

WATER DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

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

Volume 4, Issue 2

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MIKE O'BRATE

Gray County

BOARD MEMBERS

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TOM BOGNER Ford

WARREN FOX Meade

JAY HOUTSMA Hamilton

WAYNE BREEDING Morton

KIRK A. MADDUX Kearny

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CLAY SCOTT Grant

STEVE STONE Finney

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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>

GMD3 DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS

The deadline for filing nominations for 5 GMD3 Board of Director positions was January 26th, 2004. Nominations received by that date include Steve Stone for Finney County, Joe Finley and Tom Bogner competing for Ford County, Mike O'Brate for Gray County, Kirk Maddux for Kearny County and David Brenn for Surface Water (at large). The election of the 5 Board of Director positions will be held during the 29th Annual Meeting at the 4-H Building, 17002 W. Highway 50 in Cimarron, Kansas. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. CST and should end by noon.

STEVE IRSIK IS NEW KANSAS WATER AUTHORITY CHAIRMAN

Steve Irsik was recently appointed by Governor Kathleen Sebelius to be the Chairman of the Kansas Water Authority (KWA). Chairman Irsik is from Ingalls, Kansas and is involved with many facets of agriculture including dryland and irrigated farming, ranching, cattle feeding, grain storage, and the dairy industry. He is currently serving on the Kansas Natural Resources Legacy Alliance Board and the Kansas Agriculture and Rural Leadership Board (KARL). Chairman Irsik has also served as a past Board member of the Gray County Commission, Southwest Kansas Irrigation Association, Upper Ark Basin Advisory Committee and GMD3. He is a graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural economics. One of the key responsibilities of the KWA is to consult with and be advisory to the Governor, Legislature, and Director of the Kansas Water Office on water management issues. The KWA also reviews plans and programs of state or local agencies related to the water resources of the state and makes recommendations to other state agencies and political subdivisions for the coordination of their activities related to water resources management. The 23-member KWA is comprised of 13 private citizen members and ten ex officio members.

FAREWELL AND THANKS TO KENT LAMB RETIRING KWA CHAIRMAN

A big thank you goes out to Kent Lamb who has just completed a great tenure as the previous Kansas Water Authority Chairman. Mr. Lamb is a farmer/irrigator who farms with his son near Macksville, Kansas. They have both irrigated and dryland crop production. The family has served as host to farm tours focused on water quality and quantity. While serving as Chairman, Mr. Lamb was very instrumental in helping initiate programs to conserve and extend the life of the Ogallala Aquifer. He received the Fox Award in 2002 for exemplary service to the goals and objectives of the Kansas Water Plan. The Fox Award is named for Ron Fox, former state representative, who championed the cause of the Kansas Water Plan and passionately advocated its development and implementation.

GMD3 CONTINUES PROGRAMS

GMD3 Staff have already begun measurements of static water levels. The goal is to secure information on approximately 100 sites. The majority of these sites were also measured last year as an initiative in response to the abnormally severe declines identified by the Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) as recent as April of 2002. Most measurements will be taken in 7 separate areas of Southwest Kansas that experienced a potential depletion of 15 to 24 feet from 1998 to 2001.

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RETURN SERVICES REQUESTED

GMD3 CONTINUES PROGRAMS (continued from Page 1)

Once again, GMD3 will be hiring Contractors to do flow meter inspections for the upcoming irrigation season. The Contractors will be making inspections from May 15, 2004 until September 30, 2004. Last year four self-employed contract inspectors completed 1666 flow meter inspections for the District.

This is a great time to give your flow meters a quick inspection to be sure they are working properly for the 2004 irrigation season. If your meter is hard to read due to a broken lens or has excessive moisture inside, you should get it repaired as soon as possible as it will be considered non-compliant once you start to pump. **K.A.R. 5-1-9. Criteria to determine when a water flowmeter is out of compliance.** reads in part: A water flowmeter shall be considered to be out of compliance if any of the following criteria is met: (d) The water flowmeter register is not clearly visible or is unreadable for any reason.

Another returning program is the "Unauthorized Appropriation of Water Program" better known as the "Overpumping" Program. Last year at least 304 irrigation wells were selected for intensive monitoring because they appropriated water during the calendar years 2000 and 2001 that was in addition to their authorized annual limit. This year GMD3 Staff will be monitoring those that were found in non-compliance last year as well as other wells selected either randomly or according to a set of specific criteria. This effort is being coordinated with the Division of Water Resources. Enforcement action will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

GMD3 MOVES INTO NEW OFFICE SPACE

GMD3 Staff recently moved into the front suite of the same building that they have been renting in the past. Previous office space has now been remodeled and opened up to provide a much larger Board Room. The new area will not only help the Staff better serve the public but will also save money since the rent has decreased.

U.S. SENATOR BROWNBACK'S STAFF HOLDS MEETING AT GMD3

Amy Metzinger and Dennis Mesa, who work for U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, held a meeting on January 8, 2004 at GMD3 in order to obtain stakeholder input on the "Proposed Irrigation Transition Program". This proposal is a cooperative between the State Conservation Commission and the Kansas Water Office. The program would provide assistance to producers who voluntarily choose to transition land from irrigated to non-irrigated agriculture with a permanent dismissal of associated water rights. State assistance would help producers pay off their capital investments in irrigation for this purpose in areas considered high priority for reducing total withdrawals. The State would not provide assistance to reduce irrigation in areas where there is not a critical shortage of water, but would encourage all producers to make efficient use of water. During their January 14, 2004 Regular Board Meeting, the GMD3 Board of Directors voted to support the "Irrigation Transition Program".

ARKANSAS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

During the January 14, 2004 meeting, the GMD3 Board of Directors took significant action to initiate a process to incorporate water management strategies for the Arkansas River similar to those adopted by the Middle Arkansas Sub-basin Working Group. This decision followed an informative presentation made by Tina Alder, DWR. A few weeks prior to the meeting the Board had reviewed the November 2003 report entitled "Middle Arkansas River Sub-basin Management Strategies" and other related information that was also provided by Ms. Alder. In addition to these strategies, the GMD3 Board decided to develop a suitable water budget methodology that is based upon a clearly defined and scientifically viable format. This will allow GMD3 to consider a method of regulating water usage that is more responsive to current circumstances than the present system.