

WATER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

FORMERLY KNOWN AS
"the Pipeline"

SOUTHWEST KANSAS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (GMD3)
A GOVERNING BODY CONTROLLED BY LOCAL PEOPLE

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www.gmd3.org

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MEETINGS:

2ND WED. EACH MONTH

9:00 A.M. - DISTRICT OFFICE

409 CAMPUS DR., SUITE 106

GARDEN CITY, KS 67846

<http://www.gmd3.org>

SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC CASE RECEIVES INITIAL ORDER

Chief Engineer David Pope's initial order for the Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, case was signed on June 27th, 2003 in Shawnee County, Kansas. It gave approval for 3 of the 4 Application Files in the total amount of 2369 acre feet per year. The 4 Application Files had originally requested 5200 acre feet. Events leading up to this decision started when Sunflower Electric first filed the applications back in May of **1990**. On May 21, **2002**, the Chief Engineer served notice of a pre-hearing conference to be held on June 11, 2002 for these applications. On June 7, 2002, a petition to intervene was filed on behalf of the Water Preservation Committee LLC, et al, owners of water rights with points of diversion within 1.5 to 14 miles of Sunflower's proposed points of diversion. The Chief Engineer held an adjudicative hearing for these applications on September 16 – 19, 2003 in Deerfield, Kansas. This initial order was based on the September 2003 hearing.

FLOW METER TELEMETRY EQUIPMENT DEMONSTRATION

A flow meter telemetry equipment demonstration was presented during the July 9, 2003 Board of Directors Meeting. The Satellite Communication System (SCC) is a wireless two-way satellite communication system that uses the Little Low-Earth Orbiting Satellite Network for remote telemetry applications. A person can interface with the SCC via a secure URL Internet access. This system makes it possible to read and record flow measurements using a computer via the Internet. It can be installed on new flow meters and retrofitted to existing ones in the field. The SCC can also interface to pivot control panels, GPS, electric meters for AMR, tank monitors, and any electronic pulse output or analog output device. *(This is not an endorsement of any specific product or company)*

2004 BUDGET HEARING HELD

The 2004 Budget Hearing was held on July 9, 2003. For the second consecutive year the GMD3 Board of Directors held the assessments to \$0.05 (5 cents) per acre of qualified land and \$0.10 (10 cents) per acre-foot (325,851 gallons) of qualified water use within the District. In 2002 the assessment rate per acre-foot had been the highest rate ever proposed for GMD3 at \$0.12 (12 cents). Prior to 2002 the Groundwater Management District Act allowed GMDs to charge up to \$0.60 (60 cents) per acre-foot of water. In 2002 the Act was changed to allow up to \$1.00 for each acre-foot of groundwater withdrawn within the district or allocated by the water right. A groundwater management district may also assess a greater annual water user charge not exceeding \$1.50 for each acre-foot of groundwater withdrawn within the district, if more than 50% of the authorized place of use for such groundwater is outside the district (does not apply to GMD3). GMD3 has shown great fiscal responsibility by being able to maintain the lower assessment rates.

FLOW METER INSPECTIONS & OVER-PUMPING PROGRAM FOR 2003

The Contract Meter Program has been very successful so far. There have been 1119 meters inspected by the 4 contractors. Of these inspected, there have been only 60, which is 5.4 percent, that were found non-compliant. Corrective action has been taken or is pending.

SOUTHWEST KANSAS GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT NO. 3

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AQUIFER MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL TO BE REVISED

GMD3 Executive Director Hank Hansen met with state executives in Topeka on July 22, 2003 to discuss the District's Aquifer Management Protocol. Those in attendance were Chief Engineer David Pope; Kansas Department of Agriculture Adrian Polanksy; Kansas Water Office Director Joseph Harkins; Kansas Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Greg Foley; Division of Water Resources Staff Members Tom Huntzinger and Tina Alder; Kansas Water Office Staff Member Margaret Fast; and GMD3 Lobbyist Chris Wilson. The two hour meeting addressed pending revisions in the District's Protocol that may later be proposed in GMD3's Revised Management Program. In order to adopt a Revised Management Program, GMD3 would have to first propose it to the Chief Engineer for his approval, host a public hearing after receiving the Chief Engineer's approval, and then adopt it by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

OFFICE SPACE DECISION PENDING

Isn't it good and proper for government to plan to eliminate expenses whenever possible? Along with that, what if an expense can be eliminated in 10 years, or less without raising taxes or changing the budget during the interim? If this office builds it's own small and inexpensive office building, then we could eliminate our office space rental payment of approximately \$25,000 per year. The board has tentatively set a 2-year goal to resolve our office space plan and has requested input from those interested or concerned. For your information, all other such districts in the state own their offices, with the exception of one District besides us. The board has tentatively set a 2-year goal to decide on office space and has requested input from all interested parties. This is the result of not only the pending rental lease expiring, but also the District's continued initiative to eliminate unnecessary spending and improve efficiency whenever possible.

SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE

The need for this District to contract on an as-needed basis with experts of varying aptitudes is increasing. Managing the nations second largest water district demands occasional help from highly skilled scientists and other experts. Fortunately, experts often work in teams with individual members specializing in a particular field. Much like a well functioning board of directors, these teams draw on the strengths of individual members. The need for expertise has accelerated now that the District must address the prospect that a few areas may not be able to sustain irrigation indefinitely. Enlisting experts to help analyze our situation is not just for our own good, but also demonstrates that we're using proven scientific methods to help make decisions. In other words, seeking expert advice is not only in the best interest of our stakeholders, but is also respectful of statewide and other regional interests.

NEW REGULATION: SEAL BAD METERS?

The District is considering the development of a new regulation necessary to properly monitor intentional water right violations. Out of more than a thousand meter inspections conducted this year alone, the District has encountered about four persons who have been operating their water meters in a manner that allows the quantity to be deducted, rather than accumulated on the totalizer. Both the Policy Committee and the Research & Development Committee have reviewed this problem and together they plan to recommend that the Board of Directors develop a new regulation enabling better enforcement of such unlawful practices that are a discredit to the integrity of SW Kansas. This new enforcement practice is envisioned to be a cooperative effort between the Division of Water Resources (DWR) and the District. DWR Water Commissioner, Mark Rude, has expressed support of such an initiative as something he's wanted for years. The Chief Engineer, David Pope, has also encouraged additional cooperation with enforcement operations between the two offices.