



Nebraska's
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Districts

www.nrdnet.org

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601 S. 12th St. Suite 201

Lincoln, NE 68508

nard@nrdnet.org

(402) 471-7670

For More Information Contact: Erika Hill, Work: 402.471.7672, Cell: 402-570-2283 or E-mail to: EHill@nrdnet.org

DAN SMITH, FORMER NRD GENERAL MANAGER, RECEIVES RESOURCES DISTRICT HALL OF FAME AWARD

(KEARNEY, NE) – Dan Smith, retired general manager for the Middle Republican Natural Resources District (MRNRD), was inducted into the Nebraska Association of Resources District's (NARD) Hall of Fame at the NARD annual meeting in Kearney. The induction took place on Monday, September 22nd, and was presented by Terry Martin, president of NARD. Smith recently retired after nearly 35 years with the district.

“Dan is worthy of this award for many reasons,” said Joe Anderjaska, past NARD president and current NARD board representative from the MRNRD. “Dan was part of the MRNRD for nearly 35 years, starting in 1979 as Assistant Manager and becoming the General Manager in 1999. Throughout Dan’s tenure he was dedicated to his district and its mission of conserving land and water resources. Dan was always sought out for advice and was the ‘go-to’ person for information on water issues because of his knowledge and understanding of the issues within the Republican Basin. Dan was a pioneer for the MRNRD as well as many state-wide issues, and most things that happened within the district were his own creation. Dan’s work gave the MRNRD the ability to be what we are today up until he retired in 2013,” Anderjaska said.

There are three Hall of Fame categories. They include: Natural Resources District Board Member; Natural Resources District Employee; and, Natural Resources District Supporter. The NRD Supporter includes individuals outside the NRD system who have shown tremendous care and leadership in Nebraska’s on-going conservation effort. Smith was inducted under the Natural Resources District Employee category. Other inductees into the NARD Hall of Fame on Monday were: Walter Fick –Natural Resources District Board Member, and Warren D. Fairchild – Natural Resources District Supporter.

Smith confronted very controversial issues relating to the Republican Basis and natural resources across the state. He oversaw changes in water management from the drilling moratorium in 2002, to developing the first Integrated Management Plan (IMP) in Nebraska which coordinated water management between a local NRD and the State of Nebraska. Smith understood that water fueled the state’s largest industry – agriculture – and needed fair regulations to protect the state’s economy and preserve Nebraska’s water.

Smith was involved in several ground-breaking concepts and ideas, including the NCORPE project which was started in 2012. This project gave NRDs a way to augment stream flows to fulfill Nebraska's requirement for Republican River Compact compliance. Smith also oversaw the building of flood control structures, revising the Ground Water Management Plan in 1994, purchasing the Riverside Irrigation Company to retire 672 irrigated acres, and retiring of 4,100 total irrigated acres.

“The NARD is proud of the three men selected into the Hall of Fame,” said Terry Martin, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts President. “These inductees have accomplished so much to protect natural resources and educate Nebraska residents in rural and urban areas about the importance of water and soil conservation. Not only that, but they’ve been significant in bettering and creating vital conservation programs still in use today that are improving thousands of people’s lives; some without them even knowing it,” Martin said.

The Nebraska Association of Resources Districts is the trade association for Nebraska’s 23 natural resources districts. The association works with the individual Natural Resources Districts (NRD) to protect lives, protect property and protect the future of Nebraska’s natural resources. These districts are unique to Nebraska. NRDs are local government entities with broad responsibilities to protect our natural resources. Major Nebraska river basins form the boundaries of the 23 NRD’s, enabling districts to respond best to local conservation and resource management needs.

