



FROM THE NORTH DAKOTA STATE WATER COMMISSION

Water Commission Provides DROUGHT ASSISTANCE *for Ranchers*

Severe drought struck North Dakota this summer, and in response, the Water Commission reactivated the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Project Assistance Program (Program) at their June meeting.

The Program, which was established by the North Dakota Legislature in 1991, is for the development of long-term and reliable water supply sources that can mitigate water shortages caused by drought. The Program was last reactivated during the severe drought of 2006.

"The state's livestock producers are being severely impacted by this drought" said State Engineer Garland Erbele. "We can't end the drought, but with this program, we can hopefully help these hardworking folks manage some of the impacts in the short term, and have more reliable water supplies for the future."

As part of the Commission's reactivation of the Program in June, they also made \$250,000 available for assistance to livestock producers at that same meeting. Within weeks, the initial allocation was approved for eligible projects. So in July, another \$575,000 was dedicated to the Program – for a total agency commitment of \$825,000.

With regard to eligibility, livestock operations must be in specific drought disaster counties, as specified in the Governor's most recent proclamation, or adjacent counties, to qualify for cost-share assistance through the Program. Livestock producers who receive at least half of their annual gross income from farming or ranching, are eligible for financial assistance through the Program. Applicants may receive up to 50 percent, but no more than \$3,500 of the eligible costs of projects. Each producer is eligible for cost-share on up to three projects.



Approved Program projects as of July 31, 2017. The green dots indicate the location of approved projects.

Eligible Program items include: new water wells, rural water system connections, pipeline extensions, pasture taps, and associated works, labor, materials, and equipment rentals for work completed by the producer to develop new water supply projects.

Ineligible items include:

- A water supply project started without prior approval of the State Water Commission.
- Rehabilitation of an existing well.
- A water supply project on federal or state land.
- A dry hole drilled in an attempt to construct a water well or to locate a water source.
- The construction of stock dams or dugouts.
- The development of springs.
- Projects that require repair or replacement as a result of failure to provide maintenance to an existing water source.

As of the end of July, 267 projects in 23 North Dakota counties had been approved for assistance.

For more information on the Program, please go to www.swc.nd.gov.



Sharon Locken - 50 Years of Service

Sharon Locken, Administrative Staff Officer for the State Water Commission retired on June 30, 2017 after an astounding 50 years with the agency.

She began her career in 1967 and has worked under the direction and guidance of six State Engineers: Milo Hoisveen, Vernon Fahy, David Spryncznatyk, Dale Frink, Todd Sando, and Garland Erbele. "Working with each one of the State Engineers has truly been an honor," said Locken. "Being the Administrative Staff Officer for the agency has allowed me to be directly or indirectly involved in all of the Water Commission's major projects and accomplishments for the past fifty years and it has been extremely gratifying and humbling."

Locken has witnessed several changes and advances during her monumental career. "Technology has certainly progressed and transformed right before my eyes," noted Locken. "I've worked with ditto machines, made carbon copies, typed on various typewriters, used the first model of Xerox copiers, and was introduced to the ever-changing world of computers."

Throughout the years, Sharon has been passionately involved in several community organizations along with agency events and activities. These endeavors have been markedly impacted due to Sharon's direction,

Locken Celebrates 50-YEAR Career Milestone

aptitude, and exemplary coordination. She has also served as a professional administrative liaison with Water Commission members, the Governor's Office, the legislative assembly, the congressional delegation, and a variety of regional organizations, along with various local, state, and federal agencies.

"Sharon has been described as the life-blood, the heartbeat of the agency," said State Engineer Garland Erbele. "She has consistently demonstrated professionalism, commitment, and renowned dedication to the administrative operations of both the Office of the State Engineer and State Water Commission."

Locken feels exceedingly grateful for her career. "Serving the people of North Dakota for five decades is a great achievement, privilege, and blessing. I will sincerely miss the agency and the entire staff. I've always said that I excelled at my job because the staff made me look so good."



The State Water Commission would like to congratulate and recognize several long-time staff members on their well-deserved retirements. Together they have 186 combined years of service. (From left to right) James T. Fay (41 years), Dwight Comfort (26 years), Sharon Locken (50 years), Bob White (28 years), and Mike Hove (41 years).