



NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES DISTRICTS

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TO: NARD Board, NRD Managers and Conservation Partners
FROM: Dean E. Edson, NARD Executive Director
RE: January 5 NARD Update

Session Begins -- The Nebraska Legislature convened its 90-day work session on January 3, 2007 and is tentatively scheduled to end on May 31st. Days off for Holidays (H) and Recess (R) are as follows: Jan 15 (H); Feb 9 (R), 16 (R) and 19 (H); March 2 (R), 16 (R), 23 (R), and 26 (R); April 6 (R), 9 (R), 20 (R), 27 (H) and 30 (R); May 11 (R), 14 (R), 25 (R) and 28 (H). These are dates your senator(s) should be back in the district if you wish to schedule meetings with him or her.

Unicameral New Web Site -- The Nebraska Unicameral has a new website address which is www.nebraskalegislature.gov.

New Bills -- Introduction of legislative bills occurs in the first ten working days of the session. This is the beginning of a new session so there are no carry over bills from last year. The following are a few new bills of interest for the NRDs introduced in the first few days. Note, no bills were introduced on the first day. For more information on introduced legislation, visit the Nebraska Unicameral web-site at www.nebraskalegislature.gov.

- **LB 7 – Open Meetings Act, Priester.** Adds to the definition of new business to include any item not on the agenda of a meeting which is not of an emergency nature. The bill also outlines that if a citizen speaks on an item of new business, members of such body may engage in discussion with the citizen but shall not take any action on such business that requires a vote of the body at that meeting. Finally, the bill prohibits a public body from requiring members of the public to identify themselves as a condition for admission to the meeting or require that members of the public be placed on the agenda prior to such meeting in order to speak to the body regarding items on the agenda or any new business.
- **LB 17, Prohibit NRD Dual Office Holding, Mines.** Adds NRD office holders to the list of high elective offices that would be prohibited from filing as a candidate for another high elective office. Current law defines higher elective office as a member of the Legislature, county, city, or school district.
- **LB 20 – NRD Projects and Public Access, Mines.** Requires public recreation access to NRD water project properties and private lands under NRD easements if NRD contributions are 5 percent of the cost of the project. Current law, adopted in 2006, requires public access if the NRD cost is 20 percent of the total cost.

Bleed Appointed DNR Director -- Governor Dave Heineman appointed Ann Saloman Bleed as permanent director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources noting her 18 years with the department as state hydrologist, deputy director and, most recently, interim director since August 2005. Bleed is from New York, N.Y., has a Master's degree in ecology/zoology from Penn State and Ph.D. focused on ecology from the University of Wisconsin. Bleed holds a second master's in industrial engineering and systems management from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Committees -- First item on the agenda for the session is the election of the Speaker, committee chairs and committee assignments. In the Speaker race, Senator Mike Flood defeated Senator DiAnna Schimek 28-21. In contested committee chair races: Senator Levon Heidemann defeated Senator Loren Kruse 26-23 for Appropriations; Senator LeRoy Loudon Defeated Senator Chris Langemeier 26-23 for Natural Resources; Senator Ray Jannsen defeated Senator Mick Mines 30-19 for Revenue; and Senator Deb Fisher defeated Senator Arnie Stuthman 27-22 for Transportation. Other committee chair slots were not contested. The Standing Committee chairs and assignments are as follows:

Agriculture Committee. Meets: Tuesdays in Room 2102

Chairperson: Senator Philip Erdman. **Members:** Sens. Ernie Chambers, M.L. Dierks, Annette Dubas, Russ Karpisek, Vickie McDonald, Don Preister, and Norman Wallman.

Appropriations Committee Meets: Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 1524; Wed., Thurs. and Fridays in Room 1003

Chairperson: Senator Lavon Heidemann. **Members:** Sens. Pat Engel, Tony Fulton, John Harms, Lowen Kruse, Danielle Nantkes, John Nelson, John Synowiecki, and John Wightman

Banking Committee. Meets: Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 1507

Chairperson: Senator Rich Pahls. **Members:** Sens. Tom Carlson, Mark Christensen, Tim Gay, Thomas Hansen, Chris Langemeier, Dave Pankonin, and Pete Pirsch

Business & Labor Committee. Meets: Mondays in Room 2102

Chairperson: Senator Abbie Cornett. **Members:** Sens. Ernie Chambers, Steve Lathrop, Amanda McGill, Kent Rogert, Norman Wallman, and Tom White

Education Committee. Meets: Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 1525

Chairperson: Senator Ron Raikes. **Members:** Sens. Greg Adams, Brad Ashford, Bill Avery, Carroll Burling, Gwen Howard, Joel Johnson, and Gail Kopplin

General Affairs Committee. Meets: Mondays in Room 1510

Chairperson: Senator Vickie McDonald. **Members:** Sens. M.L. Dierks, Annette Dubas, Philip Erdman, Mike Friend, Ray Janssen, Russ Karpisek, and Don Preister

Government, Military & Veterans Affairs Committee. Meets: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Room 1507

Chairperson: Senator Ray Aguilar. **Members:** Sens. Greg Adams, Bill Avery, Mike Friend, Russ Karpisek, Mick Mines, Rich Pahls, and Kent Rogert

Health and Human Services Committee. Meets: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Room 1510

Chairperson: Senator Joel Johnson. **Members:** Sens. Philip Erdman, Tim Gay, Thomas Hansen, Gwen Howard, Dave Pankonin, and Arnie Stuthman

Judiciary Committee. Meets: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Room 1113

Chairperson: Senator Brad Ashford. **Members:** Sens. Ernie Chambers, Steve Lathrop, Vickie McDonald, Amanda McGill, Dwite Pedersen, Pete Pirsch, and DiAnna Schimek

Natural Resources Committee. Meets: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Room 1525

Chairperson: Senator LeRoy Loudon. **Members:** Sens. Tom Carlson, Mark Christensen, Annette Dubas, Debra Fischer, Carol Hudkins, Gail Kopplin, and Norman Wallman

Nebraska Retirement Systems Committee. Meets: At the call of the chairperson in Room 1525

Chairperson - Senator John Synowiecki. **Members:** Sens. Philip Erdman, Lavon Heidemann, Russ Karpisek, LeRoy Loudon, and Tom White

Revenue Committee. Meets: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in Room 1524

Chairperson: Senator Ray Janssen. **Members:** Sens. Carroll Burling, Abbie Cornett, M.L. Dierks, Christ Langemeier, Don Preister, Ron Raikes, and Tom White

Transportation Committee. Meets: Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 1113

Chairperson: Senator Debra Fischer. **Members:** Sens. Ray Aguilar, Carol Hudkins, LeRoy Loudon, Mick Mines, Dwite Pedersen, DiAnna Schimek, and Arnie Stuthman

Urban Affairs Committee. Meets: Tuesdays in Room 1510

Chairperson: Senator Mike Friend. **Members:** Sens. Abbie Cornett, Ray Janssen, Steve Lathrop, Amanda McGill, Kent Rogert, and Tom White

For a complete list of all assignments, please visit the Unicameral Web-site www.nebraskalegisature.gov.