Fink appointed as State Engineer

On May 30, 2001, the North Dakota State Water Commission, Chaired by Governor John Hoeven, unanimously passed a motion to appoint Dale L. Frink as North Dakota’s 16th State Engineer, effective June 1, 2001. Frink was recommended for the State Engineer position by a search committee, which was formed in January 2001 at the request of the Governor.

Frink will assume the responsibilities of the State Engineer as well as Chief Engineer and Secretary to the Commission with a clear understanding of its workings, as he has been employed with the Commission his entire professional career. Frink first joined the State Water Commission shortly after he graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in chemical engineering in 1976.

When he arrived at the Commission, Frink worked as a Planner Engineer for the West River Diversion Project, which eventually evolved into the Southwest Pipeline Project. In 1985, after various promotions, Frink became Manager of the Southwest Pipeline Project. Today, Southwest Pipeline serves 22 communities and more than 28,000 North Dakotans with a clean, affordable, high quality source of drinking water.

In 1989, Frink became Director of the Water Development Division where he oversaw several key water development efforts, including the MR&I program, Southwest Pipeline Project, and the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project. Also during his tenure as Director of Water Development, Frink gained valuable experience in dealing with the unpredictable nature of North Dakota’s water resources. During the drought of the late 1980s, he testified before the U.S. Senate to protect water levels in the state’s Missouri River basins, and by the 1990s, he was confronted with statewide flooding and a rapidly rising Devils Lake. In February 1997, Frink was promoted to the position of Assistant State Engineer where he worked closely with Interim State Engineer Jim Frink in January 2001.

When asked what he thought were some of the most critical water-related issues facing North Dakota today, Frink answered, “the completion of NAWF and a reliable water supply for the Eastern Side of the state.” He went on to say that the results of the Red River Valley Water Supply Studies are critical to future water development in Eastern North Dakota. Frink is also eager to focus on opportunities that will promote economic development throughout the state, especially in rural areas and small communities. In addition, Frink said he will pursue improvements to North Dakota’s floodplain management efforts, revision of the Missouri River Master Plan, and continued development of the Southwest Pipeline Project, and of course, an acceptable solution to the Devils Lake crisis. “North Dakota is an exciting place to work and live, and working for the State Water Commission is an exciting place to work and live, and working for the State Water Commission is an exciting place to work and live. I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that come with being North Dakota’s State Engineer.”

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

By Patrick Fridgen

The North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission), chaired by Governor John Hoeven, met on April 22, 2001 to approve several key water development projects. The budget for 2001 was based on oil extraction revenues totaling $6.29 million. However, revenues received through April 2001 exceeded $6.32 million, with an additional $637,040 projected for May and June. Interest accruing to the Resources Trust Fund also exceeded projections.

Revenues into the Water Development Trust Fund (WDTF) from the tobacco settlement now total $72.79 million. Revised estimates indicate that the WDTF will receive $23.88 million of the 2001-2003 biennium.

Mr. Frink also reported that the 2001 Commission Budget, as passed, closely aligns with the executive recommendation. Some exceptions include: $9.7 million from the WDTF to be transferred to the General Fund; and $5.5 million was added for a Fargo flood control project; $5 million was added for Devils Lake levee protection; $2.000 was added for projects authorized under Section 319 of the Water Pollution Control Act; and $9,756 will be transferred from the Eastern Side of the state to the Department of Health for development of total maximum daily loads and pollution control plans in selected watersheds throughout the state.

The Commission approved cost-share in the amount of $93,200 or 40 percent of eligible costs for the relocation of a street, water and sewer utilities, and a pedestrian bridge in Belfield. The relocations are part of phase I of a watershed improvement project and must be completed before the proposed Heart River realignment can be completed as phase II.

North Western Dairy of Parshall, North Dakota, announced plans to build a new $42 million, 500 head dairy farm near Mountrail County. When in full production, the new dairy will employ 15 to 20 people.

The State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) will once again be transferred to the General Fund for Water Commission operations; $5.5 million was added for a Fargo flood control project; $5 million was added for Devils Lake levee protection; $2.000 was added for projects authorized under Section 319 of the Water Pollution Control Act; and $9,756 will be transferred from the Eastern Side of the state to the Department of Health for development of total maximum daily loads and pollution control plans in selected watersheds throughout the state.

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In 1989, Frink became Director of the Water Development Division where he oversaw several key water development efforts, including the MR&I program, Southwest Pipeline Project, and the Northwest Area Resources Trust Fund. Frink also stated that oil extraction revenue deposits into the Resources Trust Fund continue to exceed projections. The budget was based on oil extraction revenues totaling $5.29 million. However, revenues received through April 2001 exceeded $8.28 million, with an additional $637,040 projected for May and June. Interest accruing to the Resources Trust Fund also exceed projections.

Frint was appointed as State Engineer

By Patrick Fridgen

The North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission), chaired by Governor John Hoeven, meets several times a year to discuss issues related to water supply and use in the state. The Commission has the authority to create rules and regulations to ensure the adequate and efficient use of water resources. The Commission also evaluates the feasibility and cost of new water supply projects.

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North Dakota State Water Commission
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Patrick Fridgen, Editor

The State Water Commission does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in employment or the provision of services.
What’s new with NAWS?

A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was issued by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, May 18, 2001, following a review of the Final Environmental Assessment for the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) project. Jim Lennington, Project Manager of NAWS at the State Water Commission is pleased with the signing. “This is certainly a progressive step toward the completion of NAWS,” Lennington said. “We’re pleased that the people of Northwest North Dakota are one step closer to having a reliable, quality source of drinking water.”

The Bureau of Reclamation determined that the project alternative selected for the construction of NAWS would not result in significant impacts to the human or natural environment. Thus, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required, and with the signing of the FONSI, NAWS is very close to moving forward. The preferred alternative will involve a combination of two alternatives, including: one intake at either Lake Sakakawea or Lake Audubon, a pretreatment facility near the intake or the Max booster pump station, an upgraded central treatment plant at Minot, eight storage reservoirs, 13 pumping plants, 304 miles of distribution pipeline, two new reverse osmosis treatment plants with brine evaporation ponds at Wildrose and Grenora, and one upgraded treatment plant at Parshall.

To make the preferred alternative(s) more acceptable, several commitments or features were added as part of the construction of NAWS. They include the following:

- Raw water from Lake Sakakawea or Lake Audubon will be disinfected to inactivate 99.9 percent of Giardia and 99.99 percent of viruses prior to crossing the continental divide;
- Engineering controls and fail-safe systems will be incorporated, including a number of automated pipeline isolation valves to minimize the accidental release of pre-treated water in sensitive areas should a failure occur;
- Facility inspection, operation, maintenance, and capital replacement plans will be incorporated to minimize facility degradation and breakdowns;
- Contingency plans, emergency response procedures, and periodic exercises to address response to accidental releases of water and sludge will be implemented;
- Garrison Joint Technical Committee members or Canadian representatives will be permitted to inspect the system or records at any time.
- Sludge resulting from backwash or softening clarification processes will be either treated to inactivate disinfectant-resistant pathogens, or transported for disposal in a disposal facility. Disposal within the Missouri River Basin will be considered.

Several key events led to the FONSI being signed. Since 1993, NAWS has gone through an arduous technical review by United States and Canadian interests through the Garrison Consultative Group and the Garrison Joint Technical Committee. The review was required to ensure that provisions of the 1986 Garrison Diversion Reformation Act were met – and they were.

In January, then Secretary of Interior, Bruce Babbit, signed a determination stating that the Northwest Area Water Supply project does indeed meet the requirements of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Babbit’s signing of the determination also satisfied requirements of the 1986 Garrison Diversion Reformation Act for MR&I projects transferring water from the Missouri River Basin to the Hudson Bay Basin. This paved the way for the signing of the FONSI.

On June 4, 2001, State Department officials met with their Canadian counterparts to provide formal notification of the project and its approval, and to notify them of a 30-day comment period. Comments provided by Canada, if any, will be considered during the submittal phase of the first contract. Plans and specifications for the first contract are currently being finalized. The contract will include about 7 1/2 miles of 30 and 36 inch pipe from the Minot water treatment plant to the intersection of Highway 83 and Ward County Road 16. A contract for construction of this segment could be awarded as early as October 2001.