



Irrigation Newsletter 2011

Rates are set for the irrigation season

Dawson Public Power District's board of directors approved a rate increase for 2011. A 9.7% increase in wholesale power costs and rising costs for materials and labor were factors in the decision.

The irrigation rates increased by 6.45% while residential rates increased by an average 8%. Winter rates increased more than summer rates.

FIXED DEMAND CHARGE		ENERGY CHARGES	
Uncontrolled	\$48.50/horsepower	Uncontrolled	\$0.0986/kilowatt-hour
One-day control	\$43.50/horsepower	One-day control	\$0.0906/kilowatt-hour
Two-day control	\$38.50/horsepower	Two-day control	\$0.0866/kilowatt-hour
Three-day control	\$33.50/horsepower	Three-day control	\$0.0826/kilowatt-hour
Four-day control	\$27.50/horsepower	Four-day control	\$0.0796/kilowatt-hour
Six-day control	\$22.50/horsepower	Six-day control	\$0.0596/kilowatt-hour
Standby (unused)	\$18.00/horsepower		

Before you call to report a problem...

Dawson PPD is asking customers to check their irrigation service before calling to report electrical problems.

If your irrigation service has one of the large, grey meter boxes near the road, please try turning the switch on the box before you call to report a problem with your service.

Sometimes the switch can trip and simply needs to be reset.

If resetting the switch does not work, please call us at 308-324-2386 or 800-752-8305.



New farm equipment? Watch that power line!

Please be careful when using or moving large farm equipment near power lines. If you question if there is enough room to safely enter a field, call Dawson PPD at 800-752-8305 or 308-324-2386.

If equipment does come in contact with a power line, stay in the vehicle and call for assistance. The line may remain energized.

Any attempt to exit or evacuate the equipment would most likely result in death or serious injury.

"Remember, power lines have the same appearance whether energized or de-energized," explains Dawson PPD Safety Director Dean Kunkee. "Treat all power lines as if they are energized. Only exit the vehicle after a lineman tells you they have determined that the power has been turned off."



Be aware of your surroundings when you are using large farm equipment. Look up. A moment of distraction may cause an accident.

Aid-to-construction credits end in 2011

Dawson PPD is no longer offering credits to offset the cost of building lines to new irrigation services. The practice was discontinued on any service built for the 2011 season. The program had been an incentive to encourage farmers to use electricity to power pumps. No other rate class of customer is offered construction credits.

Load management and irrigators save the day

Nebraska's electric system was between the proverbial rock and a hard spot on August 12, 2010. Thankfully, public power districts and their irrigation customers were able to avert widespread power outages.

"We had been experiencing a streak of hot weather," recalls Nebraska Public Power District System Control Manager Tim Arlt. "Our loads were up. Unfortunately, a late July storm had taken out two, 230-kilovolt transmission lines in the central part of the state and those lines were still unavailable so we were particularly concerned with the transmission system in that area."

NPPD's system operators are mandated by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation to take action to maintain transmission system reliability. This means that in an emergency they may have to reduce electric loads to keep the electric system stable.

"At 8:22 a.m., we contacted three utilities to shed load— Dawson Public

Power District, Southern Power District and Twin Valleys Public Power District," Arlt explained. "All three utilities responded and within 30 minutes and, we were back to operating limits below emergency levels."

Approximately 65 megawatts of load relief was experienced as a result of prompt actions by the three utilities.

"We knew there was a good chance that we would be asked to shed some load and had discussed what we were going to do ahead of time," said Dawson PPD General Manager Bob Heinz. "We were scheduled for irrigation load control at 10 a.m. but when we got the call for help, we kicked it on at 8:30 a.m. We recognized something really big was going

on when NPPD asked for 80 megawatts. That's a lot of power -- that's equal to about half the power used by Dawson PPD customers on the hottest day of the summer. We knew that unless we responded in a big way we could very well lose power to a big portion of our system."

This is the first time NPPD implemented its emergency relief program since reactivating it in 2007.

"The program

is just one of the plans NPPD has in place during emergency situations," said Arlt. "I am very pleased by the response we received from the participants and want to thank our wholesale customers for their efforts. This is a great example of public power working together."



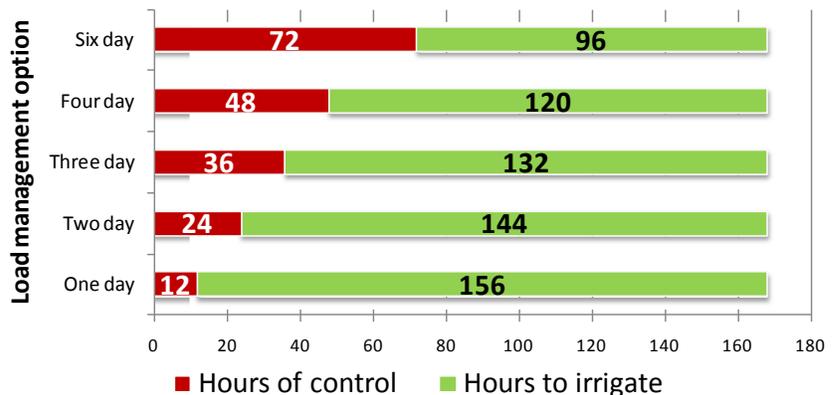
After storms damaged NPPD's transmission lines and high temperatures increased the demand for power last summer, emergency action was needed to keep the power grid stable.

Give access to DPPD's lines and equipment

When you plant your fields this spring, please leave adequate space for Dawson PPD linemen to access electrical equipment. Field roads that lead to power lines, transformers or meters need to be at least wide enough to accommodate a pickup.



Maximum control hours vs. hours to irrigate each week



Note: The control hours shown on the chart represent the maximum number of hours Dawson PPD can control during the week. Some weeks may have considerably less hours of control, leaving more available time to irrigate.

Waiting list for irrigation construction extends to 2015

Customers who request a new service built to power an irrigation motor or system will have their name placed on a waiting list. Currently, the list is for construction prior to the 2015 irrigation season.

Dawson PPD maintains the list on a first-come, first-served basis. Prior

to construction season, customers are asked if they still want the service. Estimates are created by the engineering staff and customers must pay all costs before the service is built.

By limiting the number of services built annually, Dawson is able to control load growth to ensure reliability.

Could water balance be the solution for the future?

The following article is written by Dawson PPD General Manager Bob Heinz. Heinz is president of the Nebraska Water Balance Alliance, a group of farmers, water experts and utilities that are working to raise support for a balanced and sustainable future for water resources in the state.

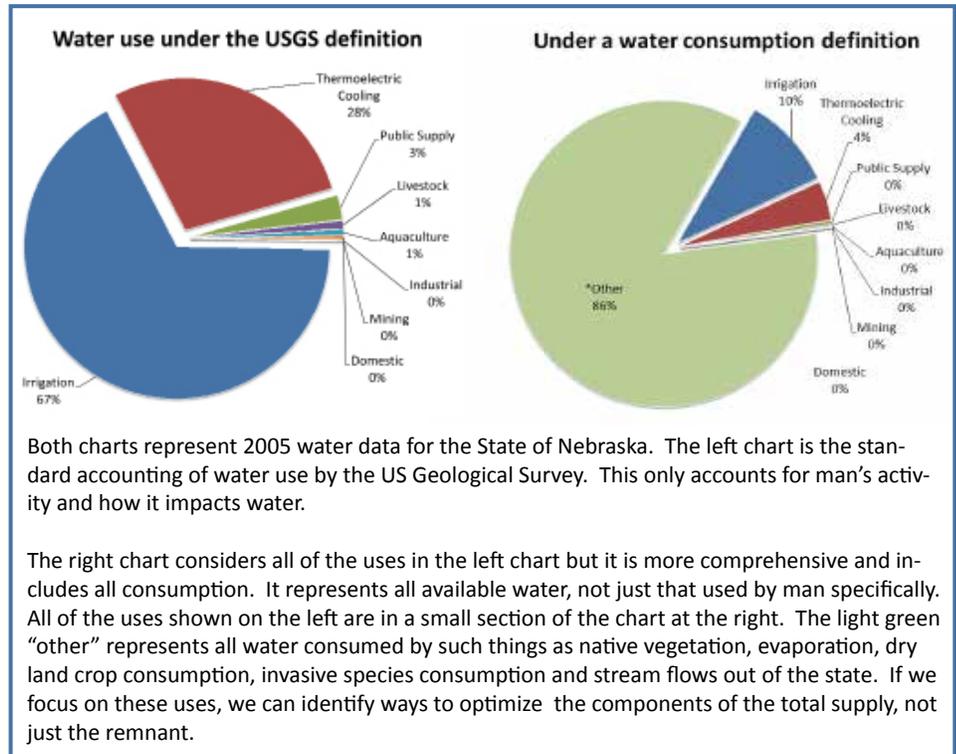
Water Balance is a new concept for most people to think about. I am hoping that with this commentary and the accompanying chart, I can help develop a basic understanding of what water balance is and where the opportunities may lie for better water management in our future.

Let's start with the big picture.

The pie chart on the left is the water identified by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) as used or consumed in the state by certain human activities. It includes agriculture, power plant cooling, municipal use, industrial use and of course irrigation. In 2005 this amounted to about 15 million acre feet and is the water use that is generally considered manageable or to be managed. This is the model which is almost always referred to when water usage management is looked at in the state. Droughts force competition for available water as this pie is reduced through climatic variability. In reality, our annual usage only comprises about 15% of the total water available in the state.

The pie chart on the right represents a comprehensive look at the total amount of water available in Nebraska in 2005. On average it amounts to about 95 million acre feet of water. As we all know, Nebraska has some extreme weather variability so on any given year the amount of water available in the state can be as

Water balance: A process to allocate water consumption. It requires an understanding of the value of the different consumptions and a negotiation of the opportunities and trade-offs associated with sustainability. By using this comprehensive approach, there may be more water to allocate than was previously believed.



low as 60 million acre feet or as high as 140 million acre feet.

One of the keys then is to first understand how much water flows into the state, how much water in the form of precipitation falls on the land mass of the state, how much is captured and stored in the lakes and aquifers, and how much water leaves the state in the form of evaporation, transpiration and stream flows. This inventory is called a water budget, kind of like keeping a checkbook balance so you always know where you are with your bank account balance. It could be done on a state wide basis, on each river basin in the state or on any other specific area of interest.

In general the information to do a water budget is currently available through a variety of sources; it just needs to be assembled.

Making a difference

Now, let's move back to the other 85% part of the 'consumption' pie chart. This is where the real benefits

of a water balance approach to water management can really make a difference. That 85% of the water in the state is consumed by native vegetation transpiration, evaporation of rain from the land or from lakes, dry land crop usage and transpiration, use by invasive species, and of course the water that flows out of the state. On average, this amounts to about 80 million acre feet of water that we are not currently accounting for.

In summary, water balance is about looking at the big picture and understanding how all of our water is used and consumed in the state. By working together we should be able to make our piece of the water usage pie bigger by reducing losses from non beneficial consumption. By making our piece of available water bigger through innovative water management techniques, there should be enough water for all which lessens the need for restrictive regulation which harms our economy.

Until next time...

Robert Heinz,
General Manager



Our economy, Our water, Our future.

Are you concerned about the availability and sustainability of water resources in Nebraska? Join the group of producers, businesses and organizations who support the water balance concept.

Visit: www.nebraskawaterbalance.org for more information.