

**GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT PUBLIC
RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

Carrington, ND

January 9, 2025

10:45 AM

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance
- II. Roll Call
- III. Consideration of Minutes
 - A. **>July 18, 2024**
- IV. Public Relations Activities
 - A. Task Order
 - 1. **>2025 Strategic Communications Services – TO GF 1.48**
 - B. **>2025 Work Plan & Budget**
 - C. Submitted Articles
 - 1. >ND Water January 2025
 - 2. >ND Water December 2024
 - 3. >ND Water November 2024
 - 4. >ND Water October 2024
 - D. Submitted News Releases
 - 1. >Matching Recreation Grant Program – 10-1-24
 - 2. >MR&I Grants – 9-25--24
 - 3. >MR&I Grants – 8-19-24
 - E. Garrison Diversion & RRVWSP News Articles
 - 1. >1-6-25 Forum
 - 2. >10-21-24 GF Herald
 - 3. >10-14-24 Foster County Independent
 - 4. >10-10-24 GF Herald
 - 5. >10-7-24 Foster County Independent
 - 6. >8-10-24 Herald Press
 - F. RRVWSP Newsletter
 - 1. >2024 Newsletter Analytics

2. >4th Quarter 2024

3. >3rd Quarter 2024

G. Upcoming Conferences and PR Events

1. >Red River Basin Commission Conference, Jan. 14-16 – Grand Forks

2. >Rural Water Expo, January 21-23 – Bismarck

H. Other Business

1. Career Fairs

The following minutes are in draft form subject to review and approval by the Public Relations Committee at its next meeting.

24-08

GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

**Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Carrington, North Dakota
July 18, 2024**

A meeting of the Public Relations Committee of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District was held on July 18, 2024, at the district headquarters in Carrington, North Dakota. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Dave Anderson at 8:45 a.m.

DIRECTORS PRESENT

Committee Chairman Dave Anderson
Director Nikki Boote
Director Ward Koeser (by video conference)
Secretary Kimberly Cook

DIRECTORS ABSENT

Board Chairman Alan Walter
Director Margo Knorr

A copy of the registration sheet is attached to these minutes as Annex I.

OTHERS PRESENT

The meeting was recorded to assist with compilation of the minutes.

READING OF THE MINUTES

Motion by Director Boote to dispense with a reading of the January 11, 2024, minutes and approve them as distributed. Second by Director Koeser. Upon voice vote, motion carried.

PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES

Submitted Articles - - Kimberly Cook, Communications Director, Garrison Diversion, referred to and reviewed articles submitted to the *ND Water* magazine on behalf of Garrison Diversion. Previously, ten issues of the magazine were published each year, which has been reduced to eight.

News Releases - - Ms. Cook also referred to and reviewed various news releases prepared by Garrison Diversion and submitted to local and daily newspapers relating to Garrison Diversion and the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP).

News Articles - - Ms. Cook called attention to various news articles, which were published in state and local newspapers, relating to Garrison Diversion and RRVWSP activities.

RRVWSP Newsletter - - Heather Syverson, Advanced Engineering & Environmental Services, reviewed the first quarter RRVWSP newsletter analytics from March 11, 2024, stating it received the best open rate its ever had. Seventy-one percent of those who received the newsletter opened it. It also had some of the highest click rates on each of the articles within the newsletter.

Ms. Syverson added the average open rate for industry standard newsletters is 37 percent and the click rate is two percent. The open and click rates for RRVWSP is almost double that for the first quarter issue.

Ms. Syverson reported the second quarter RRVWSP newsletter had an open rate of 46.4 percent; however, the average open rates on newsletters range from 45 to 60 percent.

Ms. Syverson also explained different ways people can subscribe to the quarterly newsletter.

Discussion was held regarding how to better inform and educate counties about the RRVWSP that may be interested in receiving water from the project.

Public Relations Products

County Benefits Handouts

Ms. Cook referred to the county benefit handouts included with the meeting materials, which have been prepared at the request of the county director regarding his/her member county. The handout shares information pertaining to the particular county, including when the county joined the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, programs offered by Garrison Diversion, and any benefits the county may have received.

Ms. Cook said if directors would like a handout prepared with their county's information/benefits, contact her.

Meetings and Conferences - - Chairman Anderson reviewed a list of upcoming conferences and public relation events.

OTHER

Water Topics Overview Committee

Ms. Cook reported the next Water Topics Overview Committee will be held in September, and the group will be touring the RRVWSP pipeline construction sites.

Career Fairs

Ms. Cook informed the committee Garrison Diversion is in search of an additional engineer and has registered to attend the career fairs relating to science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) at UND, NDSU and the University of Mary this fall in hopes of recruiting engineering prospects.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

(SEAL)

Dave Anderson, Chairman

Kimberly Cook, Secretary

REGISTRATION

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District
Carrington, North Dakota
July 18, 2024

NAME	ADDRESS
Lisa Schaper	GDCD
Michelle B.	GDCD
Merrill Merrill	GDCD
Kip Kover	GDCD
Dana Anderson	GDCD - Pierce
Ward Kover	GDCD
JEFF LEDOUX	GDCD
Cliff Hapner	GDCD
Ann Pellman	GDCD
Kelly Klostermann	GDCD
Paul Boersma	BV
Greg Bischoff	GDCD
Sybil Anderson	GDCD
Duane DeKrey	GDCD
On-Line	
Heather Syverson	Advanced Engineering
Jarret Bauer	Garrison Diversion
Sabrina Scherr	Garrison Diversion



Black & Veatch Corporation

Professional Services for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project
Under General Agreement dated January 17, 2008

Task Order GF 1.48 – 2025 Strategic Communications Services

Effective Date – January 1, 2025

Content of this Task Order (TO) is as follows:

- I. PROJECT BACKGROUND..... 1
- II. TASK ORDER OBJECTIVES..... 2
- III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS..... 2
- IV. BASIC SERVICES..... 3
- V. DELIVERABLES..... 4
- VI. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNER..... 4
- VII. FEE..... 5
- VIII. PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE 5
- IX. DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND ATTACHMENTS 5
- X. ACCEPTANCE..... 5

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

1. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (Project) will provide an emergency and supplemental water supply to central and eastern North Dakota (ND) in the event of moderate or severe drought conditions providing resiliency for the communities and economy in the Red River Valley. The Project, as envisioned by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion, Owner), will also supply additional water to support industrial development as well as provide an environmental benefit to local rivers during drought conditions by augmenting natural stream flows. The source water will be withdrawn from the McClusky Canal west of the City of McClusky, ND, treated at a nearby biota water treatment plant. A 125-mile, multi-county pipeline will then convey flows from the plant east to the Sheyenne River. Lake Ashtabula located downstream will provide storage allowing for controlled releases to the Red River Valley when flow augmentation is needed.
2. Professional services to develop, implement, and support the overall Project’s communication program are being accomplished through the execution of annual task orders. The approach in this Task Order is like previous Task Orders undertaken since 2021. Black & Veatch’s (Engineer’s) Consultant, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC, will be primarily responsible for the execution of this Task Order collaborating with Garrison Diversion’s in-house staff.

II. TASK ORDER OBJECTIVES

1. With the RRVWSP under construction and seeking significant funding from the State of North Dakota during the upcoming legislative session, this Task Order will assist Garrison Diversion in the development of a consistent and reliable communications strategy for project sponsors, community leaders, legislators, state leaders, and strategic partners.
2. Coordinating communications outreach during the 2025 legislative session, which will include working with staff, LAWA, and public affairs consultants to develop messaging in support of legislative requests, testimony development, presentation, and informational handouts to respond to legislative information requests and outreach.
3. Focus on assisting Garrison Diversion staff with the efforts of education, advocacy, and outreach to provide up to date and accurate information about the Project.
4. Planning and support for events that elevate the status of Garrison Diversion and the Project, including industry conferences and special events.
5. Tracking and reporting of project media coverage as well as quarterly newsletter and social media analytics.
6. Provide website maintenance as requested for the RRVWSP, Garrison Diversion, and LAWA websites.

III. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Under this Task Order, Engineer through its Consultant will provide services in accordance with the Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services dated January 17, 2008 (Agreement).
2. General Description of Activities. The Basic Services to be performed by the Engineer's Consultant consist of professional services associated with the project development and communications for the Project.
3. Work outside Basic and Special Services. Engineer through its Consultant agrees to provide the Basic Services and Special Services identified herein. Work not specifically discussed herein as part of Basic Services or Special Services is considered Additional Services. Additional Services will only be performed with proper separate authorization such as an amendment to this Task Order or a new separate Task Order.
4. Explicit Responsibilities. Basic Services and Special Services explicitly set forth the services Engineer's Consultant will perform and do not implicitly put any additional responsibilities or duties upon the Project Team and Communications Team. Deliverables to be provided are explicitly identified in the Deliverables paragraph of this Task Order.
5. Explicitly Identified Quantities. Engineer's Consultant in development of this Task Order estimates the level of effort required to provide the services discussed. Where specific

information is listed as to the quantity of service to be provided, those quantities listed are considered Basic Services or Special Services and are, therefore, included in this Task Order scope of service and associated fee estimate. Services exceeding the written quantities shown below in Basic Services or Special Services are considered Additional Services.

IV. BASIC SERVICES

Basic Services of this Task Order are organized into major tasks as follows:

Communications

- Task 1 – Strategic Communications Planning and Management
- Task 2 – Public and Media Relations
- Task 3 – Legislative Session Support
- Task 4 – Education and Engagement Support
- Task 5 – Owned Media Support (Digital, Social, Video, Design)
- Task 6 – Website Maintenance

1. Task 1 – Strategic Communications Planning and Management

This task includes overall management of Project Development related to communications and public outreach, the strategic development of and deployment of communication efforts for various audiences, and Communications Team meetings with Garrison Diversion staff.

2. Task 2 – Public and Media Relations

This task includes the quarterly development and dissemination of the RRVWSP newsletter and analytic reports that provide the newsletter open and click rates, as well as most read articles; as well as media monitoring to identify and assess the positive negative or neutral view of the RRVWSP, Garrison Diversion, and/or LAWA. This task also includes the monthly cost of the Constant Contact email marketing account utilized to send the newsletter, event invitations, and other Project updates, as well as the annual cost to utilize Meltwater, a program that tracks traditional media and social media sentiments about the Project, Garrison Diversion, and LAWA.

3. Task 3 – Legislative Session Support

This task includes the development of messaging in support of the 2025 legislative requests in support of the RRVWSP as well as creation of materials including testimony, presentations, graphics, videos, and handouts related to the 2025 legislative session This task includes working with Garrison Diversion staff, LAWA members, and public affairs consultants to respond to legislator requests for information and coordinate Project supporters for testimony and legislator outreach.

4. Task 4 – Education and Engagement Support

This task includes working with Garrison Diversion staff and LAWA members to plan, coordinate, strategize, and execute communication services through the strategic development of articles,

news releases, handouts, mailers, presentations, videos, graphics, and website content to educate and engage stakeholders, end users, affected landowners, and the public on key areas of the project. This task also includes communication and design services as described above to provide an extension of staff on an on-call basis.

5. Task 5 – Owned Media Support (Digital, Social, Video, Design)

This task includes the creation of four quarterly social media plans for Facebook and Twitter, as well as daily monitoring for comments and the development of responses, plus graphic design for social media posts.

6. Task 6 – Website Maintenance

Provide on-call website maintenance services for Garrison Diversion, Lake Agassiz Water Authority, and the RRVWSP as needed. This task includes fixing any issues that may develop with the three sites, as well as providing help to Garrison Diversion staff with creating, removing webpages, or adding new functions to the sites on an as-needed basis. This includes website hosting services and fees.

V. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be furnished under this Task Order. Documents or deliverables not included in the list below will be provided as Additional Services as authorized by the Owner.

1. Quarterly newsletter creation, dissemination, and analytics reports.
2. Quarterly social media content development, scheduling on Facebook and Twitter, and analytics report.
3. Content, video, and graphics development for owned media such as website, handouts, newsletters, social media, posters/signage, and presentations.
4. Development, media relations, and promotion of earned (traditional) media.
5. Development of standardized talking points for consistent messaging by Garrison Diversion, stakeholders, community leaders, and other interested groups.
6. Hosting services and on-call website maintenance for three websites associated with the RRVWSP – Garrison Diversion, LAWA, and RRVWSP sites.

VI. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNER

1. Interim Deliverable Review Requirements. Owner commits to review periods for interim deliverables of no more than fourteen calendar days after receipt of deliverables from Engineer's Consultant.
2. Provide Relevant Information. Owner agrees to provide relevant information and content regarding requirements for the various tasks. The Engineer's Consultant shall be entitled to use

and rely upon all information provided by the Owner or Owner’s consultants in performing services under this Task Order.

- 3. Advertising and Rental Fees. Owner agrees to pay directly to publication(s) or venues the fees of all public advertisements or in relation to conferences and events.

VII. FEE

The total fee for Basic Services provided under this Task Order is One Hundred Nine Thousand Dollars (\$109,000).

A worksheet showing the fee and level of effort by task is included in Attachment A.

VIII. PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

This scope and schedule start on January 1, 2025, with anticipated completion on or before December 31, 2025.

IX. DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE AND ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Standard Form of Agreement between Owner and Engineer for Professional Services dated January 17, 2008, is incorporated by reference.
- 2. Attachment A – Fee Estimate Worksheets

X. ACCEPTANCE

If this satisfactorily sets forth your understanding of this Task Order, please print and sign this document. You should retain one copy for your files and return an electronic copy via email to Paul Boersma (BoersmaPM@BV.com) with Black & Veatch Corporation.

By: _____
 Duane DeKrey, General Manager
 Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

By: _____
 Paul Boersma, Vice President
 Black & Veatch Corporation

Dated: _____

Dated: _____

DRAFT
2025 WORK PLAN
Garrison Diversion Conservancy District

A. Public Relations

1. Develop, publish and distribute 2024 Annual Report
2. Develop and distribute RRVWSP Quarterly Newsletter
3. Develop ND Water magazine stories (8 issues)
4. Staff Garrison Diversion and LAWA display booths at appropriate conferences and events
5. Prepare and distribute news releases regarding Garrison Diversion, RRVWSP and LAWA efforts
6. Develop and update public information pieces as needed
7. Maintain social media sites for GDCD and RRVWSP
8. Implement 2025 Communications Work Plan
9. Finalize and install wall displays at headquarters building

* 2025 additions

GARRISON DIVERSION CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
Public Relations Budget

	Budget 2024*	Budget 2025
<u>Public Education</u>		
GDCD Tours	10,000	10,000
ND Water Users	20,000	20,000
ND Water Coalition	14,000	14,000
ND Water Magazine	18,000	20,000
Missouri River Joint Board	51,000	21,000
Upper Sheyenne	50,000	50,000
Conferences/Sponsorships	20,000	20,000
Miscellaneous	10,000	10,000
Total Public Education	193,000	165,000
<u>Professional Services</u>		
Communications	\$140,000	140,000
Total	333,000	305,000

* Original 2024 Budget

Successful Construction Season Leads Into 2025 Legislative Session

By Kimberly Cook

Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) construction wrapped up in mid-November with the most pipe installed in one construction season. Crews from Oscar Renda Contracting, Carstensen Contracting Inc., and Garney Construction were blessed with an exceptionally mild fall without any snowfall until late November.

“Despite receiving 30 inches of rain this year, the contractors prevailed over the wet conditions. Previous experience with groundwater issues allowed the crews to put into practice what we’ve learned over the past couple years,” says Kip Kovar, deputy program manager for RRVWSP Engineering. “This is the most efficient construction season to date, and we saw the most pipe installed since construction began on the 72-inch transmission pipeline.”

RRVWSP co-sponsors Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) are preparing to support the project during North Dakota’s upcoming legislative session which begins on January 7, 2025.

Representatives will request \$221 million in the Department of Water Resources budget to fund the 2025-2027 work plan. During the 2023 session, state lawmakers approved legislative intent for the RRVWSP totaling \$953 million in future funding.



“We are grateful to the legislature for previously providing legislative intent for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Having state support provides peace of mind to the project’s end users. Thank you to legislators for supporting this project to ensure it is constructed in a timely manner,” says Merri Mooridian, deputy program manager of RRVWSP administration.

For the 2023–2025 biennium, RRVWSP received \$180 million in the Department of Water Resources Budget. Local users provided \$61.5 million and \$4.5 million came from the Municipal Rural and Industrial (MR&I) Program. The funding allowed the RRVWSP team to complete the design of the transmission pipeline, bid and award several construction contracts, move construction forward, and provide financial planning and studies for RRVWSP end users. Before the end of the biennium on June 30, engineers will complete the design of RRVWSP facilities such as the water treatment plant. Eighty percent of the easements needed for the project have been acquired as of December 2024.

“Construction crews made a lot of progress this year and we’re in a great place with design. We’re hoping to keep the momentum going into 2025 and beyond, with continued funding from the state,” Garrison Diversion General Manager Duane DeKrey says.

“The Red River Valley can go from flooding to drought conditions in a matter of months. We can’t prevent the next drought from happening, but we can be prepared. With large dollar figures already committed, it is crucially important to get the project completed within the 10-year construction timeframe, to maximize our investment and mitigate the economic effects of moderate and severe

drought conditions with this emergency and supplemental water supply.” Grand Forks Mayor and LAWA Vice Chair Brandon Bochenski says.

This year, Garney Construction completed the pipe installation on Contract 5B east of Carrington. The contractor will return in 2025 to complete land restoration, structure build out, hydrostatic testing, and soil haul off. Oscar Renda made progress on the 5C contract which includes approximately eight miles of pipeline and three major trenchless crossings east of Carrington, in Foster County. Carstensen Contracting Inc. also made progress on the 5D contract which involves 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek in western Foster County and eastern Wells County. Currently, 18 miles of the 125-mile buried pipeline are in the ground.

In December, Carstensen was awarded Contract 6A for \$52,258,500, which is their second contract in the RRVWSP. The contract includes construction of a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County, as well as two 96-inch-diameter trenchless highway crossings and one 96-inch-diameter trenchless wetland crossing.

Construction on 6A is scheduled to begin in the spring. The remaining portions of contracts 5C, 5D and land restoration will resume in 2025, as soon as weather permits. When the RRVWSP transmission pipeline is complete, it will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River about six miles south of Cooperstown. The RRVWSP is projected to serve nearly half of North Dakota’s population, from the central part of the state to the eastern side.



Carrington, Cooperstown, Valley City, and McLean Sheridan Rural Water District Join RRVWSP

The RRVWSP user base is growing as the cities of Carrington, Cooperstown and Valley City, as well as the McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District, recently signed memorandums of commitment to join the RRVWSP.

Tom Erdmann is the mayor of Carrington and the city's representative on the LAWA board of directors. LAWA is a co-sponsor of the RRVWSP, alongside Garrison Diversion, which is headquartered in Carrington.

"Our aquifer is presently a tremendous asset to our community. The Red River Valley water supply, in addition to our excellent Carrington aquifer, will help us during drought conditions," Erdmann says. "Additionally, we project a potential need for industrial water in the event we could become a site for another value-added processing plant. Carrington is located in the center of the state with excellent infrastructure running through our community with access to the two major railroads, an unrestricted highway system, and all the amenities that another value-added agriculture processing plant might be looking for."

The city of Carrington nominated for 0.50 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water. In addition to the future economic development opportunities the RRVWSP will provide, Carrington already benefits from an economic boost due to construction activities in Foster County. The 2024 construction season brought more than 100 workers to live and work in the city.

"We have seen a substantial increase in our sales tax collection. We presently have a 2% local sales tax that generated \$1.08 million in 2023. As of the first 10 months of 2024, we are \$184,000 ahead of last year's record sales tax collection. We are seeing an immediate impact from the construction activities on the pipeline," Erdmann says. "In addition to the construction activities, there are engineers on the site who live here in Carrington, and Garrison Diversion has added employees due to the workload associated with the project."

Valley City nominated for 2 cubic feet per second (cfs) from the RRVWSP. Valley City Mayor Dave Carlsrud is also its representative on the LAWA board of directors. He says participation in the RRVWSP is essentially an insurance policy for residents and businesses.

"We have been blessed with our aquifers so far. But we



don't know what would happen during a drought. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project is insurance for us," Carlsrud says. "Joining provides peace of mind, especially for elected officials because we have to answer the tough questions if Valley City doesn't have enough water. This is the right thing to do for the next generation."

Beyond the need for an emergency supply of water, Carlsrud says access to a supplemental water supply is valuable for economic development because it will make it easier for Valley City to recruit new businesses.

Cooperstown City Auditor Christine Olson says with the RRVWSP transmission pipeline's proximity so close to Cooperstown, it only makes sense to participate. The city nominated for 0.20 cfs.

"Participation ensures a water source for the future as well as allowing for future growth, whether commercial or residential," Olson explains. She says joining the RRVWSP will, "allow the opportunity to say 'yes' should a high-water using industry want to locate in Cooperstown."

McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District Manager Ann Broussard says the district's board of directors made the decision to participate in the RRVWSP primarily due to potential economic development initiatives that are being considered in the service area. A number of these potential initiatives would need large volumes of water. "If McLean-Sheridan Rural Water were to add only one or two bulk users to our system, the financial benefits to our existing customers would be significant. Growth in our water sales helps stabilize water rates for everyone served by our system, now and in the future," Broussard explains.

The four water providers join the city of Fargo, which will serve West Fargo and Cass Rural Water, as well as Grand Forks, which will provide service to East Grand Forks, Minn. Both Hillsboro and Mayville have also signed an MOC.

Good Bye To Dedicated Directors



This article is dedicated to two long-time members of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) board of directors, who are passing the torch to their successors at the end of 2024.

Both members have served for more than 20 years, and take with them a multitude of knowledge. The remaining directors and staff will remember them fondly for their insight, humor, kindness and service.

As a multi-purpose project, Garrison Diversion aims to provide opportunities for industry, water supply, agriculture, recreation and development of our natural resources. Its mission is to provide a reliable, high-quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota. Twenty-eight members make up the governing board of directors and each member is an elected representative of their county. Together, they all work to fulfill Garrison Diversion's mission.

E. Ward Koeser, Williams County, and Richard Cayko, McKenzie County, are stepping away from their duties on Dec. 31, 2024, and in October, the individuals participated in their last quarterly board meeting. At that time, the service and dedication of Ward and Richard was celebrated at a farewell banquet in their honor.

Richard Cayko

Cayko holds the distinction of being the first board member from McKenzie County, as he was appointed in 2003 when McKenzie County petitioned to be a part of Garrison Diversion, and elected thereafter. He served as a McKenzie County commissioner for 20 years. As a commissioner, he served on multiple committees and boards, gaining a greater understanding of rural water development and economic development, adding value to his position as a board member.

Cayko has enthusiastically served on the Recreation Committee since his appointment to the board. “I think it’s important for people to know that Garrison Diversion is about more than just getting water across the state to central and eastern North Dakota,” Cayko says. “Our recreation program helps with recreational development across North Dakota, and benefits all communities, especially the smaller communities, as they don’t usually have the resources to do recreation projects on their own. The Matching Recreation Grant Program has been a huge success for Garrison Diversion.”

Cayko brought valuable agricultural experience to the board as a fourth-generation farmer living in rural McKenzie County. Irrigated sugar beets, small grains, corn, beans and alfalfa have been raised on the family farm. From 1992 to 2000, he was named among the top 10 sugar beet producers in his region.

Cayko understands the value behind irrigated crops and serves as the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project district director and chairman of the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project board of control.

Overall, Cayko believes Garrison Diversion has positively impacted North Dakota. “I couldn’t believe it the first time I heard of someone hauling water for their household needs,” he says. “When I was a county commissioner, I saw firsthand how the MR&I program Garrison Diversion helps with gets water to people who really need it all across the state.

“I feel Garrison Diversion provides an opportunity for the people of North Dakota to benefit from a valuable natural resource,” Cayko continues. “Now we have our Red River Valley Water Supply Project under construction which is going to have a strong impact on the people and



Board Chair Alan Walter with McKenzie County Director Richard Cayko.

industries in central and eastern North Dakota. Without water, we can’t do much.”

Cayko and his wife, Catherine, enjoy traveling together. “Typically, we drive when heading to Louisiana to visit family. It’s a good way to see a lot of the country, and enjoyable to watch the different phases of farming throughout the Midwest.”

Garrison Diversion Awards

Garrison Diversion’s MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion’s member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

“Garrison Diversion is helping to provide a better quality of life for our citizens and strengthen our rural communities through the Water Supply Assistance Grant program,” says Geneva Kaiser, chair of Garrison

Ward Koeser

Koeser began his service to Garrison Diversion in 2003 and makes his mark as the first board representative from Williams County, one of the newest counties to join Garrison Diversion.

Koeser's longevity on the board has been an asset to the group, and he brings forth passion and perspective in his participation. He currently serves on the Public Relations Committee and says, "I am pleased to be a team member in this group working together to cast a vision for water in the state. To be part of a number of organizations working together to best develop the state's water resources is gratifying."

Koeser's water interests are not limited to Garrison Diversion as he also serves on the board for the Western Area Water Supply. He is currently a board trustee at Oklahoma Wesleyan University and involved in multiple other boards and committees with various interests. He served 20 years as the mayor of Williston. Most recently, Koeser was appointed to the North Dakota Ethics Commission by Gov. Doug Burgum.

Koeser has been presented with many awards, including the Army Commendation Medal in 1977. He and his wife, Joetta, have three children.

Of his time on the Garrison Diversion board of directors, Koeser says, "It's the people on the board and the staff that have made this job fun. I've put on 40 to 50,000 miles doing this job, going to meetings and such, which I'm not going to miss!"



Board Chair Alan Walter with
McKenzie County Director Richard Cayko.

"I'm from oil country but I always have remembered, and still believe firmly, our greatest natural resource in North Dakota is water. Oil will come and go; water will always be here as long as humanity is on this earth. Thank you for the opportunity to do this. I'm phasing out of a few boards, but I have great memories of being on the C-District board, and I wish you all the very best."

Water Supply Assistance Grants

Diversion's MR&I Committee. "This program is an excellent example of giving back to our district."

In September, the MR&I Committee awarded \$63,747 to 13 water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

- **All Seasons Water Users District** - \$20,000 for two customer hookups
- **East Central Regional Water District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup
- **Southeast Water Users District** - \$30,997 for nine customer hookups

- **Stutsman Rural Water District** - \$2,750 for one customer hookup

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is **May 1**. There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less.

Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.



Hillsboro and Mayville Sign Memorandum of Commitment to Join RRVWSP

By Kimberly Cook

Two Traill County communities have made the first official step towards joining the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP). Leaders from cities of Hillsboro and Mayville signed and submitted Memorandums of Commitment (MOC) to Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA), the state co-sponsors of the RRVWSP.

Mayville and Hillsboro each nominated for 0.5 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the RRVWSP. When the RRVWSP is constructed, a buried 72-inch pipeline will transport Missouri River water at up to 165 cfs to cities and rural water systems from central North Dakota to the Red River Valley where Hillsboro and Mayville are located.

Hillsboro City Commission President Levi Reese says planning for the future is the biggest factor in Hillsboro's decision to move forward with RRVWSP participation. "With the growing demand on infrastructure that is needed in today's world, we know we need to prepare for the future. This water supply gives the community a backup to a very limited resource," he explains. "We have plenty of water for today and tomorrow, but we cannot predict what the future will hold for Hillsboro. This

resource gives our community stability so that if there is a need or an issue in the future, we can keep the water running to our residents and to industry."

Mayville council member Bill Bohnsack has been involved with discussions about the RRVWSP for many years as the LAWA director representing Mayville. He says he is glad Mayville has committed to the supplemental water supply. "I believe access to water is going to become increasingly important in the future. We've got to have a reliable water supply for any future growth," says Bohnsack.

RRVWSP representatives have been meeting with rural water systems, cities and counties in 2024 to provide information about the benefits and costs associated with RRVWSP participation. The Carrington City Council and Valley City's City Commission also voted to approve participation in the RRVWSP. The next step will be for each city to submit a signed MOC.

A signed MOC indicates a water system intends to execute the Project Participation Agreement (PPA) to be part of the RRVWSP and will identify the specific water supply nomination from the RRVWSP. The MOC also means the water system agrees to provide funding for their allocated share of the local portion of the 2023-2025 RRVWSP work plan. If a system ultimately decides not to sign the PPA, another LAWA member could negotiate to take on the nomination rights and obligations before the PPA is signed.

Sen. Hoeven Sponsors Legislation to Support ENDAWS, Sen. Cramer and Rep. Armstrong Provide Support in U.S. Senate and House

Sen. John Hoeven introduced bipartisan legislation in mid-September to support more reliable, drought-resistant water supplies in North Dakota while also helping to fulfill federal compensation that was promised to the state and tribes upon the construction of the Garrison Dam and Oahe Dam.

Specifically, the bill would amend the Dakota Water Resources Act (DWRA) to increase authorizations under the Municipal, Rural, and Industrial (MR&I) water supply grant program for North Dakota and the five tribal nations in the state. North Dakota will reach the state MR&I authorization ceiling at the end of fiscal year 2024. An increase is necessary to complete ongoing water supply projects, including the Northwest Area Water Supply Project (NAWS) and the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply Project (ENDAWS).

ENDAWS is an alternate bulk water supply to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), a municipal, rural and industrial water supply project being developed to meet the water needs of central and eastern North Dakota. The state project, co-sponsored by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA), is designed with an intake on the Missouri River. Garrison Diversion estimates using the proposed alternate water source of Reclamation's McClusky Canal could save millions of dollars in construction and operations and maintenance costs.

The DWRA amendment would also ensure that biota water treatment (BWT) costs are fully accounted for, which are the responsibility of the federal government. Although the DWRA authorized funding for non-reimbursable costs related to BWT facilities, no authorization ceiling was outlined in the legislation. As a result, North Dakota and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) have been forced to allocate significant MR&I resources to cover federal responsibilities under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

Hoeven discussed the legislation at a hearing of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee and secured the support of BOR Commissioner Camille Touton for the measure. The senator has twice hosted Touton in North Dakota to review progress on the state's water supply projects, where he outlined to the commissioner the issues with the MR&I program. The legislation comes as the result of Hoeven's work with Touton, BOR, Garrison Diversion, and North Dakota stakeholders to identify and advance solutions to these issues.

"The Garrison Diversion was established to compensate North Dakota and tribal nations in the state for the loss of more than a half a million of surface acreage when federal reservoirs were established along the Missouri River," Hoeven said. "Not only was the Garrison Diversion never completed, but the grant program authorizations meant to replace the project were inadequate to cover the long-term needs of North Dakota and tribal



Sen. John Hoeven



Sen. Kevin Cramer



Rep. Kelly Armstrong

communities. Our legislation would correct this issue, helping to ensure that the MR&I program has sufficient funding authorizations to support water supply projects across the state, like NAWS and ENDAWS. I appreciate commissioner Touton for her continued willingness to work with us on these important issues and her support of moving this bill forward.”

The legislation is cosponsored by Sen. Kevin Cramer and Sen. Alex Padilla of California. Rep. Kelly Armstrong introduced a companion to the bill in the House of Representatives.

“This legislation is crucial for securing safe and dependable water supplies for North Dakota’s communities and tribal nations,” Cramer says. “These amendments

will fulfill a debt owed to North Dakota by the federal government for damming up the Missouri river. It will also help ensure we can complete critical water infrastructure projects and address pressing needs across the state.”

“We must deliver an adequate and reliable water supply across the state at an affordable rate,” Armstrong says. “In 2000, when the Dakota Water Resources Act passed, it was supposed to protect North Dakota’s water supply and keep it reliable. Our legislation amends the Dakota Water Resources Act to provide our producers with the rates that Congress intended, it gives our state clarity when building a more dependable water supply and secures clean drinking water to our North Dakota communities and the five tribal nations.”

20TH Annual Top O' the Day Tee-Off



By Kimberly Cook

Event organizers couldn't have asked for nicer weather for the 20th Annual Top O' the Day Tee-Off Golf Scramble. The North Dakota Water Education Foundation (NDWEF) and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District hosted the scramble at CrossRoads Golf Course in Carrington to raise funds for the Dushinske & Jamison Water Resources Scholarship Endowment. Scholarship funds honor two North Dakota water giants, Russell Dushinske and Warren Jamison, who are remembered for their distinguished service, dedicated leadership and lifelong devotion to water development in North Dakota.

Students whose families have taken an active role in state water resource management and are attending a North Dakota college or university are eligible to apply for one of four \$1,500 scholarships awarded each year.

The 20th annual event attracted 130 golfers, vying for top finishes and prizes donated by 20 generous sponsors who filled the course with contests and promotional items. The day ended with dinner and an awards ceremony at the CrossRoads clubhouse recognizing the first-, third- and 20th-place teams, as well as contest winners featured at many of the holes.

Tyler and Ashley Reisenauer and Arick and Sabrina Scherr brought home bragging rights and first-place prizes by shooting a 56.



“We are so grateful to the tournament sponsors, planners, golfers and workers that make this tourney a success,” Diane Jamison-Richards said. “I’m so appreciative of all the participants who help keep this scholarship alive.”

Hole contests across the course provide a bit of additional friendly competition for the day. The lucky winners are as follows:

Individual Contest Winners

- Shortest Drive (Men) – Brad Carstensen
- Closest to Pin 2nd Shot – Arick Scherr
- Longest Drive (Women) – Jane VanRay
- Longest Drive (Men) – Alan Walter
- Closest to Pin 2nd Shot – Tyler Reisenauer
- Shortest Drive (Women) – Shayla Diede
- Longest Putt – Sabrina Scherr

A genuine thank you goes to the generous sponsors of the 20th Top O’ the Day Tee-Off, as their participation is vital to the success of the scramble. Many of these sponsors also provided door prizes or games of chance out on the course:

- AE2S (Marshmallow Putt)
- American Pipe
- Apex Engineering Group
- Bank Forward
- Bartlett & West, Inc. (Ax Throwing)
- Bessette Motors
- Black & Veatch
- Burian & Associates, LLC (Chipping Contest)
- Carstensen Contracting, Inc.
- Dakota Central (Jenga)
- Dwyer Law Office
- First International Bank & Trust
- Garney Construction
- HDR
- ND Irrigation Association (Estimation Game)
- ND Rural Water Systems Association
- Oscar Renda Contracting, Inc.
- David & Connie Sprynczynatyk
- Ulteig
- Vogel Law Firm



Jim, Hayden and Hudson Schmitz, along with Pierson Painter, were the third-place team, coming in with a score of 59.



Twentieth place honors were secured with a score of 66 by Clay and Kristin Larson, Dennis Freeman and Dan Miller.

Garrison Diversion Awards Water Supply Assistance Grants

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program also aids municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

"Garrison Diversion is helping to provide a better quality of life for our citizens and strengthen our rural communities through the Water Supply Assistance Grant program," says Geneva Kaiser, chair of Garrison Diversion's MR&I Committee. "This program is an excellent example of giving back to our district."



In August, the MR&I Committee awarded \$73,155 to 11 water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use. Additionally, one municipality received \$1,080 to assist with extraordinary OM&R.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

- Cass Rural Water District - \$10,000 for one customer hookup
- East Central Regional Water District - \$29,500 for three customer hookups
- McKenzie County Water Resource District - \$14,908 for three customer hookups
- McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District - \$3,424 for two customer hookups
- Stutsman Rural Water District - \$15,350 for two customer hookups
- City of McVille - \$1,080 for extraordinary OM&R

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is May 1. There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less.

Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.



Contact: Kimberly Cook
 Phone: 701.652.3194
 Email: kimberlyc@gdcd.org

For immediate release:

Garrison Diversion Matching Recreation Grant Program Awards \$436,257

The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) Recreation Committee awarded matching recreation grants to 14 projects, totaling \$436,257.

"Garrison Diversion is thrilled to give back to our member counties and help build recreation projects that will reach thousands of people across North Dakota," says committee chairman Larry Kassian. "It's exciting to positively impact a number of communities within our district."

The following counties received Matching Recreation Grant funds in the fall of 2024:

- **Bottineau County** – \$20,600 to the Newburg Park Board to construct a gazebo at the Newburg City Park
- **Cass County** - \$33,000 to the Fargo Park District for improvements to the Anderson Softball Complex; \$20,000 to the Argusville Park Board to update playground equipment at the Argusville Park
- **Grand Forks County** - \$16,687 to the Manvel Park Board for park improvements at the Manvel Community Park; \$37,500 to the Grand Forks Park District to update equipment at the Riverside Park Playground
- **McKenzie County** - \$50,000 to the Watford City Park District to develop the Kent Pelton Nature Park All-Inclusive Playground
- **Steele County** - \$30,361 to the Steele County Park Board to add a pickleball court to the Golden Lake Recreation Area; \$50,000 to the Hope Park Board for an event center
- **Stutsman County** - \$50,000 to the Jamestown Parks & Recreation District for renovations to the youth tee-ball fields at McElroy Park; \$28,503 to install updated playground equipment at the Jamestown Reservoir Playground; \$5,750 to assist with chain link fencing for youth baseball fields
- **Ward County** - \$12,250 for the City of Sawyer to install multi-sport courts in the city park; \$31,606 to the Minot Park District to install a new playground at the South Hill Softball Complex
- **Wells County** - \$50,000 to the Harvey Park District towards the installation of a new swimming pool in Harvey

Garrison Diversion dedicates two-tenths of its one-mill levy to the matching recreation grant program to qualifying projects within the 28-county district and has awarded over \$9.0 million to valuable recreation projects since the program began in 1990. The Recreation Committee meets every spring and fall to consider applications. The next deadline for recreation grant applications is May 1, 2025.

For additional information regarding the Matching Recreation Grant Program, please visit www.garrisondiversion.org or contact Garrison Diversion at 701.652.3194.

For more information:
Kimberly Cook
kimberlyc@gdcd.org

For Immediate Release:

Garrison Diversion Awards \$63,747 in Water Supply Assistance Grants

CARRINGTON, ND (September 25, 2024) --- The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

In September, the MR&I Committee awarded \$63,747 to 13 rural water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

- **All Seasons Water Users District** - \$20,000 for two customer hookups
- **Southeast Water Users District** - \$30,997 for nine customer hookups
- **Stutsman Rural Water District** - \$2,750 for one customer hookup
- **East Central Regional Water District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is **May 1**, although emergency requests are considered as needed. There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects for municipalities, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less. Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.

For more information:
Kimberly Cook
kimberlyc@gdcd.org

For Immediate Release:

Garrison Diversion Awards \$73,155 in Water Supply Assistance Grants

CARRINGTON, ND (August 19, 2024) --- The Garrison Diversion Conservancy District's (Garrison Diversion) MR&I Water Supply Assistance Grant Program provides funding assistance to offset the costs of new customer hookups to a rural water system or district within Garrison Diversion's member counties.

The Water Supply Assistance Grant Program is also in place to aid municipal water systems or districts with extraordinary OM&R projects or emergencies impacting the delivery of water to users, introduce health and safety issues, or bring potential harm to other infrastructure if not repaired.

In August, the MR&I Committee awarded \$73,155 to 11 rural water users in the district for residential, livestock and business use.

The following systems had projects receiving funding from the Water Supply Assistance Grant Program:

- **Cass Rural Water District** - \$10,000 for one customer hookup
- **East Central Regional Water District** - \$29,500 for three customer hookups
- **McKenzie County Water Resource District** - \$14,881 for three customer hookups
- **McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District** - \$3,424 for two customer hookups
- **Stutsman Rural Water District** - \$15,350 for two customer hookups

Additionally, the City of McVille received \$1,080 to assist with a water leak within the city.

There are two grant application periods each year. The next deadline for new customer hookup applications is **May 1**, although emergency requests are considered as needed. There continues to be no deadline on extraordinary OM&R projects for municipalities, as these will occur on an as-needed basis.

Eligibility requirements state the applicant must reside within one of Garrison Diversion's 28 member counties, must be or have a member sponsor that is a political subdivision (municipality or rural water district), and a municipality must serve a population of 5,000 people or less. Grant guidelines and applications can be found at www.garrisondiversion.org.

ND company sues Texas contractor for \$4.6M

Texas company working on Red River Valley Water Supply project accused of deceit to get out of contract



An aerial view of the intake structure under construction near Washburn, North Dakota, that will pump Missouri River water through a pipeline to central and eastern North Dakota via the Red River Valley Water Supply Project.

By Wendy Reuer - The Forum

FARGO — A North Dakota company has filed a more than \$4.6 million lawsuit against a Texas-based contractor in regard to the Red River Valley Water Supply project.

According to a complaint filed Dec. 16 in Cass County District Court, Strata, the North Dakota company, hopes to recoup the \$4.6 million Oscar Renda promised to pay for aggregate materials, along with damages and attorney fees. Strata alleges that Oscar Renda, a Texas-based company, breached its contract with the company and used deceit to do so, court documents said.

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project aims to carry water to the valley from the Missouri River. That involves a 125-mile pipeline along the State Highway 200 corridor with an outlet near Cooperstown on the Sheyenne River, which flows into the Red River. While the state of North Dakota and local users are planning to shoulder the cost, congressional delegations have been working to secure additional federal funding for the project, estimated to cost about \$1.1 billion.

Oscar Renda was contracted to install portions of the pipeline. In March, Oscar Renda entered into a purchase agreement for Strata to make and supply materials for a “public Red River Water Supply Project, which is owned by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District,” according to court documents.

Strata was to fabricate 85,000 tons of granular embedment, a ton of railroad ballast and 6,000 tons of gravel from the North Dakota Department of Transportation for a cost of about \$4.5 million.

Ordered in March, Strata began making the materials, but in June, Oscar Renda told Strata it no longer wanted the materials, because it would use a different product and vendor. On June 26, Oscar

Renda sent Strata a change order reducing the amount of material and cost from \$4.6 million to just over \$21,000, according to court documents.

Court records say Strata then made an open records request from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and found that on April 11, Oscar Renda requested the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District allow Oscar Renda to change the material from granular embedment — the materials the company contracted with Strata to provide — to cement-stabilized sand. The district provisionally approved the change and later Oscar Renda was assured it would be allowed to use the cement-stabilized sand for the remaining project, court documents said.

“Only after Oscar Renda received assurance from the GDCD that it would be allowed to continue using (cement stabilized sand) past the provisional period did Oscar Renda tell Strata in late June 2024 that it would no longer be needing Strata to supply (its materials),” the complaint said.

Strata alleges that Oscar Renda violated the state’s deceit laws by failing to tell the company it had requested that the GDCD allow a change in materials it would use, and instead let Strata begin gathering the materials Oscar Renda had requested.

Strata claims that it has tried to resolve the issues with Oscar Renda through negotiations. Now that Strata has filed the lawsuit, attorneys for Oscar Renda will have 21 days after they receive the complaint to respond.

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project is expected to be finished in 2032.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Wendy Reuer at wreuer@forumcomm.com or 701-241-5530.

SUBSCRIBERS ONLY NEWS NORTH DAKOTA

Red River Valley Water Supply Project seeking participants with 14 miles of pipeline installed so far

The 2023-2025 construction plan includes installing 27 miles of pipeline and completing the design on 52 more.



A crew works on installing pipeline for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Contributed / Garrison Diversion Conservancy District



By **Delaney Otto**

October 21, 2024 at 6:35 AM

Comments

Share

News Reporting

GRAND FORKS — A drought resiliency project and economic development initiative is slowly working its way from the Missouri River to the Red River, and communities through central and

eastern North Dakota are being approached to participate in the project.

Shawn Gaddie, project consultant from AE2S, a civil and environmental engineering consulting firm, said conversations with differing communities so far have been wide-ranging in what benefits communities can get from the project and how much they know about it.

“I’ll call it an eight-month road show,” he said. “Going all around central, southeastern, eastern and northeastern North Dakota — basically the entire project service area — and talking to all of the potential water systems, cities, counties that could potentially benefit from the project.

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), which will connect a pipeline from the Missouri River to the Red River Basin, has so far installed 14 miles of pipeline, said Kip Kovar, deputy program manager. The goal of the project is drought resiliency, providing water to communities in central and eastern North Dakota both in times of mild drought and severe, 1930’s-style drought. It is also an economic development initiative. According to the Bank of North Dakota’s Regional Economic Modeling Incorporated software, 23,800 residents and 15,600 jobs will be retained annually that would “otherwise be lost during a severe drought like the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s,” according to information provided by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and Lake Agassiz Water Authority. The two groups are working together on the project.

The 2023-2025 construction plan for the project includes installing 27 miles of pipeline and completing the design for 52 more. The projected finish line for the whole project is 2032. As the pipeline is installed, Gaddie and others are meeting with different city leaders and county commissions across the middle and eastern side of the state, informing them about the project and asking if they will

participate. Participation, he said, means the communities will be allocated water from the project and will assist in funding it.

The funding for the project is split between a state and local share, said Todd Feland, Grand Forks city administrator. Of the roughly \$1.2 billion project, the state will pay for 75%, allocating funds from biennium to biennium. The cities benefiting from the project will pay for 25%. Fargo and Grand Forks, the two largest cities participating in the RRVWSP, pay for about 82% of that 25%, Feland said.

“Through the Bank of North Dakota, (the state) provided us 40-year loans for our cost share at two percent,” he said. “So, we really have positive financing to the bank and our credit for our cost share.”

The project is at the point of approaching larger construction packages, Gaddie said, and the point of needing to understand who is going to ultimately sign on to the project agreement. The RRVWSP’s goal is to have as many sign-ups as possible leading up to the legislative session and show the progress on the project. At the midpoint of 2025, Gaddie said he hopes to be done with the sign-up efforts and ultimately sign and execute the ultimate project participation agreement for the RRVWSP.

“We’re on a mission,” he said.

Kovar said the construction crew will continue installing pipeline into November, though he predicts the project will shut down for the rest of year by Thanksgiving as winter weather rolls in.

 Comments

[#conversations](#)

 Share

 News Reporting

 Tags



By **Delaney Otto** (<https://www.grandforksherald.com/delaney-otto>)

Otto is the region reporter for the Grand Forks Herald.

([https://
www.gra
ndforksh
erald.co
m/news/
2019/07/19/
2019-07-19-01](https://www.grandforksherald.com/news/2019/07/19/2019-07-19-01)
ey-otto)

CONVERSATION

Diversions, county reach agreement on open-cuts

37

Misunderstanding arising from previous meeting clarified —

BY NATHAN PRICE

At a special meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 2, Foster County commissioners came to an agreement with representatives of Garrison Diversion and the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVW) regarding open-cuts on two roads within the county.

Foster County and Garrison Diversion first discussed the issue during a meeting in early September, when Kip Kovar — Garrison Diversion's deputy program manager for the RRVW — told commissioners about an apparent misunderstanding, which could have cost Garrison Diversion around \$2 million.

Kovar said he had previously left a 2021 meeting with county commissioners with an understanding — or as he put it, a "gentleman's agreement" — that he could go ahead with open-cuts on roads where necessary for the RRVW.

The RRVW was designed to provide an emergency water supply to central and eastern North Dakota — including Foster County — during times of water scarcity, and the open-cut method involves cutting a deep trench into a road before laying down the pipeline.

However, official meeting minutes show that commissioners only agreed to open-cut one road, that being the Bordulac Highway.

That particular project was eventually completed,

but Kovar had also bid an open-cut project in 2023 for County Highway 1605, locally known as the dump ground road.

County commissioners did not agree to open-cut that road, and have expressed concerns that doing so could have negative impacts on the road long-term, such as ground settlement.

Kovar told commissioners in September that issuing a "change order" and switching to

a tunneling method could cost Garrison Diversion \$2 million, and the two entities have been trying to reach a resolution that satisfies both sides ever since.

However, a proposal previously made by commissioners was rejected by the board at Garrison Diversion.

In exchange for allowing them to open-cut the dump ground road, that plan would have stipulated that Garrison Diversion cover any repair costs related to "ground settling"

See COUNTY, page 5



COUNTY—

for the next 30 years or until an overlay is done, and that Foster County would receive a payment of \$100,000 on the off-chance this project isn't completed and Garrison Diversion is no longer around to cover those repair costs.

Kovar told commissioners that the sticking point for Garrison Diversion's board members was the \$100,000 payment, and he attempted to assure commissioners that Garrison Diversion isn't going anywhere.

He then suggested amending the deal to state that Garrison Diversion would cover the costs of any repairs related to ground settling forever, with no time limit and whether or not there's an overlay.

"There shouldn't be a time limit in my opinion," said Kovar. "It's our pipe, it's under your road, so we take care of it. ... even after an overlay, it's our pipe there, so if we're creating problems we'll fix it."

Kovar noted that Garrison Diversion has already spent \$1.25 million since 2021 taking care of township roads impacted by the RRVW within Foster County.

"And we're probably going to double that by the time we leave Foster County," he added, "and that's blading, putting

rock on the roads, those types of things."

Carrington Mayor Tom Erdmann also attended the special meeting, representing the Lake Agassiz Water Authority Board, of which he's a member.

"What we're saying at Garrison and Lake Agassiz Water is that these things will be taken care of," he said. "If we've already committed \$1.25 million in aggregate work for your township roads already, that tells me that we've got a fair amount of skin in the game and we're willing to make commitments to the future that we will protect Foster County and their roads."

Separately, Kovar also agreed that Garrison Diversion should cover any costs the county's road superintendent, Nate Monson, or the county's road engineer, Mike Rivinius, might incur when addressing potential settlement issues resulting from the open-cut.

Steve Metzger, a board member with Garrison Diversion who was also in attendance, agreed.

Kovar specifically suggested \$5,000 per open-cut to cover those costs, but the commission countered with \$10,000 just for the dump ground road.

Commissioner Pat Copenhaver eventu-

ally made a motion to that effect, stating that in exchange for allowing Garrison Diversion to open-cut the dump ground road, they must cover any long-term issues that may arise from ground settlement, as well as cut a check for \$10,000 to Foster County.

That motion was carried unanimously by the commission, and soon after an identical motion was carried for the Kensal Highway, essentially giving Garrison Diversion permission to open-cut two Foster County roads in exchange for \$20,000.

Almost immediately after the motions passed, Kovar told the commission that Garrison Diversion would agree to the compromise.

Metzger added, "On behalf of the Garrison board, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to do this. This is the kind of communication we needed to have."

"We greatly appreciate working with the county," added Erdmann on behalf of the Lake Agassiz Water Authority Board.

Meanwhile, to handle any future open-cut or similar projects, a new committee has been established by the county commission to find long-term solutions and policies for utilities and roads.

Before adjourning the meeting, Foster County Commission Chairman David Utke attempted to clarify comments made during the previous meeting about the aforementioned "gentleman's agreement," regarding open-cuts.

He wanted to assure Foster County residents that no such agreement was made, and that it was simply a misunderstanding which led Kovar to bid an open-cut project on the dump ground road — a misunderstanding which has now been corrected.

"There are some people who read the article in the paper, and are thinking that this commission has made some backroom deals or something outside of meetings, which we have not done," said Utke.

Kovar said that he was referring to a "road maintenance plan," which was previously presented to Foster County commissioners and which stated that roads could be open-cut. However, he admitted that the plan was not signed by the commission nor specifically agreed to by commissioners.

"Sorry if I got anybody in trouble, because yes, the Foster County Commission did not have an official agreement with me. That's correct," said Kovar.

Foster County
Independent
10-14-24

[Inaugural State of Region 4 event highlights growths, challenges in northeast North Dakota - Grand Forks Herald | Grand Forks, East Grand Forks news, weather & sports](#)

MINTO, N.D. — North Dakota lawmakers say they'll take the feedback they heard at the inaugural "State of Region 4" event back to the Legislature.

The night of discussion focused on the region's rural opportunities and challenges. U.S. Rep. Kelly Armstrong, who attended the meeting and gave a special address, said the issues he heard in the discussion are in line with what he has talked about with his own people.

The progress across the rural area will be good for everyone, he said.

"It's been really fun to listen to all this," said Armstrong, R-N.D. "When one of you guys has something great going on, it benefits everybody else around this room."

The event, held by the Red River Regional Council at the Minto Community Center, covered projects and projections revolving around growth in Grand Forks, Walsh, Nelson and Pembina counties. Three key topics were workforce, housing and child care, which local leaders said were the main things they have been hearing about and focusing on.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform legislators and officials about what growth opportunities and challenges exist in the region, and what help the rural area needs ahead of the 2025 legislative session.

Rural people are the ones who are going to make things work, Armstrong said, and the government wants to give them a shot. Getting high school and college students interested in the area and taking them out to do things like hunting or biking will keep them in rural North Dakota, he said, and knowing what opportunities and challenges are at hand means now people can deal with them.

"I want to get a lot less aspirational and a lot more operational," he said.

Other government officials Sen. Janne Myrdal, R-Edinburg; Rep. Emily O'Brien, R-Grand Forks; and Rep. Jared Hagert, R-Emerado, held a Q&A session at the end of the event.

Some questions asked were about [Measure 4](#) , a proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot for November that would eliminate property taxes, which the three legislators said they would all vote “no” on. Attendees also asked about keeping in contact with constituents, the Legacy Fund, critical race theory and book bans.

Rep. David Monson, R-Osnabrock, and Sen. Scott Meyer, R-Grand Forks, were also scheduled to be at the event, but didn't attend.

Myrdal said she has spoken with Armstrong about rural needs, and both of them have plans for addressing those needs.

“I think we're going to look at these things, we're going to be creative, we're going to try and work together, and he has promised me as a governor to be more active in rural areas,” she said. “And I also promised that we're going to start a rural caucus in the Senate and the House.”

Attendees also heard updates and information gathered by the RRRC and its partners, such as Real. Good. Northeast North Dakota, a visitor and talent attraction marketing campaign, and the Red River Community Housing Development Organization.

Barry Wilfahrt, vice president of the RRRC and president and CEO of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Chamber of Commerce, also spoke about growth in Grand Forks.

Wilfahrt's comments focused on construction — finished, underway and upcoming projects. He said there is momentum through the whole region, and in Grand Forks that is present in the [new Altru hospital](#) , poised to open on Jan. 9; the Grand Forks Air Force Base planning to host a [squadron of B-1B bombers](#) from February to November 2025; future modification of Global Hawks and a hypersonic missile test planned for October 2025; three school projects — the new [Twining](#)

[school on the Grand Forks Air Force Base](#) , a new career tech education center opening fall 2025 and the new [Valley Middle School](#) — along with rising UND and Northland Community and Technical College enrollment; the permitting process is complete for a new soybean plant; and plans on a new indoor sports arena and aquatics center, along with a BMX track.

He also mentioned road construction and the improvement of infrastructure in Grand Forks, as well the growth of housing, retail and other sectors.

“The whole northern valley is really booming right now,” he said.

Amie Vasichcek, city auditor of Lakota, board member of the Red River CHDO and president of the Nelson County JDA, talked about construction the Red River CHDO is doing in Lakota on two new homes as part of the organization’s [Spark Build 2024 initiative](#) . The goal of the project is to increase housing production in the region, particularly in rural areas. Vasichcek said she had been looking for ways to grow the community when the project came her way.

“I knew that was it,” she said.

Amber Osowski, owner of Rocking Horse Child Care, talked about the Walsh County JDA’s [child care center project](#) , which she has been chosen to be the provider for when the center opens. It is under construction in Grafton, and while the project has received or is pending approval on just over \$1 million in funding, it still needs \$308,331.

Programs and restrictions from the Legislature have had good and bad impacts on child care in the region, she said, and the strain has been going back and forth between the families and the providers.

“Many programs, including my own, are often not charging what we should because we know the strain that it puts on families,” she said.

Other topics touched on during the event include:

- Kristi Kasprick, the project manager of Real. Good. Northeast North Dakota, spoke about the good and bad that she's seen with marketing the region and drawing people in over the seven months she has been the project manager. A workforce study is underway and the program is being updated with more features to attract possible residents.
- Shawn Gaddie of AE2S, Steve Burian of Burian and Associates and Grand Forks City Administrator Todd Feland spoke about a Red River Valley water supply project that will bring water from the Missouri River to Red River, focusing on drought resiliency and industrial development.
- Dawn Mandt, executive director of the RRRC, spoke about highlights and momentum in the region. She mentioned the growing number of H-2A workers and other foreign workers, an acceleration of people moving to smaller areas, a chasm growing between big and small towns and how the region needs better support to fulfill its projected growth.

10-7-24

County creates committee for utility/road policy

BY NATHAN PRICE

On Tuesday, Oct. 1, the Foster County Commission approved the minimum sale price for seven delinquent tax properties within the county.

The owners of each respective property have not paid property taxes on them for the past three years, thereby making them delinquent.

The delinquent tax sale has been scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 19 at 10 a.m., and will take place at the county auditor's office in the Foster County Courthouse.



The minimum sale price of each property was determined by adding up all three years' worth of delinquent taxes, as well as the estimated taxes owed in 2024 and any special assessments or city liens against the property.

Below is each delinquent property and their respective minimum sale price:

- Lot 7 Blk 13, 1st Addition,

- Grace City - \$55
- Lots 1 & 2, N 2/3 Rds of lot 4 Blk 14, 1st Addition, Grace City - \$95
- Lot 3 Blk 14, 1st Addition, Grace City - \$1,640
- Lots 10-12 Blk 14, 1st Addition, Grace City - \$65
- Lots 10 & 11 Blk 2, Tracy's addition, Grace City - \$180
- Lot 16 Blk 11, Original, Grace City - \$165
- E6" Lot 3 and all lots 4-5 Blk 28, Original, Carlington - \$1,895

The owners still have an opportunity to keep their property up until the date of the sale, but they must pay

all three years' worth of delinquent taxes.

Also at the commission's regular meeting on Tuesday, a new committee was officially created to handle utility and road policy.

The committee has aptly been named the Road and Utility Policy Committee, and it will consist of seven members.

Those members will include the county road superintendent, the county road engineer, the county state's attorney, one member of the planning and zoning committee, one member from the county commission, the county auditor/treasurer and one member from the public.

The committee's creation is largely a response to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project, and a recent misunderstanding between the county and Garrison Diversion regarding open-cuts of roads within the county.

A short-term resolution of that particular misunderstanding was discussed during a special

COUNTY — meeting on Wednesday afternoon, Oct. 2, just as this edition of the Independent went to press.

However, a long-term solution to the issue will be discussed by this new committee, which the county hopes can create a process or policy that avoids any confusion moving forward.

The commission's next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 15 at 3:30 p.m. in the Foster County Courthouse.

Commissioners also noted that the first commission meeting in November has been moved to Thursday, Nov. 7 at 3:30 p.m., to accommodate for the general election on November 5.

Red River water pipeline inching toward county

By Neil O. Nelson

Garrison Diversion Conservancy District board member Bill Ongstad and representatives from Garrison Diversion headquarters in Carrington met with the Wells County Commission this week, following up on their initial meeting with the commissioners a year ago.

Ongstad, Harvey area farmer and landowner, addressed commissioners Bryan Lutt, Dennis Docker, Danny "Boone" Maxwell, Brian Miller and chairman Stan Buxa before turning his opening remarks at the commission's regularly scheduled meeting over to the Garrison delegation.

Ongstad and the Garrison delegation of Duane DeKrey, general manager; Kip Kovar,

district engineer; and Scott Mehring, construction supervisor; were in Fessenden Tuesday to give the Wells County Commission an update on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project cutting across the state, including the far southeastern corner of the county - Bilodeau Township, in particular.

The \$1.24 billion pipeline will cross over two to three miles in Bilodeau Township.

Work that has reportedly started in Wells County will be completed in 2026. No county roads will be crossed by the pipeline.

The Garrison delegation assured the commissioners that all township roads will be chemically treated and bladed

RRVWSP

Continued on page 3



RED RIVER VALLEY WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

Serving the Water Supply Needs of Central North Dakota and the Red River Valley

RRV water project a 10-year build

RRVWSP

Continued from page 1

during construction. Following completion, all roads will be restored and signed off by the county.

Permits required are being worked on, said the Garrison delegation.

Recovery of land and the condition of roads already rebuilt, according to Bill Ongstad has "pretty good."

Carstenson Contracting, Dell Rapids, S. Dak., will be focusing its work in the next two years on the pipeline from Carrington to Cooperstown.

RRVWSP

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) is using a buried pipeline to carry water from the McClusky Canal, along Highway 200, to the Sheyenne River north of Lake Ashtabula, which, when the Sheyenne reaches the Red River near Fargo, will provide

a supplemental and emergency water supply to users in central and eastern North Dakota.

The project will reach approximately 50% of North Dakota's population.

The 10-year build will be completed in 2032.

In the first phase, the Missouri River Intake is being installed at McClusky on the McClusky Canal. The 72-inch pipeline, buried nine-feet deep, will follow Highway 200 from McClusky to Cooperstown.

The pipeline itself will cost \$929 million.

As an aside, Bill Ongstad on Tuesday told how 8,000 acres south of Turtle Lake will be irrigated by Missouri River Water.

"This is important," said Ongstad. "It's the first use of Missouri River water."

The trend is for more irrigated land, Ongstad added.

"If we don't use the Missouri water, the people downstream will."

RED RIVER VALLEY WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

2024 NEWSLETTER ANALYTICS



AVERAGE INDUSTRY RATES FOR E-NEWSLETTERS

37.72%

AVERAGE OPEN RATE

2%

AVERAGE CLICK THROUGH RATE

0.2%

AVERAGE UNSUBSCRIBE RATE

The quarterly RRVWSP Progress Report typically receives more engagement with recipients than an average industry newsletter. The Open Rate is the percentage of people who received the newsletter in their inbox and opened the email. The Click Through Rate measures the percentage of people who clicked on each article. The Unsubscribe Rate measures the percentage of people who received the newsletter and decided to opt-out from receiving future newsletters.

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 1

EMAILS SENT: 561

OPEN RATE: 71%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Construction Season Welcomes 100 Workers to Foster County- Click Rate 69.5%
- Introducing Jeff LeDoux, Garrison Diversion Board Member - Click Rate 68.6%
- Check Out the Updated RRVWSP Website - Click Rate 67%%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 0

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 2

EMAILS SENT: 556

OPEN RATE: 46.4%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Landowner Satisfaction the Goal of the RRVWSP Land Restoration Process - Click Rate 40.4%
- Meet Keith Nilson, LAWA Board Member - Click Rate 40.4%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 0

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 3

EMAILS SENT: 564

OPEN RATE: 53.6%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Meet Ann Broussard, LAWA Board Member - Click Rate 33.3%
- Hillsboro and Mayville Sign Memorandum of Commitment to Join RRVWSP - Click Rate 30.4%
- Sen. Hoeven Sponsors Legislation to Support ENDAWS, Sen. Cramer & Rep. Armstrong Provide Support in U.S. Senate & House - Click Rate 20.7%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 0

RRVWSP PROGRESS REPORT QUARTER 4

EMAILS SENT: 565

OPEN RATE: 57%

ARTICLES & CLICK RATES:

- Successful Construction Season Leads into 2025 Legislative Session - Click Rate 25.2%
- Carrington, Cooperstown, Valley City & McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District Join RRVWSP - Click Rate 23%
- Introducing Bill Bohnsack, LAWA Board Member - Click Rate 19.8*0%

UNSUBSCRIBES: 1

Successful Construction Season Leads Into 2025 Legislative Session

Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) construction wrapped up in mid-November with the most pipe installed in one construction season. Crews from Oscar Renda Contracting, Carstensen Contracting Inc., and Garney Construction were blessed with an exceptionally mild fall without any snowfall until late November.

“Despite receiving 30-inches of rain this year, the contractors prevailed over the wet conditions. Previous experience with groundwater issues allowed the crews to put into practice what we’ve learned over the past couple years,” says Kip Kovar, Deputy Program Manager for RRVWSP Engineering. “This is the most efficient construction season to date, and we saw the most pipe installed since construction began on the 72-inch transmission pipeline.”

Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA), the co-sponsors of the RRVWSP, are preparing to support the project during North Dakota’s upcoming legislative session which begins on January 7.

Representatives will request \$221 million in the Department of Water Resources Budget to fund the 2025-2027 work plan. During the 2023 session, state lawmakers approved legislative intent for the RRVWSP totaling \$953 million in future funding.

“We are grateful to the legislature for previously providing legislative intent for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. Having state support provides peace of mind to the project’s end users. Thank you to legislators for supporting this project to ensure it is constructed in a timely manner,” says Merri Mooridian, Deputy Program Manager of RRVWSP Administration.

For the current 2023-2025 biennium, the RRVWSP received \$180 million in the Department of Water Resources Budget. Local users provided \$61.5 million and \$4.5 million came from the Municipal Rural and Industrial (MR&I) Program. The funding allowed the RRVWSP team to complete the design of the transmission pipeline, bid and award several construction contracts, move construction forward, and provide financial planning and studies for RRVWSP end users. Before the end of the biennium on June 30, engineers will complete the preliminary design of RRVWSP facilities such as the water treatment plant. Eighty percent of the easements needed for the Project have been acquired as of December 2024.

“The construction crews made a lot of progress this year and we’re in a great place with design. We’re hoping to keep the momentum going into 2025 and beyond, with continued funding from the state,” says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion General Manager.

“The Red River Valley can go from flooding to drought conditions in a matter of months. We can’t prevent the next drought from happening, but we can be prepared. With large dollar figures already committed, it is crucially important to get the project completed within the 10-year construction timeframe, to maximize our investment and mitigate the economic effects of moderate and severe drought conditions with this emergency and supplemental water supply,” says Brandon Bochenski, Grand Forks Mayor and LAWA Vice Chair.

This year, Garney Construction completed the pipe installation on Contract 5B east of Carrington. The contractor will return in 2025 to complete land restoration, structure build out, hydrostatic testing, and soil haul off. Oscar Renda made progress on the 5C contract which includes approximately eight miles of pipeline and three major trenchless crossings east of Carrington, in Foster County. Carstensen Contracting Inc. also made progress on the 5D contract which involves 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek in western Foster County and eastern Wells County. Currently, 18 miles of the 125-mile buried pipeline are in the ground.

In December, Carstensen was awarded Contract 6A for \$52,258,500, which is their second contract in the RRVWSP. The contract includes construction of a 7.1 mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County, as well as two 96-inch diameter trenchless highway crossings and one 96-inch diameter trenchless wetland crossing.

Construction on 6A is scheduled to begin in the spring. The remaining portions of Contracts 5C, 5D and land restoration will resume in 2025, as soon as weather permits. When the RRVWSP transmission pipeline is complete, it will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River, located about six miles south of Cooperstown. The RRVWSP is projected to serve nearly half of North Dakota's population, from the central part of the state to the eastern side.

Carrington, Cooperstown, Valley City & McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District Join RRVWSP

The Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) user base is growing. The Cities of Carrington, Cooperstown, and Valley City, as well as the McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District recently signed Memorandums of Commitment to join the RRVWSP.

Tom Erdmann is the Mayor of Carrington and the City's representative on the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board of Directors. LAWA is a co-sponsor of the RRVWSP alongside the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) which is headquartered in Carrington.

“Our aquifer is presently a tremendous asset to our community. The Red River Valley Water Supply in the addition to our excellent Carrington aquifer will help us during drought conditions,” says Mayor Erdmann. “Additionally, we project a potential need for industrial water in the event we could become a site for another value-added processing plant. Carrington is located in the center of the state with excellent infrastructure running through our community with access to the two major railroads, an unrestricted highway system, and all the amenities that another value-added agriculture processing plant might be looking for.”

The City of Carrington nominated for 0.50 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water. In addition to the future economic development opportunities the RRVWSP will provide, Carrington already benefits from an economic boost due to construction activities in Foster County. The 2024 construction season brought more than 100 workers to live and work in the city.

“We have seen a substantial increase in our sales tax collection. We presently have a two percent local sales tax that generated \$1.08 million in 2023. As of the first 10 months of 2024, we are \$184,000 ahead of last year’s record sales tax collection. We are seeing an immediate impact from the construction activities on the pipeline,” says Mayor Erdmann. “In addition to the construction activities, there are engineers on the site who live here in Carrington, and Garrison Diversion has added employees due to the workload associated with the project.”

Valley City nominated for 2.00 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the RRVWSP. Dave Carlsrud, Valley City’s Mayor, is also its representative on the LAWA Board of Directors. He says participation in the RRVWSP is essentially an insurance policy for residents and businesses.

“We have been blessed with our aquifers so far. But we don’t know what would happen during a drought. The Red River Valley Water Supply Project is insurance for us,” says Mayor Carlsrud. “Joining provides peace of mind, especially for elected officials because we have to answer the tough questions if Valley City doesn’t have enough water. This is the right thing to do for the next generation.”

Beyond the need for an emergency supply of water, Mayor Carlsrud says access to a supplemental water supply is valuable for economic development because it will make it easier for Valley City to recruit new businesses.

Christine Olson, Cooperstown City Auditor, says with the RRVWSP transmission pipeline’s proximity so close to Cooperstown, it only makes sense to participate. The city nominated for 0.20 cfs.

“Participation ensures a water source for the future as well as allowing for future growth, whether commercial or residential,” explains Olson. She says joining the RRVWSP will, “allow the opportunity to say ‘yes’ should a high-water using industry want to locate in Cooperstown.”

Ann Broussard, McLean-Sheridan Rural Water District Manager, says the District’s Board of Directors made the decision to participate in the RRVWSP primarily due to potential economic development initiatives that are being considered in the service area. A number of these potential initiatives would need large volumes of water. “If McLean-Sheridan Rural Water were to add only one or two bulk users to our system, the financial benefits to our existing customers would be significant. Growth in our water sales helps stabilize water rates for everyone served by our system, now and in the future,” Broussard explains. McLean-Sheridan nominated for 0.42 cfs.

The four water providers join the City of Fargo which will serve West Fargo and Cass Rural Water, as well as Grand Forks which will provide service to East Grand Forks, Minn. Both Hillsboro and Mayville have also signed an MOC.

Introducing Bill Bohnsack, LAWA Board Member

Bill Bohnsack joined the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board of Directors in 2019 to represent the City of Mayville. As a retired Chemistry, Biology, and Earth Science teacher for the Mayport-Portland School District, as well as operating the municipal swimming pool, Bill has a strong understanding of the science behind water projects. That knowledge comes in handy as a LAWA Director when discussing the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP).

“A lot of people on the eastern side of the state don’t realize the progress that has been made on the project because the construction is happening near Carrington right now. And since the pipes are buried underground, it’s not as easy to see as something like the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion as it’s being constructed,” says Bill. “Other states are interested in getting water from the Missouri River. I am glad the project is already underway, so North Dakota can access its share of the water.”

The City of Mayville signed a Memorandum of Commitment in 2024 to join the RRVWSP. “The Red River Valley Water Supply Project will provide Mayville with a backup water supply as well water for future industrial use,” explains Bill.

Beyond being part of a historic drought mitigation project, Bill says his time on the LAWA Board has been a great experience because it has allowed him to get to know the other Directors on the Board. “Being able to talk with the other members and hear what is going on in their cities has been interesting. It has been valuable for me to understand the challenges and successes other cities are experiencing.”

Hillsboro and Mayville Sign Memorandum of Commitment to Join RRVWSP

Two Traill County communities have made the first official step towards joining the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP). Leaders from Cities of Hillsboro and Mayville signed and submitted Memorandums of Commitment (MOC) to Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA), the state co-sponsors of the RRVWSP.

Mayville and Hillsboro each nominated for .5 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from the RRVWSP. When the RRVWSP is constructed, a buried 72-inch pipeline will transport Missouri River water at up to 165 cfs to cities and rural water systems from central North Dakota to the Red River Valley where Hillsboro and Mayville are located.

Levi Reese, Hillsboro City Commission President, says planning for the future is the biggest factor in Hillsboro's decision to move forward with RRVWSP participation. "With the growing demand on infrastructure that is needed in today's world, we know we need to prepare for the future. This water supply gives the community a backup to a very limited resource," he explains. "We have plenty of water for today and tomorrow, but we cannot predict what the future will hold for Hillsboro. This resource gives our community stability so that if there is a need or an issue in the future, we can keep the water running to our residents and to industry."

Mayville Council Member Bill Bohnsack has been involved with discussions about the RRVWSP for many years as the LAWA Director representing Mayville. He says he is glad Mayville has committed to the supplemental water supply. "I believe access to water is going to become increasingly important in the future. We've got to have a reliable water supply for any future growth," says Bohnsack.

RRVWSP representatives have been meeting with rural water systems, cities, and counties in 2024 to provide information about the benefits and costs associated with RRVWSP participation. The Carrington City Council and Valley City's City Commission voted to approve participation in the RRVWSP. The next step will be for each city to submit a signed MOC.

A signed MOC indicates a water system intends to execute the Project Participation Agreement (PPA) to be part of the RRVWSP and will identify the specific water supply nomination from the RRVWSP. The MOC also means the water system agrees to provide funding for their allocated share of the local portion of the 2023-2025 RRVWSP Work Plan. If a system ultimately decides not to sign the PPA, another LAWA member could negotiate to take on the nomination rights and obligations before the PPA is signed.

Sen. Hoeven Sponsors Legislation to Support ENDAWS, Sen. Cramer and Rep. Armstrong Provide Support in U.S. Senate and House

Senator John Hoeven introduced bipartisan legislation in mid-September to support more reliable, drought-resistant water supplies in North Dakota while also helping to fulfill federal compensation that was promised to the state and tribes upon the construction of the Garrison Dam and Oahe Dam.

Specifically, the bill would amend the Dakota Water Resources Act (DWRA) to increase authorizations under the Municipal, Rural, and Industrial (MR&I) water supply grant program for North Dakota and the five Tribal Nations in the state. North Dakota will reach the state MR&I authorization ceiling at the end of fiscal year 2024. An increase is necessary to complete ongoing water supply projects, including the Northwest Area Water Supply Project (NAWS) and the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply Project (ENDAWS).

ENDAWS is an alternate bulk water supply to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), a municipal, rural and industrial water supply project being developed to meet the water needs of central and eastern North Dakota. The state project, co-sponsored by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) and Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA), is designed with an intake on the Missouri River. Garrison Diversion estimates using the proposed alternate water source of Reclamation's McClusky Canal could save millions of dollars in construction and operations and maintenance costs.

The DWRA amendment would also ensure that biota water treatment (BWT) costs are fully accounted for, which are the responsibility of the federal government. Although the DWRA authorized funding for non-reimbursable costs related to BWT facilities, no authorization ceiling was outlined in the legislation. As a result, North Dakota and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) have been forced to allocate significant MR&I resources to cover federal responsibilities under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.

Sen. Hoeven discussed the legislation at a hearing of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Committee and secured the support of BOR Commissioner Camille Touton for the measure. The Senator has twice hosted Touton in North Dakota to review progress on the state's water supply projects, where he outlined to the commissioner the issues with the MR&I program. The legislation comes as the result of Sen. Hoeven's work with Touton, BOR, Garrison Diversion, and North Dakota stakeholders to identify and advance solutions to these issues.

"The Garrison Diversion was established to compensate North Dakota and Tribal Nations in the state for the loss of more than a half a million of surface acreage when federal reservoirs were established along the Missouri River," said Sen. Hoeven. "Not only was the Garrison Diversion never completed, but the grant program authorizations meant to replace the project were inadequate to cover the long-term needs of North Dakota and tribal communities. Our legislation would correct this issue, helping to ensure that the MR&I program has sufficient funding authorizations to support water supply projects across the state, like NAWS and ENDAWS. I appreciate Commissioner Touton for her continued willingness to work with us on these important issues and her support of moving this bill forward."

The legislation is cosponsored by Sen. Kevin Cramer and Sen. Alex Padilla of California. Rep. Kelly Armstrong introduced a companion to the bill in the House of Representatives.

"This legislation is crucial for securing safe and dependable water supplies for North Dakota's communities and Tribal nations," said Sen. Cramer. "These amendments will fulfill a debt owed to North Dakota by the federal government for damming up the Missouri river. It will also help ensure we can complete critical water infrastructure projects and address pressing needs across the state."

"We must deliver an adequate and reliable water supply across the state at an affordable rate," said Rep. Armstrong. "In 2000, when the Dakota Water Resources Act passed, it was

supposed to protect North Dakota's water supply and keep it reliable. Our legislation amends the Dakota Water Resources Act to provide our producers with the rates that Congress intended, it gives our state clarity when building a more dependable water supply and secures clean drinking water to our North Dakota communities and the five Tribal Nations.”

Meet Ann Broussard, LAWA Board Member

One of the newest members of the Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA) Board of Directors is a self-described Cajun from Louisiana who relocated to North Dakota 17 years ago. Ann Broussard is the General Manager of the McLean-Sheridan Rural Water (MSRW) District. She joined the LAWA Board in early 2024 with the goal of representing rural water interests.

Ann began her water career with MSRW 10 years ago as a meter reader. She moved up the ranks to her current role in 2018 to oversee the rural water provider's operations. MSRW supplies water to the Cities of Turtle Lake, McClusky, Coleharbor, Mercer, and Pick City, as well as 600 rural users in McLean and Sheridan Counties. In addition, MSRW has a water supply agreement with the City of Washburn and serves about 150 rural users near Washburn.

As a new LAWA Director, Ann says she has enjoyed learning more about the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP). “I am very interested in learning how everything works. The project is fascinating, I appreciate the opportunity to get to know all of the city and water system leaders involved in LAWA,” she says. “The Red River Valley Water Supply Project will benefit rural water systems. I think that's important for people to know. It's not just for the bigger cities like Fargo and Grand Forks.”

When she's not busy managing MSRW or working on her LAWA or North Dakota One Call Board duties, you can find Ann spending time with family. She is married with five kids – two are in college and three are school age. She enjoys sewing and watching baseball, especially when her kids are playing. Ann also likes to cook, which allows her to recreate some of the spicy Cajun dishes she grew up enjoying.

To receive quarterly updates on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project, subscribe to the newsletter at rrvwsp.com.



**42nd Annual Red River Basin
Land & Water International Summit Conference
Agenda**

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

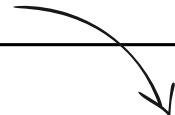
Time	Session	Details	Speaker(s)	Location
1:00 - 1:30pm	Welcome & Introductions	Introduction & National Anthems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brian Holmer, RRBC Chair Ted Preister, RRBC Executive Director 	Main Ballroom
		Indigenous Welcome	Dr. Daniel Henry Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, University of North Dakota	
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Keynote	Introduction	April Walker Red River Valley Alliance	Main Ballroom
		Integrating Ecology, Infrastructure and People: A Productive Human Ecological Approach for the Red River Basin	Scott Bishop Bishop Land Design	
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Break & Exhibits			Exhibit Hall
3:00 - 4:30 pm	Moderated by: Larry Johannson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Climate Preparedness & Resilience	Dr. Leigh Youngblood USACE	Main Ballroom
		Is Environmental Resiliency <i>Still</i> Possible in the Face of an <i>Even More</i> Extreme Climate Variability?	Gregory Gust North Dakota Dept. of Emergency Services	Main Ballroom
		Indigenous Science	Dr. Susan Chiblow International Joint Commission	Main Ballroom
5:00 - 7:00 pm	Moore Engineering, Inc. - Workshop Wrap Up Social, Hors D'oeuvres, and Exhibits Please join us for a networking social that includes a wonderful spread of hors d'oeuvres and an opportunity to meet representatives from around the Red River Basin			Exhibit Hall



42nd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Time	Session	Details	Speaker(s)	Location
7:00 - 8:30 am	Breakfast			
8:30 - 9:00 am	Moderated by: Jeff Browaty	2024 Year in Review and 2025 Outlook	Amanda Lee National Weather Service	Main Ballroom
9:00 - 10:00 am		Minnesota Agricultural Perspective	Thom Petersen MN Agriculture Commissioner	Main Ballroom
		Update from the North Dakota Department of Water Resources	ND Dept. of Water Resources	
10:00 - 10:30 am	Break & Exhibits			Exhibit Hall
10:30 - 12:00 pm	Moderated by: Morrie Lanning	An Update on Minnesota's Multi-Faceted Conservation Approach	John Jaschke MN Board of Water and Soil Resources	Main Ballroom
		Development of a Stream Stabilization Project for the Benefit of Lake Traverse (TCD 52)	James Guler Moore Engineering, Inc.	
		Incorporating Resiliency into Watershed Projects	Zach Herrmann Houston Engineering, Inc.	
		Provincial Parks and Recreation along the Red River in Canada	Nicole Armstrong Manitoba Environment and Climate Change	
12:00 - 12:45 pm	Lunch: Buffet Style			Main Ballroom
1:00 - 3:00 pm	Break Out Sessions			





**42nd Annual Red River Basin
Land & Water International Summit Conference
Agenda**

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Break Out Sessions 1:00-3:00 pm

Main Ballroom Moderated by: Gavin van der Linde		Room 1 Moderated by: Debbie Fiebelkorn		Room 2 Moderated by: Molly Costin	
Elm River Dam Safety Retrofits	Lyndon Pease Moore Engineering, Inc.	Stony Creek Restoration Project	Bennett Uhler Houston Engineering, Inc.	Zebra Mussel Mitigation Strategies	Jordan Grasser AE2S
Restoration Projects on the Roseau River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracy Halstengard, Roseau River Watershed District • Erik Jones, Houston Engineering, Inc. • Nate Dalager, HDR 	The Flood Damage Reduction Workgroup - Collaborating to Manage Flood Risk and Improve Natural Resources in the Red River Basin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theresa Ebbenga, MN Dept. of Natural Resources • Linda Vavra, Bois de Sioux Watershed District 	Climate Resiliency Plans at Small, Medium and Large Scales	Matt Metzger Barr Engineering
Engineering with Nature and Community: Natural Infrastructure Systems Design	Hank Venema Strategic Systems Engineering	Maximizing co-benefits of conservation: A wetland ecosystem services tool (WEST) for Prairie Canada	Paige Kowal Ducks Unlimited Canada	PrairieDNA: The Prairies North Environmental DNA Monitoring Network	Eric Collins University of Manitoba





42nd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Time	Session	Details	Speaker(s)	Location
3:00 - 3:30 pm	Break & Exhibits			Exhibit Hall
3:30 - 5:00 pm	Moderated by: Jenny Mongeau	Wetland Banking 101 – Introduction to a Tool for Watershed Improvement	Jeff Madejczyk Moore Engineering, Inc.	Main Ballroom
		White Earth Wild Rice	Cliff Crowell	
		Restoring Fish Passage in the Red River Basin	Ted Rud Houston Engineering, Inc.	
		West Central Regional Water District Project Update	Stephen Slick AE2S	
6:00 pm	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash Bar 		Main Ballroom
6:30 pm	Awards Banquet Hosted by: Dave Piepkorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin McLeod, Consul and Head of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy Service, Minneapolis, USA • Rebecca Molinoff, U.S. Consulate, Winnipeg, Canada • Leadership Award Presentation • Silent Auction Prize Draw 		



42nd Annual Red River Basin Land & Water International Summit Conference Agenda

Thursday, January 16, 2025

Time	Session	Details	Speaker(s)	Location
7:00 - 8:30 am	Breakfast			Main Ballroom
8:30 - 9:00 am	Annual Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Chairman Report Executive Director Report Financial Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brian Holmer Ted Preister Marvin Plett 	Main Ballroom
9:00 - 9:40 am	Moderated by: Ted Preister	Soil Health	Kim Melton Red River Basin Commission	Main Ballroom
		Northern Red River Valley Flood	Brandon Barnes Barr Engineering	
9:40 - 10:10 am	Break & Exhibits			Exhibit Hall
10:10 - 11:20 am	Moderated by: Marvin Plett	Manitoba Public Water System Resiliency Assessment	Mark Lee Manitoba Environment and Climate Change	Main Ballroom
		Flood Mitigation and Water Quality Efforts in the Red River Basin of Minnesota	Rob Sip Red River Water Management Board	
		Environmental Infrastructure	Lynda Nicol Manitoba Association of Watersheds	
		Fargo-Moorhead Metro Diversion	Kris Bakkegard FM Diversion	
11:20 - 12:15 pm	International Red River Watershed Board & International Joint Commission			Main Ballroom
12:15 pm	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conference Wrap Up Grand Prize Drawing 			Main Ballroom

39th Annual Water Systems ⁵⁷ EXPO & Conference

January 21 - 23, 2025

Bismarck Event Center

Tuesday - January 21

- 8:00 am** Registration Opens
- 9:00 am** Pre-Conference Session (Prairie Rose 105)
- Noon**
- USDA-Rural Development: Engineering and Environmental Updates
 - ND Dept. of Water Resources: Basic Asset Inventories and More
 - ND Information Technology: Cybersecurity for Water Utilities
- 9:00 am** City of Bismarck Lift Station Tour (Registration Table)
- Noon**
- 2:00 pm** NDRWSA Annual Board Meeting, History of Rural Water, and EXPO Opening Session (Prairie Rose 105)
- 3:00 pm** Exhibit Hall Opens (Hall D)
- 4:00 pm** Meter Change-Out Competition: Preliminary Round - Exhibit Hall
- 5:00 pm** Exhibitor Appreciation Social - Exhibit Hall
- 6:00 pm** Exhibit Hall Closes for the Evening

Wednesday - January 22

- 8:00 am** Breakfast in the Exhibit Hall/Exhibit Hall Opens
- 9:00 am** Concurrent Sessions
- **Board of Director/Manager Track: Roundtable Discussions** (Prairie Rose 105)
 - **Operation & Maintenance Track: Exhibitor Demonstrations** (Exhibit Hall)
- 9:00 am** Water Taste Contest - Exhibit Hall
- 11:00 am** Meter Change-Out Competition: Final Round - Exhibit Hall
- 11:15 am** Exhibit Hall Prize Drawings/Exhibit Hall Closes
- 11:30 am** Awards Luncheon Buffet (Hall C)
- 1:00 pm**
- Awards Luncheon - Honoring the Best in the Business
 - Corporate Elite & Diamond Sponsor Recognition
 - 2025 Water Taste Contest Final Judging
- 1:30 pm** Concurrent Sessions
- Board, Management & Administrative Track** (Prairie Rose 105)
- 1:30 pm** The Attorney General's Office: ND Open Records & Open Meetings Laws
- 2:40 pm** ND Office of the State Auditor: Water System Financial Audits 101
- Operation & Maintenance Track I** (Prairie Rose 101)
- 1:30 pm** Jasper Engineering: Confined Space/Gas Detection Training
- 2:05 pm** Bolton & Menk, Inc: Utilizing GIS to Maintain Collection System
- 2:40 pm** Stenner Pump: Service Repair, Maintenance and Troubleshooting
- Operation & Maintenance Track II** (Prairie Rose 103)
- 1:30 pm** KLM Engineering: Spring Checklist; Preparing Your Water Storage Tanks
- 2:05 pm** Dakota Supply Group: Catch Leaks Before They Catch You
- 2:40 pm** Liquidtek, LLC: Solving the Pond Puzzle
- 3:15 pm** Coffee Break
- 3:30 pm** Concurrent Sessions continue
- Board, Management & Administrative Track** (Prairie Rose 105)
- 3:30 pm** Rural Water Impact & Municipal Impact: Websites ⁵⁷ The Ultimate Communication Tool

4:05 pm HDR, Inc: Collaborating on Collaborative Delivery Construction Manager at Risk

Operation & Maintenance Track I (Prairie Rose 101)

3:30 pm Hach: Proper Measurement and Calibration of Dissolved Oxygen and pH

4:05 pm TEAM Laboratory Chemical: Bio-Augmentation and Aquatic Plant Management

Operation & Maintenance Track II (Prairie Rose 103)

3:30 pm Core & Main: History of Water Metering

4:05 pm Central Plains Water District & Apex Engineering: Hydraulic Modeling for System Expansion

5:00 pm Social and Scholarship Live Auction

Thursday - January 23

7:30 am Breakfast Buffet

8:30 am Concurrent Sessions

Board, Management & Administrative Track (Prairie Rose 105)

8:30 am TrainND Southwest: Effective Meetings, Overcoming Meeting Challenges, Robert's Rules of Order, and the Top 5 Tips
Strategic Planning

Operation & Maintenance Track I (Prairie Rose 101)

8:30 am Bartlett & West: Artificial Intelligence in Rural Water

9:05 am In Control, Inc: SCADA - A Force Multiplier for Operations

Operation & Maintenance Track II (Prairie Rose 103)

8:30 am AE2S: Regulations for Control System Cybersecurity in the Water Sector

9:05 am Tonka Water, a Kurita Brand: Filter and Softener Refurbishment 101

9:45 am Coffee Break

10:00 am Concurrent Sessions continue

Board, Management & Administrative Track (Prairie Rose 105)

10:00 am TrainND Southwest: Effective Meetings, Overcoming Meeting Challenges, Robert's Rules of Order, and the Top 5 Tips