

NP company gets bid on Central project

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Construction expected to start this month

A North Platte company received the bid to enlarge and renovate the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District's office and shop in Gothenburg.

Central's board of directors awarded the bid at Monday's monthly meeting to Wayne Dowhower Construction Co., of North Platte.

Dowhower Construction submitted the low bid of \$1.98 million for the project, which will include a 9,000-square-foot addition to the existing maintenance shop, construction of a steel storage building, renovation and expansion of the existing office area, and paving and fencing for the property.

The project will take place over two years, with the initial phase expected to begin this month.

Gothenburg Division Manager Kevin Boyd said operations, maintenance and administrative activities have outgrown the existing building, which was constructed in 1972.

Central has already made renovations to the control center portion of the office to comply with federal security requirements. Central's four hydroplants, the Supply Canal, and many canal structures in the irrigated area are controlled from the Gothenburg office.

Snowpack below normal

Civil engineer Cory Steinke reported that snowpack accumulation in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and Wyoming are below normal. Snowpack is currently 49% of normal in the upper North Platte River Basin, 69% in the lower basin, and 60% in the South Platte River Basin.

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“Current inflows to Lake McConaughy are 718 cubic feet per second,” Steinke said, “while average inflows for this time of year are around 1,480 cfs. With the ongoing releases of water necessary to meet the flow requirements of Central’s federal license, the lake’s elevation is slowly dropping.”

Depending upon spring precipitation amounts, he said, Lake McConaughy may have already reached its peak elevation for the year.

Steinke added that the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is no longer projecting a spill of excess water from its Wyoming reservoirs. As recently as a month ago, he said, the Bureau had been anticipating that storage conditions in its North Platte River reservoirs would result in at least a small release of water that exceeded storage capacity. The Wyoming reservoirs are currently 86% full.

Also at Monday’s meeting:

The board awarded a bid to Allen Blasting & Coating of New London, IA, for \$1.54 million. The project will entail application of a synthetic coating to the inner surfaces of a mile-long siphon that carries water from the Supply Canal to Elwood Reservoir. The lining will extend the operational life of the siphon by 20 or 30 years.

Notice to proceed with the project will be delayed until after an evaluation of a 250-foot section of the siphon that was coated with the epoxy last fall.

The board awarded a \$13,000 bid to Morrow & Associates of Omaha to conduct a wage survey for 35 hourly positions. Wage surveys are used to determine the median or average compensation paid to employees. Such surveys focus on job duties, geographic regions, employer size, and/or similar industries.

The directors approved a request from staff to begin advertising Central’s intention to transfer

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water rights. The 2012 application will include 22 requests covering 977 acres.