

Lower Republican NRD Review

Protecting Lives, Protecting Property, Protecting the Future



Volume 76

Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NiRIA)

The Lower Republican NRD and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources are partnering in a new program to reduce nitrogen fertilizer inputs. Earlier this year, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 1368, establishing the Nitrogen Reduction Incentive Act (NiRIA). This state funded program encourages producers to reduce the use of commercial fertilizers by offering financial incentives. To qualify, producers must verify a reduction in their nitrogen application by the lesser of 40 lbs./acre or 15% of their baseline rate. Applications and guidance documents are available at the Lower Republican NRD or online at www.lrnrd.org.

For this program, our district is divided into three priority areas (A, B, and C).

Priority A: Irrigated acres located in a wellhead protection area or the Superior-Hardy SPA.

Incentive Payment = \$15 per acre.

Priority B: All certified irrigated acres within the Lower Republican NRD that are not located in the Priority A area.

Incentive Payment = \$12 per acre.

Priority C: All other areas of the district, including dryland acres.

Incentive Payment = \$10 per acre.

Each application/field is limited to 280 acres and the eligible crops are corn, sugar beets, or potatoes.



The incentives can be combined with other nutrient management programs offered by NRCS or other entities. Producers will need to confirm compatibility with those other programs. Producers are also given flexibility to determine how they will reduce their nitrogen application but are responsible for providing documentation that verifies a reduction in their nitrogen application by the lesser of 40 lbs./acre or 15% of their baseline rate.

Applications and documentation providing a baseline use of nitrogen in previous years may be submitted to the Lower Republican NRD by mail, in-person, or online and are due January 15, 2025. The applications will be ranked, and successful applicants will be notified by March 15th, 2025. Producers will have until January 15th, 2026, to document and show the reduction in their nitrogen application to be eligible for payments.

Contact us at (308) 928-2182 or visit us online at www.lrnrd.org for more information on the application process.

Additional information about the program may be found by scanning the QR code. You can also visit the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources website:

<https://dnr.nebraska.gov/lb-1368-nitrogen-reduction-incentive-program>.

Or contact Alexa Davis: (402) 471-3948 or alexa.davis@nebraska.gov.

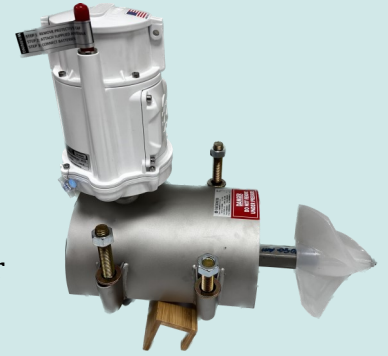
College Scholarship Deadline

Each year the Lower Republican NRD offers three \$1,000 scholarships for conservation education. To be eligible for a scholarship, the student must have a permanent residence within our District, plan to major in a natural resource related field, and be registered as a full-time student. Scholarship recipients may attend the college or university of their choice, but priority will be given to those attending a Nebraska college or university. The deadline for applications is April 1. Applications and additional information regarding these scholarships are available on our website at www.lrnrd.org under the News and Information tab or at the Lower Republican NRD office in Alma.

New Flow Meter Project

The Lower Republican NRD began our groundwater flow meter project last winter within the boundaries of the district. Many of the groundwater flow meters were installed in the early 2000s, and they are nearing the end of their useful life. We have been seeing a significant increase in calls for meters that are not working properly. The new telemetry meters being installed are NRD owned and will implement remote monitoring capabilities to provide water use in near real-time to ag water users. This project will help improve irrigation water management on the farm as well as on a watershed basin level.

The predominant irrigation flow meter in the district is the mechanical McCrometer propeller meter. For the new meters, FlowConnect™ technology will integrate built-in communications to the meter for transmitting accurate, reliable irrigation flow data. ExactRead technology, made possible with the digital register option, ensures the flow reading on the meter's register in the field and the data remotely viewed on the web are always the same. Flow data is generated and transmitted directly from the meter register. There will be an app that producers will be able to access on their phone so that they can check their water usage on the new meters. We are hoping to have the app ready for the 2025 irrigation season.



The District was successful in securing over \$3 million in Federal and State grants for the initial phase of this project. With this money, currently, there have been over 500 meters installed in the Rapid Response Area. Installations will continue this fall and winter. The Bureau of Reclamation recently announced that an additional \$4.3 million has been set aside for the second phase of our project, enabling us to install the new meters across the entire district in the next few years.

If you plan on doing any work on your irrigation system and want us to check the flow meter specifications, or if you would like to change the location of the meter, please contact us at the NRD office. If a system needs additional pipe work to meet the flow meter specs, or a check valve needs to be installed, the District will be requiring those producers to get that work done before installing the new meter. These modifications to the pipe or other parts of the system are required for compliance with our current rules and regulations. The new meters do not have installation requirements beyond the current mechanical meters.

After the new telemetry meters have been installed, the Lower Republican NRD will continue to do maintenance checks on a 4-year rotating schedule. Future repairs and maintenance to the district owned meters will be budgeted and paid for by the NRD. Intentional damage, negligence, or removal of the meter will be charged to the owner or operator.

Also, we would like to ensure the old mechanical meters are either returned to the proper owner or we can dispose of them if they are at the end of their useful life or will not otherwise be used. These meters were specifically calibrated to the pipe on the system. Using them on other systems or allowing someone else to use them may result in improper usage readings and possible non-compliance with the rules and regulations.

Trees Available

The Lower Republican NRD is currently accepting tree orders until March 15, 2025. Trees offer thousands of benefits like protecting livestock from the harsh winter winds in Nebraska to improving your property by reducing heating and cooling costs. They also provide wildlife with food and habitat while offering them cover from



harsh weather and predators. If you are interested in a windbreak or planting shrubs for wildlife, contact your local NRCS office. There are trained personnel to assist you with your tree selection and a tree plan. We offer a wide variety of trees and shrubs along with machine planting, mulch and drip tape. Cost share is available and a list of trees and shrubs can be found on our website at www.lrnrd.org under the What We Do tab and programs. Call soon for the best availability.

NDEE ONE RED Irrigation Engine Rebate Program

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) announces the opening of the 2024-2025 ONE RED Irrigation Engine Rebate Program. Applications will be accepted for rebates to assist farmers with the replacement of agricultural irrigation pump diesel engines with all-electric equipment. Applications must be submitted to NDEE by January 16, 2025, to be considered.

To be eligible, applicants must have owned the diesel engine for two years and operated it for at least 250 hours each of those years. The diesel engine may be replaced with an electric motor to power a surface pump or by connecting an existing submersible pump directly to the electric grid. The replaced diesel engine must be scrapped to ensure that its exhaust emissions are completely eliminated. Applicants may submit one application for one engine replacement.

NDEE will reimburse 60% of the cost of the electrical equipment, installation, and required electric utility costs up to a maximum rebate of \$23,000. No reimbursements will be made for any expenses incurred before the recipient has signed a project agreement with the Department.

Information, instructions, and application materials are available on the ONE RED Irrigation Engine Rebate Program web page: <http://dee.ne.gov/publica.nsf/pages/17-016>.

For more information on the ONE RED program and its initiatives, visit: <http://dee.ne.gov/ndeqprog.nsf/onweb/cprg-implementation>.



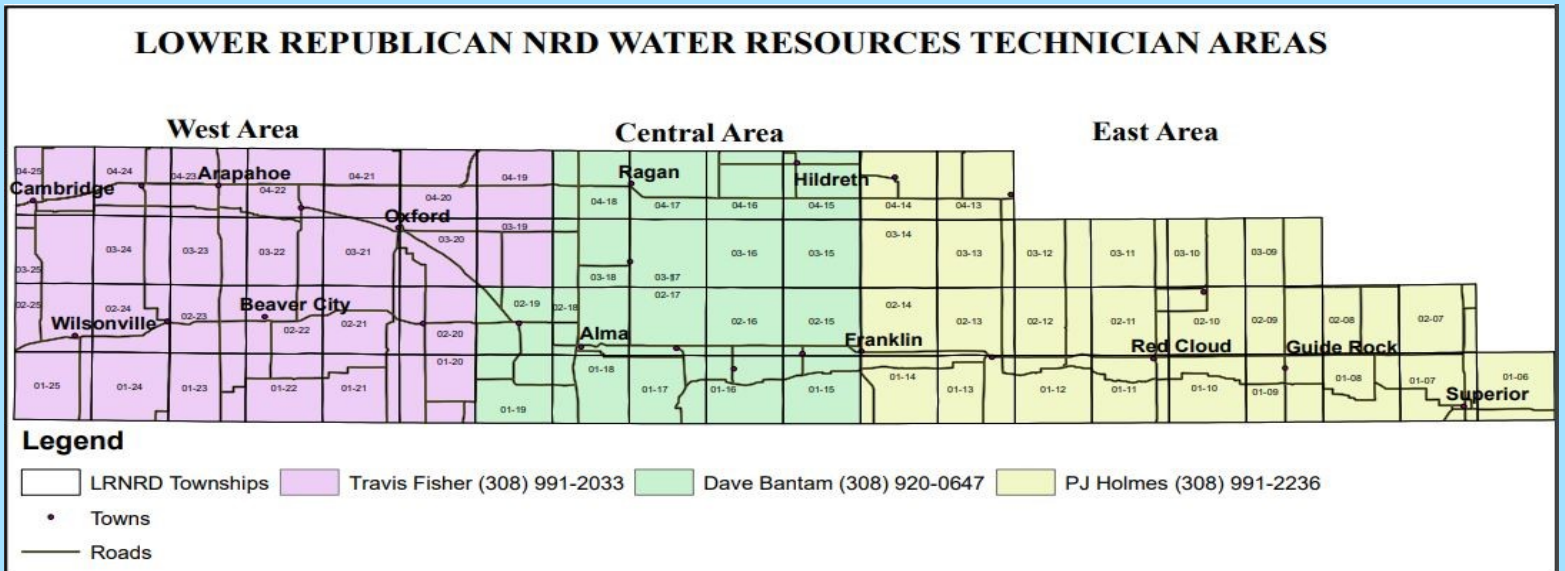
Reminder: June 1, 2025 is the deadline for

Occupation Tax Exempt Form, Pooling and Chemigation!

All of these forms will be available after the beginning of the year on our website at www.lrnrd.org. They will be under the News and Info tab and the download forms are on the right hand side of the page. The chemical you report on the chemigation permits is what you applied in 2024. Also, occupation tax has been set at \$7.00 per acre for 2025.

Water Resources Technician Areas

The Lower Republican NRD has 3 Water Resources Technicians to cover the district. The western area is covered by Travis Fisher. Dave Bantam covers the central area and PJ Holmes takes care of those in the eastern area. Below is a map that is color coded for the areas along with the technicians name and phone number.



Board of Directors	
Subdistrict 1	Clark Andrews, Holbrook
Subdistrict 1	Toby tenBensel, Holbrook - Secretary
Subdistrict 2	Troy Fletcher, Oxford
Subdistrict 2	Marlin Murdoch, Orleans - Chair
Subdistrict 3	Tim Kahrs, Franklin - Treasurer
Subdistrict 3	Matt Harrison, Naponee
Subdistrict 4	Chris Grams, Upland
Subdistrict 4	David Bartels, Riverton - Vice Chair
Subdistrict 5	Lee Fintel, Superior
Subdistrict 5	Don Duffy, Guide Rock
At-Large	Bradley Wulf, Red Cloud

LRNRD Staff	
Todd Siel	General Manager
Nick Simonson	Assistant Manager
Shirlee Poyser	Admin. Assistant/Bookkeeper
Kristi Heft	Water Resources Administrator
Mary Goebel	Water Secretary/Info. & Edu.
Kyle Largent	Rural Water Superintendent
PJ Holmes	Water Resources Technician
Dave Bantam	Water Resources Technician
Travis Fisher	Water Resources Technician
Deb Klingenberger	Franklin County Office Secretary
Jennifer Helms	Furnas County Office Secretary
Lynetta Snelling	Webster County Office Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 12**—Board Meeting, 1:30 pm, LRNRD Meeting Room, Alma
- December 24**—Christmas Eve—Office Closes at Noon
- December 25**—Christmas Day—Office Closed
- January 1, 2025**—New Year’s Day—Office Closed
- January 9**—Board Meeting, 1:30 pm, LRNRD Meeting Room, Alma
- January 23**—South Central Water Conference 9:30 am,
Phelps County Ag Center, Holdrege
- February 13**—Board Meeting, 1:30 pm, LRNRD Meeting Room, Alma
- March 9**—Daylight Savings Time Begins
- March 13**—Board Meeting, 1:30 pm, LRNRD Meeting Room, Alma
- March 15**—Tree Order Deadline
- April 1**—LRNRD Scholarship Deadline

This is a publication of the Lower Republican Natural Resources District
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