

***By Russ Pankonin***

***The Imperial Republican***

Construction of a pipeline to carry augmentation water to Medicine Creek broke through a logjam that's been hindering progress.

During last Thursday's Upper Republican Natural Resources District meeting in Imperial, Manager Jasper Fanning updated the board on the project.

For several weeks, construction crews have been trying to bore under a large natural gas pipeline that crosses the path of the pipeline.

Due to a high water table at the site, a de-watering system had to be installed. Even with the system in place, the ground under the pipe remained too wet to allow for boring.

Initially, the plan called for excavating under the gas pipeline but the contractor couldn't receive clearance from the pipeline's operator.

Since it appeared the boring could not be completed due to soil conditions, Fanning said contractors finally received the go-ahead to excavate under the pipeline.

Fanning said the pipeline has been pressure tested all the way to the pipeline crossing.

Assistant Manager Nate Jenkins said the contractor was installing two large fiberglass tubes under the pipeline early this week.

The PVC augmentation pipe will be slid through these fiberglass tubes. Once this is completed, Jenkins said the contractor can finish installing the last half mile of the pipeline to the discharge site.

Jenkins said the first phase of the project, which includes 13 interconnected wells, is ready to operate.

He said some new culverts will need to be installed downstream to handle the increased flow of water in the creek.

They are still working with some landowners to obtain easements to complete the work. Once that is complete, he expects pumping to begin.

### **Pumping for compliance**

The project needs to begin operating by early spring to keep the Republican Basin NRDs and the state in compact compliance with Kansas.

Fanning said the Middle Republican NRD is negotiating with the two irrigation districts for about 4,000 acre feet of water presently being held in Enders Lake.

He said if they can purchase that water, it will take some pressure off the start-up date for the augmentation project.

If that water is released downstream, he said it would result in a five- to 10-foot elevation loss in the lake.

## **URNRD must offset 14,158 AF**

In 2014, Fanning said the URNRD will have to offset 14,158 acre feet of over-pumping for 2013 as its part to keep Nebraska in compliance.

He said the pumping from the Rock Creek augmentation project during 2014 should be sufficient to offset the deficit.

## **Several requests granted**

The board voted to allow Centennial Ag to drill a 200 gpm well to feed water to a new fertilizing mixing plant in Perkins County.

Jake Adler, representing Centennial Ag, said the plant should not require any more than three million gallons of water per year.

Board members noted the company could install wells of 49 gpm or less without violating the NRD's rules and regulations. These wells could pump as much as 80 acre feet of water annually.

The board voted to allow the company to pump up to 9.2 acre feet without having to provide any offset.

Rod Beemer, land manager for Austin Company, received permission to connect two wells to irrigate two circles.

A 500 gpm well on one circle collapsed a number of years ago and the replacement well yielded just 300 gpm.

By joining the two wells, with a total capacity of 1,100 gpm, Beemer said they could operate the property more efficiently without using more water.

Delbert Bussell of Imperial received a variance to retire 70 acres by removing end guns on a number of his pivots.

That will allow him to add back 61.6 acres on another tract.