



UPPER BIG BLUE NRD

Natural Resources District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Upper Big Blue NRD is Mailing Reporting Packets to Area Irrigators: Watch Your Mailbox

In the spring of 2006, the Upper Big Blue NRD measured ground water levels at 511 observation wells throughout the NRD. These measurements were then used to compute the Spring 2006 Average Ground Water Level within the NRD. The findings show that the Spring 2006 Average Ground Water Level in the Upper Big Blue NRD is 0.52 feet below the reporting level, and 2.48 feet above the allocation level. Observation wells are measured in the spring of each year, allowing the water table to rebound from the previous irrigation season.

Therefore, the reporting level set forth by the Upper Big Blue NRD Rules & Regulations has now been reached. **As a result, ground water users in the Upper Big Blue NRD are now required to report annual ground water use to the Upper Big Blue NRD and to certify their irrigated acres in 2007.** If the Average Ground Water Level in the Upper Big Blue NRD falls below the 1978 level, the use of flow meters will be required and ground water allocation will begin.

The Upper Big Blue NRD is in the process of sending well registration information packets and special reporting forms to water users regarding the 2007 reporting requirements. Municipal, Commercial, and Industrial users were sent this notification in September, and **Irrigators will be sent the notification in mid-October.**

Contained in the letter to landowners will be the well registration information and number of irrigated acres that the Upper Big Blue NRD has on file for that landowner. It is the landowner's responsibility to verify with the Upper Big Blue NRD whether or not the number of irrigated acres and well registration information is correct, and if the landowner is also the operator. [It is critical that this information is correct in case the Upper Big Blue NRD begins allocating ground water in the future]. If the Upper Big Blue NRD begins allocation of ground water, and landowners have not reported the number of acres that they intend to irrigate, then they may not be allowed to irrigate those acres during the allocation period. If you need assistance completing your report, please contact the NRD office for an appointment at (402)362-6601.

Cost-Share available for Flow Meters in the Upper Big Blue NRD

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District has been awarded a \$900,000 grant from The Nebraska Environmental Trust to cost-share on irrigation flow meters. The total grant amount will be disbursed over a three-year period. The grant should be able to provide enough cost-share funding for 1,800 new flow meters available across the Upper Big Blue NRD.

In order to provide enough cost-sharing opportunities for District citizens, the NRD will provide cost-share of one flow meter per owner who meets the application process guidelines. A cost-share application is being mailed to each landowner in their reporting packet.

The following details cover Program Eligibility, Program Requirements and Cost-Share Rate:

Program Eligibility:

A landowner shall be eligible for one flow meter for the life of this program.

The flow meter must be associated with an irrigation system located in the District.

Irrigation wells permitted by the District after March 1, 2004 are not eligible for cost-share.

A flow meter purchased or installed prior to approval of the cost-share application is not eligible for cost-share.

Program Requirements:

The flow meter must be new.

The flow meter must be a model approved by the District.

The installation must comply with the District's minimum installation requirements.

Each flow meter must measure groundwater withdrawal from an irrigation well.

The flow meter must be used at the installed location for a minimum of three years.

The landowner shall be responsible for operation, repair and maintenance of the flow meter.

The landowner must agree to report groundwater withdrawal measured by the flow meter for three consecutive years beginning with the first full operational irrigation season after the flow meter is installed.

Cost-Share Rate:

The cost-share rate shall be 50% of the county average cost (minus other cost-share funds) or 50% of the actual cost (minus other cost-share funds), whichever is less. The maximum cost-share for this practice shall be \$500. The minimum cost-share payment is \$100.

If you are interested in applying for this flow meter cost-share program, please contact the Upper Big Blue NRD at (402) 362-6601.

The Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District has been extremely fortunate enough to receive such a grant of this caliber that will ultimately benefit a great number of Nebraska producers. We are both privileged and excited about the possibilities that this grant will provide being funded exclusively by The Nebraska Environmental Trust. The Trust is funded by proceeds of the Nebraska Lottery and private donations and has awarded more than \$89 million to conservation projects in Nebraska since 1994.

If you would like information on any of the services that the Upper Big Blue NRD provides, or have any questions please feel free to contact:

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