

Frink appointed as State Engineer

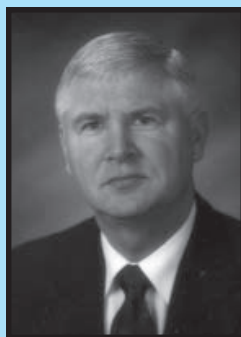
By Patrick Fridgen

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 began working for the State Water Commission shortly after he graduated from North Dakota State University in 1971 with a Master of Science degree in agricultural engineering. When he arrived at the Commission, Frink worked as a Planning Engineer for the West River Diversion Project, which eventually evolved into the Southwest Pipeline Project. In 1985, after various promotions, Frink became Manger 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 unpredictability 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 Basin reservoirs, and by the mid 1990s, he was confronted with statewide flooding and a rapidly rising Devils Lake. In February 1997, Frink



COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

By Patrick Fridgen

The North Dakota State Water Commission (Commission), chaired by Governor John Hoeven, acted on several items of business and was given status reports on continuing water management projects and programs at the May 22, 2001 meeting in Bismarck.

An agency financial report, presented by Interim State Engineer Dale L. Frink, indicated that oil extraction tax deposits into the

was promoted to the position of Assistant State Engineer where he worked until his appointment as Interim State Engineer 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 NAWS and a reliable water supply for the Eastern portion of the state." He also indicated 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 Manual, 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 when it comes to water," Frink said. "I look forward to the opportunities and challenges that come with being North Dakota's State Engineer." ■

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 exceeded projections.

Revenues into the Water Development Trust Fund (WDTF) from the tobacco settlement now total \$23.79 million. Revised estimates indicate that the WDTF will receive \$23.88 million of new funds in the 2001-2003 biennium.

Mr. Frink also reported that the 2001-2003 State Water 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 for Water Commission operations; \$5.5 million was added for a Fargo flood control project; \$5 million was added for Devils Lake levee protection; \$200,000 was added for projects authorized under Section 319 of the Water Pollution Control Act; and \$99,756 will be transferred from the WDTF 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 was approved for cost-share in the amount of \$91,240 or 50 percent of eligible costs for a water supply system. The water supply system will consist of 3 1/2 miles of pipeline from Parshall's reservoir to the dairy. The pipeline will be oversized so it can also be used as a supply line for a rural water system in the future. It is expected that the dairy will begin operation this fall with 400 head, gradually building to 800 head after 20 months. At full operation the dairy will employ 15 to 20 people.

To make rural ring dikes even more affordable, the Commission increased its level of participation by approving 50 percent cost-share, not to exceed \$25,000 of state costs per farmstead. This is an increase from 40 percent cost-share, which the Commission approved at the July 14, 2001 meeting.

Related to the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), the Commission approved the comprehensive project priority list, the

fundable list, and approved the disbursement of fiscal year 1997 through 2001 DWSRF funds by the Department of Health.

In North Dakota, the DWSRF is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Department of Health. The Commission's role in the DWSRF process is twofold. First, the Department of Health cannot disburse DWSRF funds without the Commission's approval. Second, the Department of Health must establish assistance priorities and expend grant funds pursuant to the priority list for the Drinking Water Treatment Revolving Loan Fund after obtaining approval from the Commission.

The Six Mile Bay bridge of Highway 19 in Ramsey County is being raised a second time due to high water levels in Devils Lake. Ramsey County is responsible for a water supply pipeline that crosses through the bridge and provides water service to seven users and Graham's Island State Park. In 1996, when the bridge was raised the first time, Ramsey County received supplemental disaster assistance through community block grant funds to move the pipeline. That funding is no longer available, so the Commission approved 75 percent of eligible costs or \$167,250 to complete the project. The Parks and Recreation Department will provide \$22,100.

Regional water systems in the Southeast portion of the state may provide a solution to meeting new drinking water standards proposed by the federal government. In response, the Commission approved \$60,450 or 65 percent of \$93,000 to obtain an assessment, concept development, and opinions of

probable cost for various phases of a Southeast Area Regional Expansion project in that portion of the state. The study was proposed by the three existing regional water systems: Southeast Water Users District, Ransom-Sargent Water Users District, and Dickey Rural Water Association.

A Devils Lake hydrologic update indicated that the current elevation of the lake is 1447.6 feet above mean sea level (amsl). At this elevation, the lake has begun to flow from East Devils Lake to Stump Lake, through the Jerusalem Channel, at a rate of 15 cubic feet per second (cfs). It was also reported that the National Weather Service predicts a 50 percent probability that Devils Lake will reach an elevation of 1448.1 feet-amsl. At that elevation, the estimated flow from Devils Lake to Stump Lake will reach 100 cfs through the Jerusalem Channel.

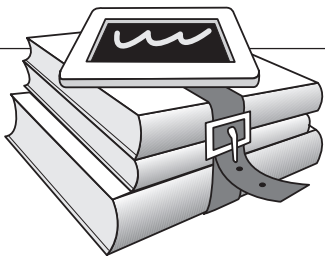
Also related to Devils Lake, it was recommended and approved that the location of the state temporary emergency outlet be shifted from the Twin Lakes route to the Peterson Coulee route. The Commission also approved funding for the Twin Lakes route project, approved at the December 2000 meeting, be made available for preliminary design and other items necessary to reach the construction phase of a temporary outlet along the Peterson Coulee route.

Finally, the Commission approved a resolution of appreciation for David Sprynczynatyk, who resigned as North Dakota's 15th State Engineer and Chief Engineer-Secretary to the Commission last December. Sprynczynatyk is now Director of the North Dakota Department of Transportation. ■



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THE WATER PRIMER

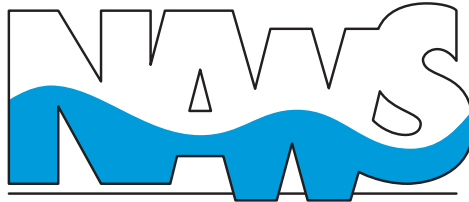
What's new with NAWS?

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 Lenington, 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," Lenington 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 construc-

Northwest Area Water Supply



tion 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 Babbitt, signed a determination stating that the Northwest Area Water Supply project does indeed meet the requirements of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Babbitt'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. ■