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## DNR Encourages Landowners to Consider CREP Under New Rental Rates

LINCOLN – Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Acting Director Brian Dunnigan today announced changes to the Nebraska Platte-Republican Resources Area Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and is encouraging farmers and landowners to consider enrollment in the program.

Dunnigan said the Nebraska Farm Service Agency State Committee recently approved increases to the CREP rental rates. Rates now range from \$130 to \$160 an acre for pivot irrigated property and \$120 to \$150 an acre for gravity irrigated property. This is an increase of roughly \$20 to \$35 per acre above previous rates.

“We want to highlight this program change as landowners begin to consider their options for the 2009 crop year,” Dunnigan said. “CREP is an important tool for landowners and farmers in areas where water management is of high concern.”

The Nebraska Platte-Republican CREP was approved in 2005. Through the program, landowners with fields located in specified areas of the Republican, North Platte and Platte river basins can enroll irrigated cropland acres for a period of 10 to 15 years and receive annual rental payments and cost-share assistance for establishing resource conserving practices on the land. The program is conducted in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

Dunnigan said enrollment in the Platte-Republican CREP has slowed recently, aided by improved rainfall and commodity prices. He said the improved rental rates may make the program more attractive to landowners.

“CREP is an important option for farmers who are trying to manage high input costs and limited water resources,” Dunnigan said. “It can be especially valuable on marginal acres that generally yield poorly or are difficult to irrigate.”

Water saved by not irrigating acres enrolled into the CREP is used to help Nebraska meet its obligations under the Republican River Compact Settlement and the Platte River Recovery and Implementation Program.

For more information about the Platte-Republican Resources Area CREP, landowners and farmers should contact their local Farm Service Agency Office, or call the Department of Natural Resources at (402) 471-2363. Information also can be found online at [www.dnr.ne.gov/CREP/CREP.html](http://www.dnr.ne.gov/CREP/CREP.html).

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