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Natural Resources District

NEWS RELEASE

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NRD Board and Staff Tour District Projects

Tri-Basin Natural Resources District (NRD) staff, directors, and guests spent the morning of Tuesday, August 11 touring a local ag business and groundwater projects in the district. Curtis Scheele, Irrigation Water Management Specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, kicked off the tour with a demonstration of soil moisture sensors in a soybean field just west of Holdrege. The soil moisture sensors, along with data provided by the Nebraska Water Management Network's Evapotranspiration Gauges, allow ag producers in Tri-Basin NRD to use irrigation water more efficiently by utilizing moisture stored in the soil instead of routinely irrigating crops.

Hawkins Manufacturing, Inc. in Holdrege was the next stop on the tour. Participants learned about the many agricultural products manufactured by Hawkins, including implement tool bars for tractors and the Hawkins Down Corn Reel, which makes it easier for producers to harvest corn if the stalks have been broken over.

The tour continued on to the Odessa Improvement Project Area (IPA) in northern Phelps County. The ditch and culverts included in the IPA allow rainfall runoff in the area to drain toward the Platte River. This cooperative project between Tri-Basin NRD and landowners also helps stabilize high groundwater levels. Tri-Basin General Manager John Thorburn explained the project to tour participants.

The second well in the North Dry Creek Streamflow Augmentation Project was the next tour stop. Thorburn explained that this project utilizes groundwater to augment streamflows of North Dry Creek, a tributary of the Platte River. The purpose of the overall project is to help the State of Nebraska fulfill its

commitment to the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program to reduce shortages to Platte River flow targets by offsetting impacts to Platte streamflows resulting from post-July 1, 1997 water uses within Tri-Basin NRD. The project enables Tri-Basin NRD to protect the flows and habitat of the Platte River along the northern boundary of the district.

Finally, four participants stopped at the Lost Creek Diversion in Kearney County to assess storm damage and the need for repair to the structure.

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