to support this program. The recent budget approved by the board of directors provided for \$110,000 of district funds to be used in this program. We hope to be able to develop similar programs in the near future.

These have been trying times. The drought continues and the legislature has been reluctant to provide funding for additional programs that would reduce irrigated acres. Election year rhetoric makes it difficult to determine what positions our state leaders are actually promoting. This district will continue to work with your best interests in mind. Please

remember that some acres or some uses are going to have to be reduced. We will try to keep those changes to a minimum. Funding is an important part of these considerations and we will work to keep the major portion of that funding at the state level. We raised taxes this year to support our commitment

to existing programs and will have some funds available to match programs in the future. We continue to look for the best programs of the limited choices that exist. We

will also try to develop new programs that meet the needs and capabilities of the producer, the NRD and the State.

We have made some changes in our rules and regulations that I consider administrative. A new definition of replacement well has been adopted that reflects a change in the statutes and several changes relating to the metering program were made. We also made a change in our industrial allocation that allows the board more opportunity for consideration when a new request is made. No changes were made to our allocations and no changes were made to the number of certified acres. They remain the same as they have been for the last two years.

-Dan Smith, General Manager

District Headlines

Don't Forget to Vote!!

The Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors has six seats up for re-election in 2006. Current directors Don Roberts and Dennis Hoyt did not file for election.

Those filing and their hometowns are:

- Jim Roberts, McCook
- Duane Dodson, Maywood**
- Mike Peters, McCook**
- Kevin Fornoff, Hayes Center**
- Josh Friesen, Wallace
- Dan Nelson, Moorefield
- Benjie Loomis, Maywood
- Marty Schurr, Maywood
- Brad Randel, Indianola
- William Barger, Culbertson
- Bradford Hock, Culbertson

**Incumbents

Make sure to cast your vote on November 2!

NRD Receives Funding from NRCS for Conservation Innovation Project

The Middle Republican NRD, in cooperation with the Upper Republican NRD, Southwest Public Power District and McCook Public Power District, received \$19,100 in funding from the USDA NRCS. The grant will assist in a pilot program to retrofit 24 existing meters on electric wells to send the meter pulse over power lines. The PPDs will collect these pulses daily and send data to the MRNRD. With this new system, usage reports will be available to Project Collaborators approximately one day after the meter is read. The pilot project will include 24 active meters, which will be read daily. The project funds the purchase and installation of equipment to remotely read selected customer meters within Southwest and McCook Public Power District for water usage accounting purposes. As part of the project, a web tool will be designed that will allow producers to check their daily water usage via the internet.

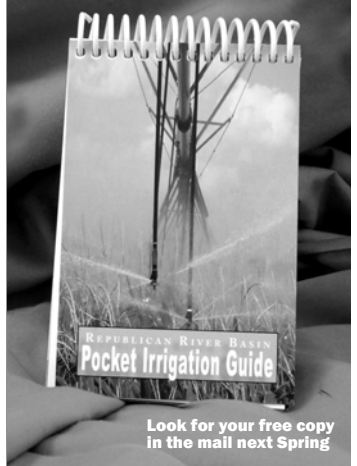
FY2006-07 Budget Approved

The Middle Republican NRD Board of Directors adopted a budget for fiscal year 2006-07 at their September 12 meeting in McCook. The new property tax requirement is \$874,061, which reflects a 1.3 cent increase in the levy rate from FY05-06. The 2006-07 Tax rate is .05397. A budget hearing was held at the McCook Fairgrounds Community Building and no testimony was received. Most of the present programs will continue and include: land treatment cost share, wildlife habitat cost share, maintenance of present dams, continuation of the Groundwater Management Area for Water Quality, Integrated Management Plan and Rules and Regulations for Ground Water Quantity, and continuation of tree planting/sales program. The recent budget approved by the board of directors provided for \$110,000 of district funds to be used in the EQIP special incentive program.

Conservation Poster Contest

Three area students were recognized by the Middle Republican Natural Resources District (NRD) for their creativity and understanding of water conservation. Colyn Gugelman (Maywood), Katelyn Melton (Dickens), and Sara Wright (Culbertson) were finalists in the NRD Conservation Poster contest. Posters are judged for their conservation message, visual effectiveness, originality, and universal appeal. Middle Republican NRD contest winners are then entered in competition with posters from other NRD's around Nebraska. The winner of the state competition is submitted in the National Conservation poster contest. Winners in the local contest receive \$10, state competition winners receive a \$50 savings bond, and the national poster contest winner takes home \$100. The Conservation Poster Contest is co-sponsored by the Middle Republican NRD, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, National Association of Conservation Districts and the NACD Auxiliary in cooperation with the Washington County Soil Conservation District in Maryland.

**Irrigation
for the
environment,
public health,
and YOUR
bottom line.**



Good irrigation management means applying the right amount of water at the right time, and making efficient use of water and energy. Good daily management decisions increase both irrigation efficiency and conserve groundwater, with the goal of growing a profitable, high quality crop.

All irrigators in the Republican Basin will be mailed a copy of the guide by Spring 2007. The guide includes instructions on irrigation scheduling, information on flow meter repair or replacement, conversion formulas, watering requirements, chemigation, pump efficiency, and contact information for local organizations and agencies.

To learn more, contact your local NRD, NRCS office or local UN-L Extension office.

800 873 5613

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

September	19	5th Grade Conservation Craze, Curtis
	19	Area 3 Range Judging Contest
	24-26	NARD Conference, Kearney
October	9	Columbus Day, Office Closed
	10	Board of Directors Meeting, Curtis, 7:30 PM
	12	South West Region FFA Land Judging Contest, Phelps County
November	2	Election
	11	Veteran's Day, Office Closed
	14	Board of Directors Meeting, McCook, 7:30 PM
	23	Thanksgiving, Office Closed
December	14	Board of Directors Meeting, Curtis, 1:30 PM
	25	Christmas, Office Closed

There are more activities and events on our online calendar at: <http://www.mrnrd.org/calendar.html>

It's time once again for **FALL METER READINGS**

Starting the beginning of October, Middle Republican NRD Technicians Rich Karre, Tom Hanson, and Dennis Peterson will once again read and service meters in the district. The flow meters in **Hitchcock and Hayes County** will be serviced this year.

Irrigators who typically remove their meter from the well after irrigation season are asked to let the MRNRD office know where the meter is stored so the meter can be read.

Upcoming EQIP Signups, Act Now!

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) assists farmers and ranchers with improving soil, air, and water quality on private working lands. Ground and Surface Water Conservation improvements help producers conserve water by altering present irrigation systems to improve water efficiency and a reduction in water used.

Farmers and ranchers interested in soil, water and wildlife conservation or wetland restoration funds are encouraged to make an application at their Natural Resources Conservation Service office. The cutoff for applications is projected to be December 2006 or January 2007.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joseph Anderjaska	Hayes Center
Duane Dodson	Maywood
Kevin Fornoff	Hayes Center
Gayle Haag	Bartley
Dennis Hoyt	Culbertson
Stanley Moore	Bartley
Jerry Mustion	Culbertson
Michael Peters	McCook
Donald Roberts	McCook
Rick Spencer	Culbertson
Kelly Wertz	Trenton

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Richard Karre	Technical Supervisor
Robert Merrigan	Assistant Manager
Christy Peterson	Office Supervisor & Board Secretary
Dennis Peterson	Technician
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Kathy Barger	Hayes County NRCS
Kathy Clark	Lincoln County NRCS
Betty Fritsch	Red Willow County NRCS
Carol Lashley	Hitchcock County NRCS
Kim Smith	Frontier County NRCS

SPRINKLES & SPLASHES is the official publication of the Middle Republican Natural Resources District. It is published quarterly by the MRNRD, 220 Center Av., PO Box 81, Curtis, NE 69025. We can be reached at 800-873-5613, 308-367-4281, Email: office@mrnrd.org or www.mrnrd.org.

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