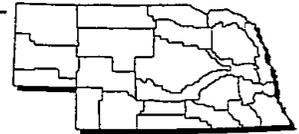
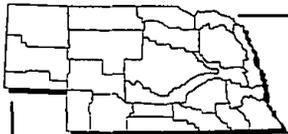


**An Analysis of
Natural Resources District:
Program Effectiveness,
Cost Effectiveness,
Duplication of Responsibility
and Other Options for
Facilitating Property Tax Relief**

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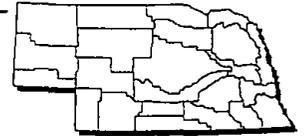
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I. INTRODUCTION

The Nebraska Legislature through LB1085 (1996) directed the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission by September 1, 1998 to issue a report analyzing natural resources district (NRD) cost effectiveness, program effectiveness, duplication of responsibilities and authorities, and other services or areas that could facilitate property tax relief. This report is being issued in fulfillment of that directive. Our conclusion, after careful examination of these issues, is that natural resources districts have generally operated efficiently and effectively with little duplicative effort. Administrative mechanisms to spread ideas and discuss potential duplication are already in place. Nevertheless areas of potential improvement do exist, and this report provides a number of suggestions in that regard.

In providing direction for this report, LB1085 directed "the Commission shall outline the five possible changes which, in its best judgement, represent the opportunities most likely to stabilize and enhance the natural resources district system through restructuring and cost efficiencies." Seven such recommended changes are provided in this report, although in most instances they are provided as recommendations to the districts rather than as suggested changes in state statute. A major strength of the natural resources district system is that it is based upon local units of government which can be responsive to local voter preferences, local needs, and the vast differences in natural resources and natural resource issues between districts. A district, for instance, may allocate its efforts to soil conservation, groundwater management, watershed structures or even trails or rural water systems in a manner which would be completely inappropriate for a different district, but is in line with voter preferences and the needs of that particular district.

This extends to relations with other units of government. What might be duplication in one district could be needed cooperative effort in another. Statutory changes that could cause the districts to march in lockstep in order to avoid potential duplication, could also limit the practical nuts and bolts opportunity for cooperation and getting things done at the local level. We believe that practical responsiveness to "what works" at the local level was a major reason the districts were created.

This is the second report the Commission is issuing in response to direction provided in LB1085. On September 1, 1997 a report entitled "An Analysis of Natural Resources District Revenue Base, Board Sizes, and Potential for Boundary Changes or Con-

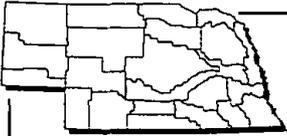
solidation" was issued. Generally, this second report does not readdress those issues. Readers interested in those topics should refer to the first report.

Work on this report began in the fall of 1997, shortly after completion of the first report. In 1996 a seven member committee was established to facilitate work on the study and it continued its work on this second report. It was composed of three Commission members, three members of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD), and one Commission staff member. Commission members appointed included: Vince Kramper (Chair), Don Roberts and Wayne Davis. NARD members included Mike Mosel (President), Richard Beran and John Turnbull. The Commission staff member was Gayle Starr.

The Committee's first meeting on this second report was held on September 23, 1997 and it concluded its work in the summer of 1998. To assist in compiling the report the committee sent separate questionnaires to municipalities, county boards and natural resources district managers. Summaries of municipality and county board responses to the questionnaires are included as Appendix A and B, respectively, of this report. Responses to one of the surveys of natural resources district managers are included as Appendix C and the form for the other survey of managers is included as Appendix D.

A wide range of alternatives and suggestions were discussed in the compilation of this report. An abridged summary of various parties' suggestions by subject, as provided in LB1085 Committee meetings and the surveys is provided at the end of each portion of Section VII. Issues, Alternatives and Recommendations.

In addition to this introduction this report contains sections addressing: the fiscal status of natural resources districts, survey results, district program and cost effectiveness, potential duplication, other services or areas that could provide property tax relief, issues/alternatives/recommendations, and the seven changes most likely to enhance NRDs through restructuring and cost efficiencies. In addition to the appendices mentioned previously, graphs of natural resources district fiscal status are provided as Appendix E. Those graphs and this report's section on fiscal status are useful in showing how NRD budgetary requirements have changed through time and the substantial differences between NRDs in regard to their budgetary requirements and budgetary trends.



II. FISCAL STATUS OF NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICTS

The study of the fiscal history of the Natural Resources Districts is important in order to know how the districts are doing. The fiscal history is a strong indicator of the success of the district's policies and management. This history also indicates the strengths of the governing statutes. Without that historical knowledge, it is difficult to determine if major changes are in order. How do you know where you are going if you don't know where you have been?

The charted data are district to district comparisons and statewide composites of information. The material is presented to assist in viewing the big picture. Individual district information can be found in Appendix E. The charts do not support arguments to merge districts, but rather illustrate trends, board philosophies, budget management, and the aggressiveness of the various districts. The tax levy charts illustrate that, as a whole, districts are operating below the levy limits established by the legislature. Districts are not experiencing the financial difficulties that the cities, counties, and school districts face. This is not to say that districts do not need to become more efficient or to improve. There is always room for improvement. But gains in efficiencies do not always mean reduction in property tax. More often gains mean an increase in productivity with the same resources.

In any discussion of Natural Resources Districts, it is easy to jump to the conclusion that because a few districts have the largest budgets and

collect more taxes than the others, they provide more for their citizens. To get a better feel, several comparisons have been made.

The NRDs budgeted \$22,625,775 for property tax in FY 97. However, about 75% of the tax was budgeted by 7 NRDs (**Figure 1**). The balance was shared by the other 16 districts.

In FY 97 the Papio-Missouri NRD had the largest budget of any of the districts. However, as can be seen in **Figure 2**, the Upper Republican NRD had the highest budget on a per capita basis, \$77.08. Although the Papio-Missouri NRD has the largest population (560,000) its per capita budget was \$31.75. The lowest per capita budget is \$14.97, which was the Twin Platte's. The average FY 97 budget per capita for NRDs statewide was \$ 35.82.

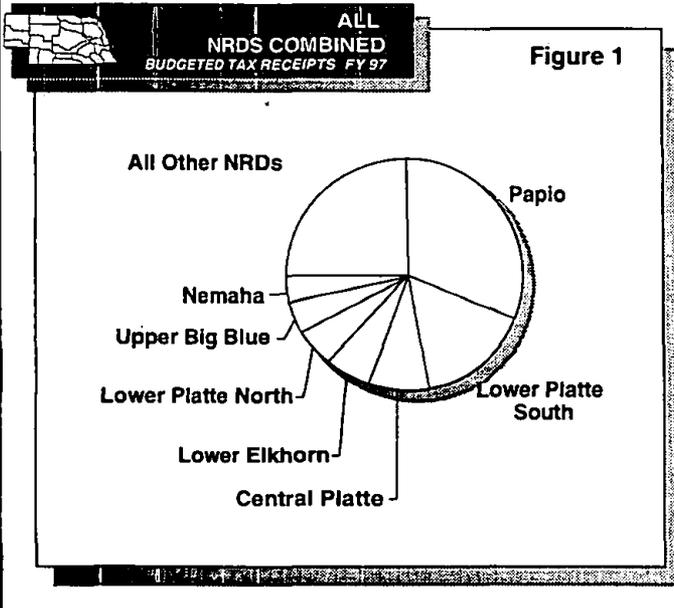


Figure 1

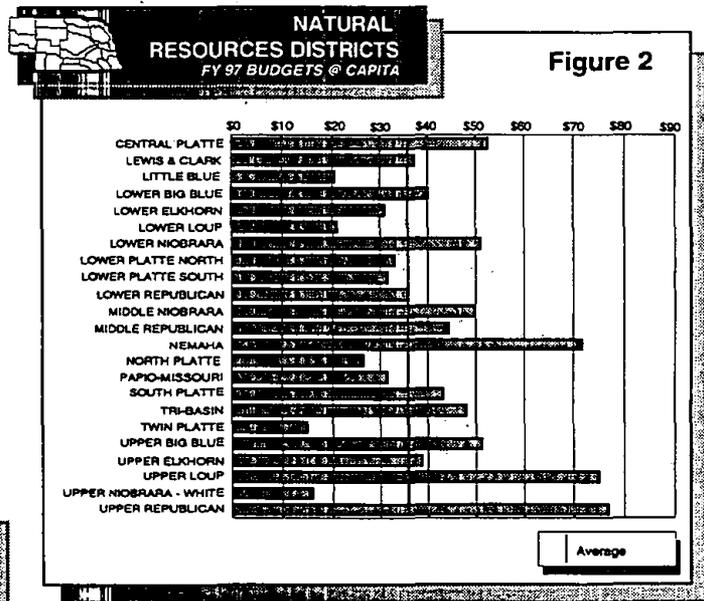
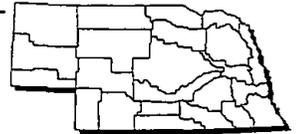
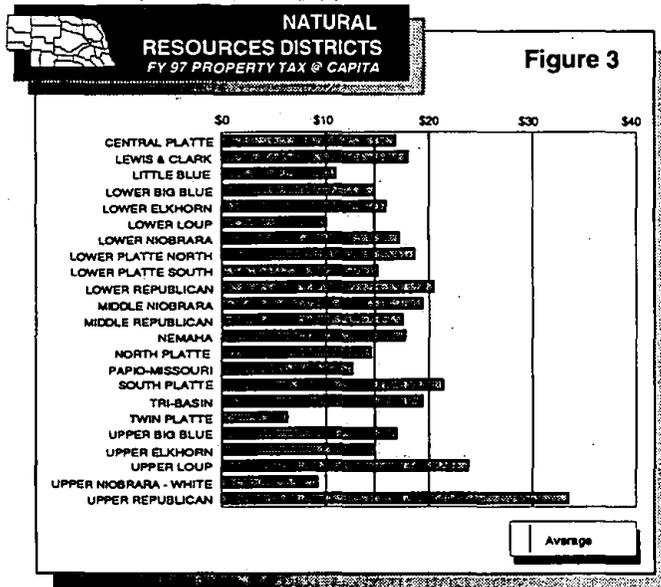


Figure 2

The Papio-Missouri NRD ranks 18 out of 23 in total square miles of land area but it had the largest property valuation (\$21,871,372,476) in FY 97 (2% of the area of the state and 31 % of the valuation). The Middle Niobrara NRD, which ranks 5th in size, has the smallest valuation (\$523,182,370) of any of the NRDs, less than 1% of the total. The Lower Loup NRD is the largest district with 7,917 square miles, but ranked 5th in valuation (10% of the state's land area and 5 % of the total valuation). The Lower Platte North NRD is the smallest district in size with 1,504 square miles but its valuation in FY 97 ranked 7th.

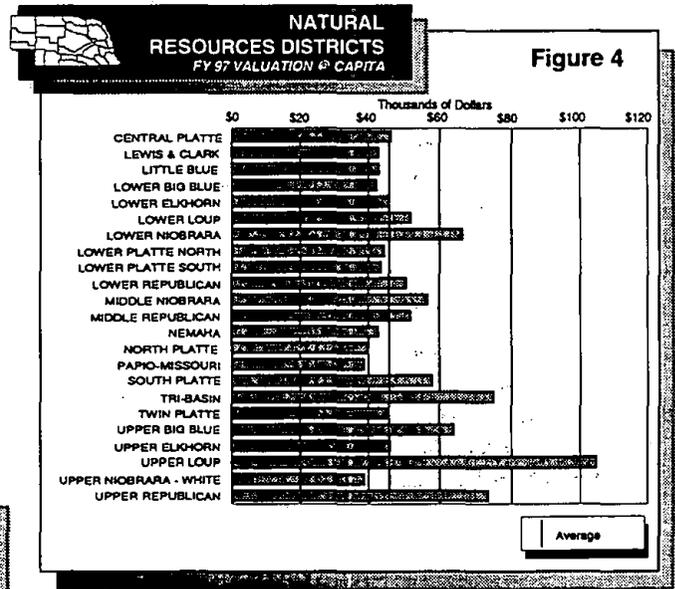


A better comparison can be made when the FY 97 valuations are compared on a per capita basis. Surprisingly, the highest property valuation per capita was in the Upper Loup NRD at \$105,111. The Upper Loup NRD's population is only 5,220, the least amount of people of any of the districts. The second highest property valuation per capita was in the Tri-Basin NRD at \$75,105. The lowest property valuation per capita, however was in the Upper Niobrara-White NRD at \$38,997, not the Papio's which was \$39,020. As can be seen in **Figure 3**, the average valuation per capita per district was \$45,794.



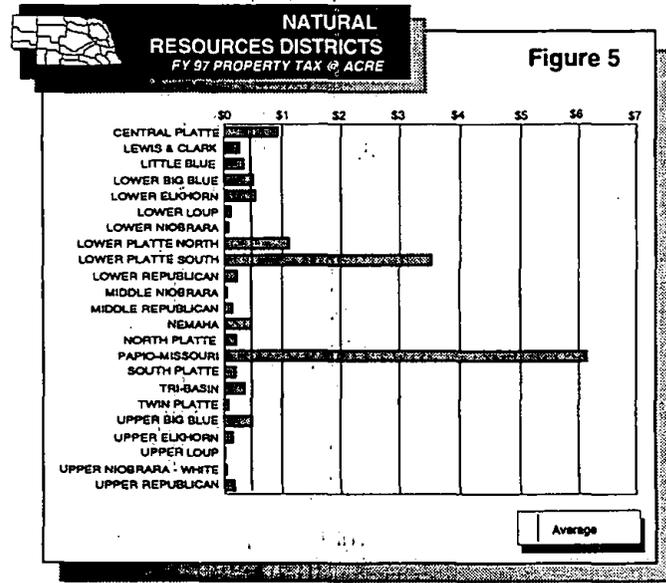
Valuations are the basis for property tax. Property tax is the principal revenue for the NRDs and it sets the base for the activity level of any district. The property tax budgeted in a district may show a NRD's aggressiveness in pursuing projects and programs, but outside funds must also be taken into account. Property tax is leveraged by many of the Districts into larger revenue bases by being the matching monies for state, federal and private grants. Chapter VI goes into more detail on outside funding.

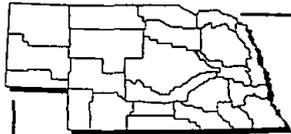
NRD property tax comparisons for FY 97 (**Figure 4**) show that the highest property tax per capita for NRDs is in the Upper Republican, \$33.48 per capita. The Upper Loup NRD has the second highest per capita tax at \$23.96. The lowest property tax per capita for the districts is in the Twin Platte NRD at \$6.27. The statewide average property tax per capita for the districts is \$14.78. The Papio-Missouri River NRD, with the highest valuation and population, is just below the state



average in this comparison. The Lower Big Blue, the Lower Platte South, the North Platte, and the Upper Elkhorn NRDs all have property taxes per capita right at the state average.

Property tax is not levied per capita but rather on the value of the land. A quick statewide comparison of tax per acre is found in **Figure 5**. It is no surprise that on this basis the Papio-Missouri has the highest average tax per acre of \$6.16. It must be kept in mind that this is not the average tax on rural farm lands but rather the average on all properties, including industrial, commercial, farm, ranch, and residential. The lowest tax per acre is \$.03 in the Upper Loup NRD, an indicator of the tremendous amount of ranch land in that district. The statewide average NRD property tax per acre is \$.72.





The data presented on the following figures is a fiscal summary of the first 25 years for the Natural Resources Districts. The valuations, budgets, and tax levels for all the districts have been reviewed from Fiscal Year 73 through Fiscal Year 97. The districts fiscal years are defined by statute and are the twelve month period beginning July 1 and ending June 30. Fiscal Year 73, therefore, began on July 1, 1972, the first official day of operations for the Natural Resources Districts.

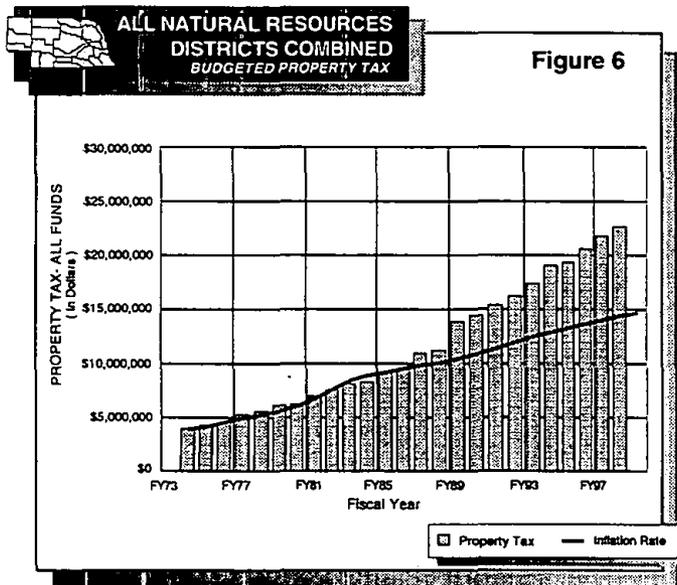
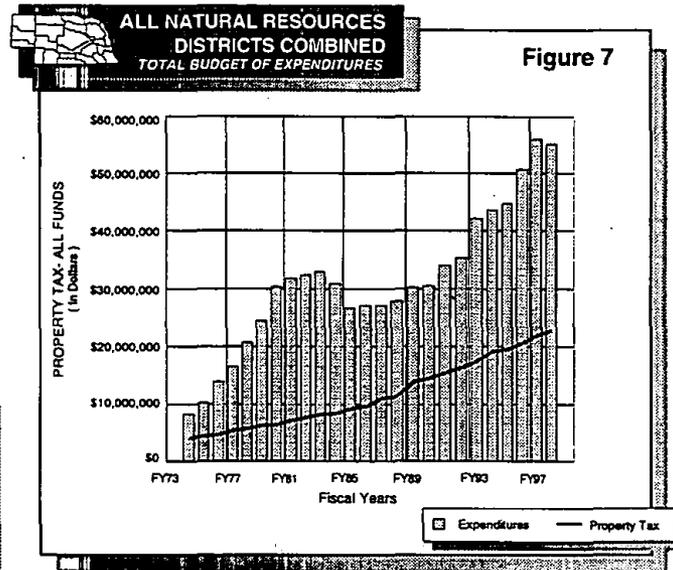
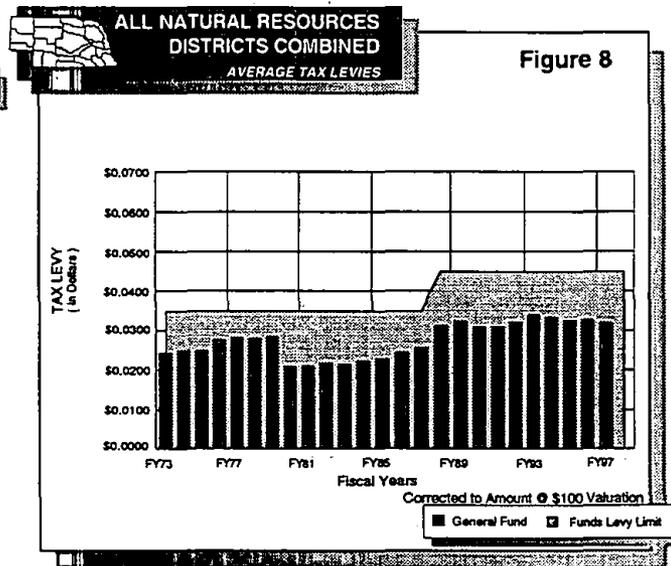


Figure 6 compares the total property tax budgeted by all of the NRDs to the rate of inflation. The Consumer Price Index (1982-84 = 100 base) was used in the comparison. The single line in the chart is the property tax adjusted upwards or downwards from 1984 for inflation, while the gray vertical bars represent the actual budgeted property taxes. The data shows that the districts have been more than keeping up with the effects of inflation over the years. Keep in mind that the first few years were start up years for all of the NRDs. As operational knowledge and experience was gained the budgets changed. See the appendix for the historical budgeted property tax for each individual district.

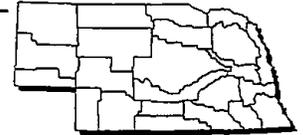
Property taxes are only part of the revenues for the districts. **Figure 7** displays the total budget of expenditures for all 23 NRDs for the 25 year period. The total statewide property taxes for NRDs is represented by the line on the graph. Well over half of the total statewide revenues for districts is from sources other than property tax. Appendix E contains graphs of budgeted expenditures for each district.



Property tax levies are the subject of much discussion because of the tax limits now imposed by statute. The NRDs have always had a levy limit. In **Figure 8** the gray area is the limit which started out at \$.035 per \$100 of valuation. The



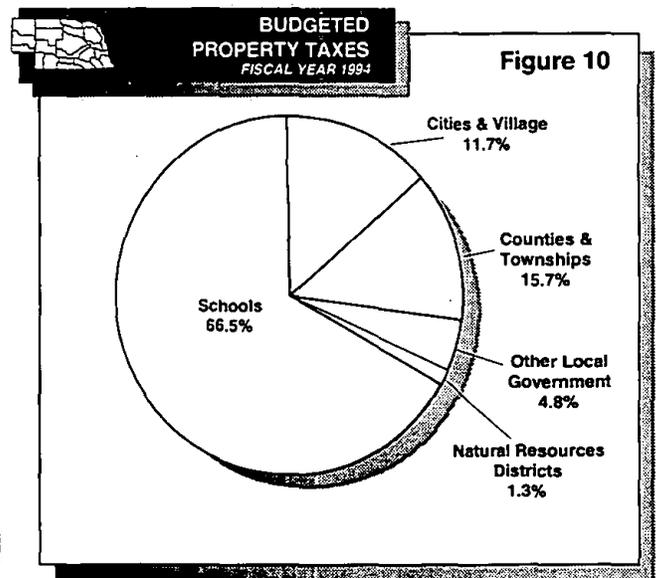
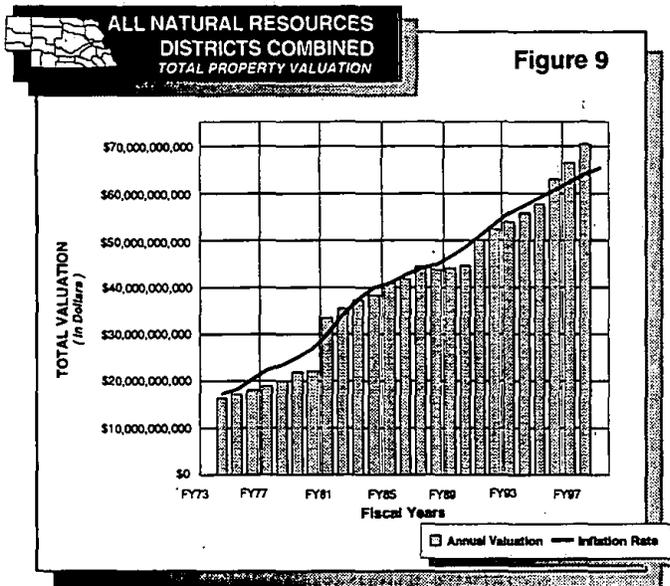
limit on all activities is now at \$.045 per \$100 of valuation for the districts. Groundwater regulatory activities had separate levy authority limits for several years but those have been repealed. The average tax levies for the NRDs has always stayed below the levy limits, however several of the districts have been at or near the maximum authorized from time to time. For instance, as can be seen in the appendix, the Lower Platte North NRD has levied near the maximum allowed

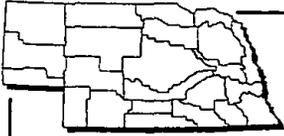


for the 25 year period. The Twin Platte NRD, on the other hand has had consistently low levies.

Figure 9 is a graph of the total property valuation of the State of Nebraska from FY 73 through FY 97. The actual total valuation has increased over the years as property has appreciated in value. The valuation has been compared to an inflation adjusted valuation for the same period. Again the CPI-U 1982-84 = 100 base was used. Property valuations have increased slightly more than the rate of inflation over the 25 year period. Because of the longterm increase in valuation the district property tax levies have remained at very constant levels while the budgeted tax revenues have increased.

Natural Resources Districts are only one of the local political sub-divisions in Nebraska that are supported by property tax. Statewide in FY 94 NRDs budgeted property taxes (**Figure 10**) amounted to only 1.3% of the total property taxes levied. This is important to remember in any discussions. A typical property owner in FY 94 paid \$1,000 in property tax, \$665 of that went to the public schools while \$13 went to the NRDs. A 2 1/2% increase in the \$665 tax for schools is \$16.63, which is more than the total NRD tax in the example. In comparison, a 2 1/2% increase in NRD tax amounts to \$0.33.





III. SURVEYS OF COOPERATION, EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

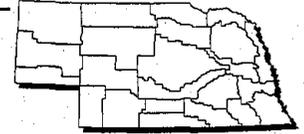
To assist in compiling this report the committee directed that surveys be sent to each of Nebraska's municipalities, the Boards of all 93 counties, and the managers of all 23 Natural Resources Districts. Questions primarily dealt with cooperation, efficiency and effectiveness. Responses were received from 163 of 521 municipalities (31.3%), 31 of 93 counties (33 1/3%), and 22 of 23 natural resources district managers (95.7%). The questionnaire and a summary of the responses from municipalities and county boards are included as Appendices A and B, respectively. The responses of natural resources district managers are included as Appendix C.

The responses were diverse and difficult to characterize on an overall basis. It is suggested that the reader see material in the Appendices.

On a very general basis the responses from municipalities detailed a wide variety of cooperative programs and projects with the most common ones relating to flood control and floodplain management issues, water quality, wellhead protection, tree planting, park improvements, and drainage improvements.

Responses from the counties were generally complimentary, with only two that could probably be considered negative. The most common item mentioned by the counties was their involvement with NRDs on Road Structures (17 responses). Secondly, many counties expressed concern about siltation of road ditches, drainage ditches, culverts and bridges. Other items were all mentioned much less frequently.

Some of the more interesting responses from natural resources district managers dealt with ways to increase efficiency. The most common comment in that regard was that NRDs needed to adopt various forms of electronic technology. The second most common response was that they could share specialized equipment and personnel, especially expensive equipment. Training was also mentioned as a common NRD action to increase efficiency.



IV. SURVEY OF NRD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of this study natural resources districts also were separately surveyed about some of their accomplishments. All 23 NRDs responded. A copy of the survey form is included as Appendix D. Results were added to acquire the statewide totals presented in the following paragraphs and in Table 1. While it is impossible to quantify every task that an NRD is involved in, it did seem useful to present those things that might lend themselves to some type of quantification. It is very important to remember the limitations of statistical data and that each NRD is a different entity with varying requirements, needs, and opportunities. With those things in mind, the following paragraphs attempt to present some statistical information about the State's NRDs. Because of the difficulty of acquiring historical data, that data presented represents only recent years or the current status.

Tree planting and basic soil and water conservation practices have always been significant priorities for the NRDs. In only the last five years the districts have sold 8,665,887 trees to landowners for planting by either the NRD or the landowner. In addition to providing the local administrative support for the expenditure of \$16,544,662 of cost-share money for conservation practices in the last five years through the Soil and Water Conservation Fund, the NRDs provided an additional \$11,168,445 of NRD money for conservation cost-sharing. Over that same five year period NRDs cost shared on construction of 387 dams for various purposes and an additional 41 road structures built in cooperation with county governments. Districts reported completing 160 miles of channel improvement projects over the 5 year period. Some districts also work cooperatively with communities on both structural and non-structural methods of flood control. Floodplain activities by some districts have included zoning assistance, mapping, flood routing, buyouts and construction review.

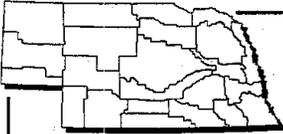
Groundwater quantity and quality have always been significant issues for the NRDs, with water quality becoming more important in recent years. State law charges NRDs with the primary responsibility for these issues and allows them to form groundwater management

areas to address these issues with information, education, monitoring, research and, if necessary, regulation authorities. Currently, fourteen NRDs have formed groundwater management areas covering their entire district with additional small management areas in two districts. Several other NRDs are considering the establishment of groundwater management areas. A map of the groundwater management areas is included as Figure 11. To carry out these management responsibilities NRDs currently monitor 6,307 groundwater sites for water quality and 4,401 for quantity. Groundwater management areas cover over 55% of the state's land area.

An additional groundwater quality responsibility assigned to NRDs is the local administration of the chemigation program. Any irrigator wishing to apply chemicals through their irrigation system is required to have a permit from the NRD to do so and the NRD is responsible for periodic inspection of the equipment used for this purpose. In 1997 NRDs statewide issued 12,350 permits to utilize this practice. Another water quality practice carried out by NRDs is the plugging or decommissioning of abandoned wells to prevent those wells from being a conduit for pollutants to enter the groundwater aquifer. State funds are available for this purpose and since 1994 NRDs have decommissioned over four thousand abandoned wells.

NRDs work cooperatively with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission to establish wildlife habitat areas with the use of the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP). State funds for this program come from the sale of habitat stamps to hunters. Funds are used to pay landowners to set aside areas on which habitat is established. Currently 1,377 contracts are in force on about twenty six thousand acres throughout the state. NRDs provide local administration of the program and twenty-five percent of the funding.

The original NRD law provided that existing rural water supply districts would not be merged into the NRD structure, but that no additional such districts could be formed and that any projects would come under the authority of NRDs. NRDs currently operate eight domestic water supply areas serving 3,095 customers and eight small communities. One additional water supply area is nearing completion.



Several of these water supply areas overlap NRD boundaries and in each case one of the involved NRDs handles all of the administrative responsibilities under a cooperative agreement in order to provide for a more efficient method of operation.

Recreation has become a significant responsibility for some districts with thirteen districts operating and maintaining a total of fifty public use areas on 10,582 acres. In addition, districts have provided financial and technical assistance to municipalities and other public bodies on 240 separate recreation areas such as city parks. Eight districts have become involved in the establishment and operation of thirty separate recreational trails with a combined length of approximately 230 miles.

As part of their management responsibilities they have become involved in a number of research, demonstration and study projects. Virtually all of these efforts are carried out with various state and federal agencies and many of them cooperatively with other districts on issues of mutual interest. Currently a total of 54 such efforts are underway.

Each NRD provides local administration for each of the cost-share programs that the Natural Resources Commission administers at the state level, including the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program, the Resources Development Fund, the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund, the Water Well Decommissioning Fund, and the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund. These responsibilities require significant input on the part of the NRDs.

Table 1

**Selected Survey Results
Natural Resources District Accomplishments**

Current Status or Most Recent Year Accomplishments

- Groundwater Sites Being Monitored for Water Quality - 6,307
- Groundwater Sites Being Monitored for Water Quantity - 4,401
- Chemigation Permits Issued (1997) - 12,350
- Abandoned Wells Decommissioned or Plugged (Since 1994) - Over 4,000
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) Contracts in Force
(In Cooperation with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission) - 1,377
- Customers Provided with Domestic Water Service - 3,095
- Number of Recreation/Public Use Areas Operated and Maintained - 50
- Number of Acres in Recreation/Public Use Areas Operated and Maintained by NRDs - 10,582
- Number of Recreation Areas for Which NRDs have Provided
Financial or Technical Assistance to Other Public Bodies - 240
- Number of Trail Miles with NRD Participation - 230

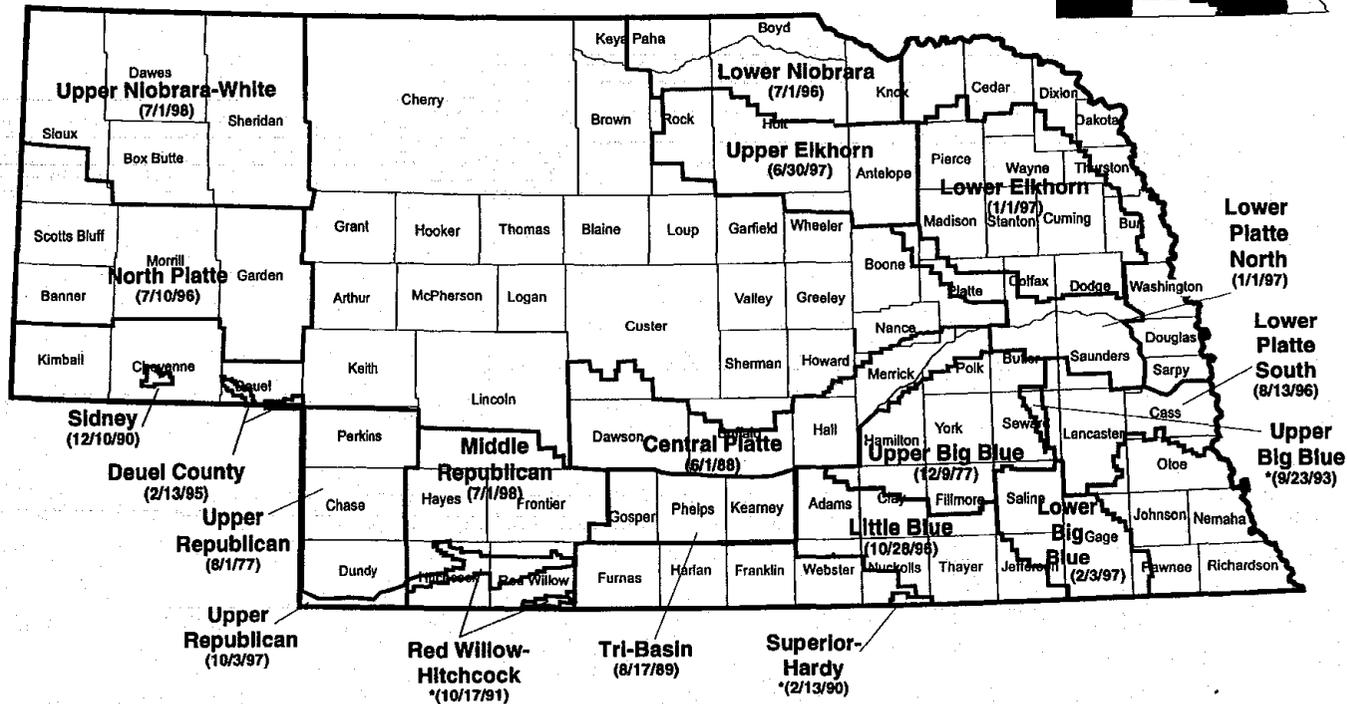
5 Year Accomplishments July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1998

- Trees Sold - 8,665,887
- State Monies Administered for Local Conservation Cost Share - \$16,544,662
- Additional NRD Money Provided for Local Conservation Cost Share - \$11,168,445
- Dams for Which NRDs Provided Construction Cost Share - 387
- Road Structures Built in Cooperation with Counties - 41
- Miles of Channel Improvement Cooperated on or Constructed - 160

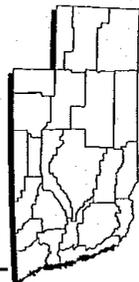


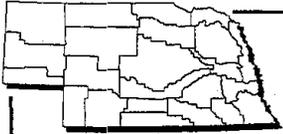
GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

Figure 11



*Water well construction permits are required for former Special Protection Areas after July 19, 1996





V. PROGRAM AND COST EFFECTIVENESS

Natural Resources Districts utilized a little more than 1% of the property tax statewide and property tax accounted for about 46% of the district's combined revenue in FY 95-96. NRD property tax requirements were approximately \$22.7 million in FY 96-97 out of total budgeted (though not necessarily expended) requirements of \$55.1 million. For this the NRDs have delivered a generally growing program in twelve areas of statutory responsibility.

Since 1985 overall combined NRD property tax requirements have generally been growing at a higher percentage rate than inflation or that of other local units of government. Several factors likely account for much or most of this increase: 1) additional responsibilities mandated by the Unicameral, 2) program adjustments or expansions caused by the relative youth of the 25 year old NRD system, 3) growing local level demand for services NRDs can provide, and 4) some growth of property tax as a % of total NRD budget requirements since FY 84-85 (see Table 2). Major legislation increasing NRD responsibilities was listed in Table 1 of the Commission's September 1997 Report, "An Analysis of Natural Resources District Revenue Base, Board Sizes, and Potential for Boundary Changes or Consolidation."

Determining program and cost effectiveness within these trends can be difficult. Natural Resources Districts have been primary sponsors or co-sponsors in a wide variety of water resources projects that have provided flood control, recreation, drainage recharge, or rural water supply. Districts have provided major soil conservation cost share funding. They have shared in construction of trails, helped in development of fish and wildlife habitat and wetland restoration. Their tree planting programs have assisted landowners throughout the state. Their groundwater programs have addressed both water quantity and quality while regulating chemigation. Districts have been leaders in environmental education and public information on proper land stewardship. They have provided a wide range of assistance to local governments as discussed elsewhere in this report. Even these are only a sample of NRD activities.

The diversity of district programs, the difficulty of monitoring the environment and the problems with ascribing environmental changes to any one program make a thorough and objective evaluation of program and cost effectiveness almost impossible.

For instance, it is known (through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's National Resources Inventory) that a much lower percentage of Nebraska land has unacceptable levels of soil loss than was the case 20 years ago. However, was that due to NRD cost share, state cost share, changes in federal farm program conservation requirements, changing landowner beliefs, changing economic conditions, or differences in monitoring? Probably some combination was responsible; but it is difficult to be sure what that combination was. Similarly NRD groundwater management programs may have effects that help result in better water quality or higher water levels at some wells. However, it is difficult to be sure it was the NRD program that caused a change even though we may suspect a connection.

Although NRDs do compile annual summaries of property tax requirements and budgeted total requirements, they do not have a common accounting for subprograms within each NRD. The previous section of this report provided a cumulative summary of some common physical accomplishments by NRDs. The diversity of NRD programs and differing nature of NRD projects and cost share with other partners makes summarization of many other activities difficult. The NRD may pay widely varying amounts of total project cost on various projects. The tremendous difference in total district budget (with two districts accounting for nearly half of tax receipts) also makes general summaries of effectiveness difficult.

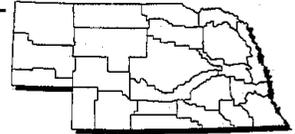
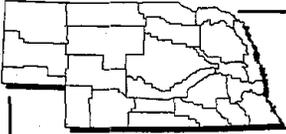


Table 2

NRD Property Tax Requirements as a % Of Total NRD Budget Requirements by Year*

Year	<i>Property Tax as % of Total Budget Requirements</i>
96-97	41.26
95-96	38.98
94-95	40.53
93-94	43.28
92-93	44.40
91-92	41.54
90-91	45.96
89-90	45.18
88-89	47.31
87-88	45.79
86-87	40.49
85-86	39.30
84-85	35.25
83-84	34.32
82-83	25.01
81-82	24.72
80-81	23.24
79-80	22.00
78-79	21.31
77-78	24.99
76-77	27.03
76-76	31.69
75	32.26
74	41.76
73	47.93

* Please note total budget requirements were calculated prior to the year and are generally higher than actual expenditures. Although total NRD expenditures are not available for each of these years, tax requirements would generally constitute a greater percentage of total expenditures than they do of total requirements.



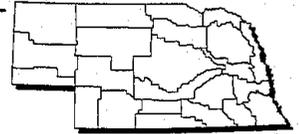
VI. POTENTIAL DUPLICATION

Natural Resources Districts generally have good mechanisms to avoid duplicating the work of other districts. An NRD manager's committee, an NRD public information officer's committee, Nebraska Association of Resources Districts meetings and Natural Resources Commission meetings all serve to inform districts about the work of other districts. Surveys also did not identify duplication with other local units of government as being a significant problem. This may be in part because when there are areas of common interest, NRDs work on cooperative projects with those other units of government.

In the course of the surveys/meetings the idea was raised that NRDs could benefit from better information about state and federal data collection efforts so as to avoid duplicative efforts by NRDs. NRDs do collect a variety of information such as groundwater quality data

that is also of interest at the state and federal levels. Although this topic has received some discussion in the past, it is also worth some future attention.

The line between cooperative effort and duplicative effort can appear to be a fine one. For instance both the districts and the Cooperative Extension Service (and others) are involved in conservation education. Both the districts and communities may be involved in wellhead protection or flood prevention. However, in many of these instance the entities are well aware of the others' efforts and work in a cooperative and complementary fashion. Greater dangers of duplication may come from efforts outside the local area which are not publicized enough for districts to learn about.



VII. OTHER SERVICES OR AREAS THAT COULD PROVIDE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Natural Resources Districts could provide property tax relief through several means. These include: 1) charging user fees, 2) finding alternative outside funding sources, 3) operating efficiencies, and 4) dropping programs or projects.

Natural Resources Districts already charge user fees for certain services, although in some cases those fees are limited by statute. Commonly user fees are charged for chemigation inspections, tree planting, and use of NRD equipment (such as grass seeding equipment) statutory maximum. Chemigation net receipts of \$25 for the initial application and \$8 for renewal are insufficient to pay costs and should be increased. Raising user fees or charging new ones could help take pressure off other sources of revenue.

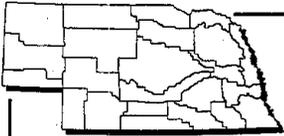
In FY 95-96 NRDs received about 54% of their income from sources other than local taxes. Table 2 provides a comparison of budgeted property tax requirements as a percent of total requirements through time. Please note that these are budgeted amounts rather than actual expenditures. However, property tax does comprise a relatively larger portion of NRD budgets than it did in some earlier times. Outside funding can supplement NRD work and it appears that local property tax revenue may have to some degree made up for relatively smaller growth of outside revenue. Finding new outside sources of funds could reverse that trend and to some extent provide property tax relief. However, in some instances those outside funds may come with caveats that don't allow the types of funding use that could provide that relief.

Several factors may have accounted for this change in budgeted outside funding including: 1) a shift in emphasis from project development to resources management (for which fewer outside funds are available), 2) possibly reduced levels of federal financial presence, 3) flat levels of state funding to the

Resources Development Fund and the Soil and Water Conservation Fund in the early part of the decade of the 1990s and 4) and changes in the methods NRDs use to budget outside funds. However, this trend may well now be reversed by state contributions to the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.

Operating efficiencies can also be used to extend tax dollars and effectively provide tax relief. The ideas provided in this report indicate some of the types of actions that may provide those types of efficiencies. Generally staff and director training and wise use of available technology can help achieve those efficiencies.

The final method of providing property tax relief would be to achieve spending reductions through reductions in programs and projects. A potential corollary to this would be to hold down future spending increases by having the unicameral limit new duties given to the districts. If a decision was made to limit NRD spending it could either be done through a lid or through legislation rescinding certain statutory duties. It is the Commission's opinion that the duties the Unicameral has given the NRDs have been appropriate and that the districts have fulfilled those duties in a responsible manner. Therefore, we do not recommend that those duties be diminished. We also believe NRD expenditures generally reflect local demands. Therefore, we do not recommend a "tighten the lid" approach on expenditures. However, should the Unicameral believe an expenditure reduction is needed, we do favor an approach that lets each district decide the portions of its budget that could be cut with the least impact on needed services in each district.



VIII. ISSUES, ALTERNATIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Potential improvements in NRD efficiency and effectiveness are most likely to come from specific changes within general issue categories or areas of operation. The following paragraphs examine those general categories and some of the specific alternatives districts may wish to consider within each category. Which alternatives are appropriate for adoption will vary with circumstances in each district. While we do make some recommendations in the following pages, we generally leave that decision to the Boards within each district.

A) Information-Education

The Commission believes that NRDs should improve their information-education efforts in regard to officials in other local units of government. To that end we are recommending that NRDs provide city, county and village governments with information on NRD activities at least once every two years in order to account for electoral turnover.

Natural Resources Districts can provide a wide range of services to counties and municipalities, be it assistance with drainage, wellhead protection, rural water, mapping and survey, or a variety of other areas. We view those services not as duplicative, but complimentary. NRD staffs have both expertise that may not be available to the other unit of government and a knowledge of natural resources concerns that affect the region. In some cases it simply makes sense for those units of government to cooperate. However, if the other units of government are unaware of that potential for cooperation or the services available, that cooperation may not occur and an opportunity for needed collaboration may be lost. The response rate received in the surveys and the responses themselves made it appear likely that many municipalities and counties are only marginally aware of opportunities for NRD assistance. When there had been cooperation or where there was awareness the responses were positive. An information effort directed at those officials is a way not only to cooperatively solve problems; but it is also a way to identify problems in the NRDs area. To that end meetings with local officials should also be encouraged.

While the overall public education efforts of NRDs are generally sound, we also recognize the need for continued emphasis in this arena. Keeping local voters informed and local preferences in mind is a key district role as it sets policy.

Information-education related suggestions or alternatives mentioned either in the surveys or during LB1085 meetings included some of the following items. While we are making a formal recommendation only in regard to providing information to local governments, we believe most of the following suggestions are good ideas. Often they have been adopted by at least one district and are worthy of consideration by others.

Commission Recommendation

** NRDs should provide city, county and village governments with information on NRD activities at least once every two years in order to account for electoral turnover.*

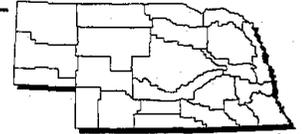
Other Alternatives Identified in Surveys/Meetings

- * NRDs should provide cities, counties and villages with a list of NRD services
- * NRDs should include information on NRD activities in local newspapers. (This can be both effective and more cost effective than mailing)
- * NRDs should treat NRD information for city dwellers and those who live in rural/agricultural areas as two separate items
- * NRDs should hold NRD open houses
- * NRD should make an NRD videotape

B) Director and Staff Training

Director and staff training is perhaps the most important single factor in achieving efficient cost effective NRDs. Simply put: good leadership and good board and staff organization will lead to well run districts which will provide for better cooperation between NRDs and between NRDs and other political subdivisions. For that reason we recommend continuing leadership training for Board Directors and staff. We also recommend continuing staff training on financial management, personnel management, administration and project/program management.

An efficient and effective NRD has a combination of sensible coordinated policy clearly laid out by a Board, sound coordinated staff decisions in carrying out those policies, and good two way chan-



nels of communication between the Board, the staff, and the public. Effective NRD leadership in resource management means not waiting for problems to come to the district or develop. It means leading other units of government into cooperative solutions to problems.

That type of approach doesn't occur naturally. It takes continuing hard work and training by both board and staff and a knowledge of their role by each. Efficiencies come in the "little things" as well as major overall policy questions. That can mean a knowledge of the latest techniques of finance or project management. It may also mean knowing what type of equipment or software best does a specific job. Or it may mean knowing what a different NRD has tried that works. It may also mean knowing what type of information map, equipment or research is already available. All of those mean training and coordination. This need is likely to expand in the future as more types of electronic data and programs become available to better manage natural resources. They will allow more efficient, thorough and accurate analysis and management - but only to a trained staff.

The following paragraphs discuss specific training needs.

*** Leadership Training**

Leadership training needs to involve both NRD directors and staff. Directors need solid information, a clear understanding of duties and objectives, an understanding of organizational capabilities, an idea of how they can influence the future and a vision of what they'd like that future to be. They set the policy for the NRD and broadly determine what the staff will do. Directors are often the first individuals to hear about or identify a specific resource issue. Providing wise policy and strong clear direction to the staff while avoiding both letting problems simmer or micromanaging can be a challenge. It is a challenge leadership training can help them meet. Leadership training can help staff more efficiently carry out the assignments directors provide.

*** Financial Management**

Good financial management provides more than one benefit to NRDs. First it helps achieve maximum benefits from existing funds by their proper use. This can mean monetary savings as well as avoidance of legal difficulties. However, even more importantly it provides an NRD with a clear picture of its options and the framework within which its programs can

operate. Knowledge of financial assets and obligations is important at the NRD level but can be complex. Financial management training can help NRD staff address that complexity and provide directors with financial information in the clear concise form they need in order to make good policy. It can also result in staff awareness and skills with the latest software or other financial management material.

*** Personnel Management**

Good personnel management techniques can result in a well trained, motivated work force that knows its role and can efficiently carry out the policies of the NRD directors. Fair personnel rules that accommodate employee needs can also help hold down costs. However, training can be indispensable to developing and maintaining the best policies.

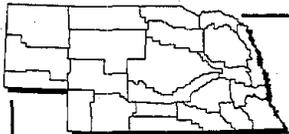
*** Administration and Project/Program Management**

Managing the affairs of a multi-purpose organization such as a natural resources district requires good administrative skills. Even administering a single project or program within an NRD can prove to be a complex task. Administrative and project management skills can be augmented by continuing training in software, legal background, administrative techniques and project specific information.

Director and staff training related suggestions or alternatives mentioned either in the surveys or during LB1085 meetings included some of the following items. While we are only formally recommending the first mentioned recommendation of increased NRD continuing training, we believe that additional joint training efforts are a good idea and should be carefully considered by NRDs. We also believe NRDs may want to consider developing a program tailored specifically to NRDs and containing separate courses on leadership, financial management, personnel management, administration, and project/program management.

Commission Recommendation

**** NRD directors and staff should participate in continuing leadership training. We also recommend continuing staff training in financial management, personnel management, administration, and project/program management.***



Other Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

- * NRDs should conduct joint training efforts
- * The NRC and NARD should analyze joint training needs
- * Provide more staff training and idea exchange through NARD

C) Computers, Electronic Equipment and Data Compatibility

Computers and other electronic equipment represent a major avenue for increasing the cost effectiveness of natural resources districts. They are the basis of efficiencies in word processing, accounting, data and record storage, data analysis and communications. These efficiencies are enabling NRDs to take on increasing responsibilities and provide increased services without the staff increases that would have been required only a few years before.

Because of the efficiencies provided we believe it is important that all natural resources districts acquire at least some ability to use the equipment now available. For that reason we recommend that natural resources districts should share computer equipment, personnel and expertise between districts. We also recommend that sharing occur with other units of government. As a related recommendation we encourage natural resources districts to examine the idea of adopting an 800 phone number and implementing that option where cost effective.

A wide variety of electronic mapping information is now available on-line through the Natural Resources Commission and other state agencies. Increasingly some natural resources districts are able to manipulate that data to provide sophisticated geographic information system coverage of selected natural resource relationships in their district. With the advent of digital orthoquads, digital soils coverages and digital hydrologic information it is likely to become even more important that some NRD information be available in electronic map format. That data can ultimately be made available to assist other units of government. For instance, digital orthoquads could be used to help counties with land assessment. Computers and electronic equipment also present superb opportunities for data sharing, sharing of knowledgeable personnel, and in some instances equipment sharing. Because computer equipment quickly becomes outdated, equipment sharing has

the advantage of holding down overall costs to allow updating.

Compatibility of data and equipment is a major efficiency question that has troubled organizations nationwide. If data is gathered for an NRD study, but cannot be used as part of a statewide analysis because of differences in collection or compilation technique, then part of the potential utility of the effort has been wasted. To date this problem has primarily addressed through the NRD managers committee and informal coordination mechanisms. Districts and other governmental units must coordinate and continually ask how new data collection efforts relate to other agency's data collection needs in order to maximize efficiency.

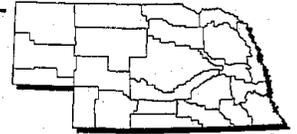
Commission Recommendations

- * *Natural Resources Districts should share computer equipment, specialized machinery, personnel and expertise between districts and with other units of government*
- * *Natural Resources Districts should examine the idea of adopting a toll free number and implement this option if or where cost effective*

Other Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

- * Make computers compatible among NRDs
- * Share Technology
- * Share Software
- * Upgrade to the latest survey equipment or else reach an agreement to share survey equipment and personnel with other NRDs
- * Use NRD electronic capability to help counties with land assessment via Digital Orthophoto Quadrangle (DOQ)
- * NRDs need to be set up to use the digital soil coverages we will have in the next few years
- * Make computers compatible with NRCS/ FSA
- * Develop e-mail, fax, teleconferencing, and internet capability (including e-mail at all NRD locations)
- * Provide for electronic filing of forms and documents
- * Coordinate implementation of GIS with cities and counties

In addition to some of the items listed above, the



surveys indicated activity by some NRDs has included:

- * A toll free number for access to the district office by all parties
- * Local networking of computers
- * Use of cellular phones by field staff

D) Joint Activities with Other NRDs and State/Federal Agencies

The previous portions of this report have dealt with sharing of NRD computer/electronic equipment and sharing NRD training activities. However, the potential for joint activities between districts is far wider. Personnel sharing can allow adjacent districts to hire a full-time professional staff member in a situation where no one district had sufficient need to justify hiring a person based on its need alone. Circuit rider staff could assist other local units of government in multiple NRDs. Joint purchasing can occasionally help bring bulk discounts that one NRD could not receive on its own. Cooperative efforts with state and federal agencies can help provide local NRD perspective to studies by those agencies or provide federal/state assistance on a local led NRD study. NRDs already engage in a variety of joint activities. Although the Commission is making no recommendation on specific joint activities we do suggest individual NRDs closely examine these opportunities.

Alternatives Identified in Surveys/Meetings

- * Reach agreement on sharing survey equipment and personnel with other NRDs
- * Counties are interested in roads, joint projects on roads and anything that can help offset the cost of roads
- * Counties expressed interest in NRD technical assistance in sizing culverts and bridges
- * Conduct joint training efforts
- * Use interlocal agreements to increase the joint funding capacity of governmental units under the lid
- * Co-locate with similar local, state and federal agencies
- * Share personnel
- * Use "circuit-rider" staff
- * Use part-time staff
- * Provide staff services to neighboring NRDs on a cost basis
- * Explore potential pooled purchasing through NARD to receive maximum discounts
- * Purchase insurance through agency providing consolidated package to all NRDs

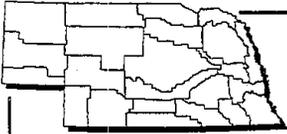
- * Joint purchase of computer hardware and software to receive discounts via joint licensing

In addition to some of the items listed above, the surveys indicated activity by some NRDs has included:

- * Cooperation on rural water supply projects (operation by one NRD of a system in two NRDs)
- * Providing service to adjoining areas of other NRDs if appropriate, i.e. tree planting and chemigation inspection
- * Conduct of joint information/education and teacher workshops
- * Joint efforts/agreements on Republican River water, the Lower Platte River and the Platte River
- * An interlocal agreement on Platte River ice jams
- * Chemigation valve kits were constructed by one NRD and made available to all NRDs
- * Reciprocal agreements on operator certification for groundwater quality management
- * Use of correctional facility crews to perform appropriate tasks
- * Cooperation on arboretums
- * Cooperative studies and grant applications
- * Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program cooperative administration and funding
- * Musk thistle control agreement and Leafy Spurge Task Force
- * Sharing cost of conservation assistance with NRCS and others
- * Funding soil survey programs
- * Rainwater Basin Joint Venture
- * Agreements with State Forester to cost share on NRD forester

E) Assistance/Cooperation with Other Local Units of Government

The Surveys of Municipalities indicated that Natural Resources Districts already provide a wide variety of assistance to those local units of government. The type and amount of assistance can vary significantly between NRDs and between individual units of government. We believe that NRD assistance to local units of government would be in considerably more demand if those governments were better acquainted with the duties and capabilities of their local district. That is one reason we have recommended expansion of the NRD information-education function. Although we are not making a formal recommendation in regards to assistance to local units of government per se, we do strongly suggest NRDs strongly consider expanding these efforts.



Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

- * Have NRDs assist counties with land assessment via DOQs
- * Assist communities with park improvements / recreational areas
- * Provide counties with stream hydrology for use in bridge and culvert design
- * Provide windbreaks at edge of town/ treeplanting
- * Assist with wellhead protection and future well development
- * Assist with well testing / water quality testing
- * Send a representative to visit communities or meet with mayors / councils
- * Assist with flooding / channel clearing / stream cleanup / drainage / stormwater management / stream habitat / bank stabilization
- * Help counties with: cost sharing on road structures, design of bridges and culverts, cleaning of drainage ditches, road ditch erosion, monitoring of livestock confinement facilities, runoff control

In addition to some of the items listed above, the surveys indicated activity to assist municipalities or counties by some NRDs has included:

- * Floodplain assistance
- * Wetland restoration assistance
- * Water Tower assistance
- * Plugging abandoned wells
- * Weed spraying certification
- * Trails assistance
- * Lagoon assistance
- * Rebuilding a lake
- * Environmental education
- * Checking well meters
- * Arboretum assistance
- * Wildlife areas
- * Assistance on a dispute (over a landfill)
- * Mapping aerial photography
- * Assistance on sediment & erosion control ordinances
- * Provided equipment (grass drills and tree planters) for use by cities, municipalities and schools for their projects free of charge

F) Administrative - Budgetary

Natural Resources Districts can and have implemented budgetary and administrative measures that on a case by case basis can save the district money. We believe districts should continue to examine those options and adopt them as appropriate. Generally we believe that what will work is situation specific and is best left to the discretion of the Natural Resources District. One exception to that is our recommendation that Natural Resources Districts be exempted from state sales tax. The lack of sales tax exemption is not only unfair and a cost to each district, but a source of confusion to merchants. Sometimes a merchant may unknowingly fail to charge the tax and the District personnel may fail to catch the error. An audit by the Nebraska Department of Revenue resulted in a late payment fee by at least one NRD. It would be more efficient to make NRDs exempt. Some of the measures suggested in surveys or meetings included the following:

Commission Recommendation

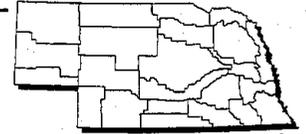
- * *Exempt Natural Resources Districts from sales tax.*

Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

- * Improve investment of any surplus funds by competitive negotiations
- * Look for ways to enhance revenue producing programs such as tree planting and chemigation inspections
- * Evaluate all programs and eliminate those that are ineffective
- * Leverage other resources with NRD programs
- * Contract services where appropriate
- * Make more use of interns

In addition to some of the items listed above, the surveys indicated activity by some NRDs has included:

- * Sharing of travel by both NRD staff and board members and sometimes with personnel of other NRDs
- * Maintenance of time, activity and mileage logs to better manage staff efforts
- * Entering into agreements with contractors,



landowners and other groups to do maintenance and carry out other NRD responsibilities when it is more efficient

- * Holding board and committee meetings on the same day to reduce travel cost
- * Requiring cost sharing on most projects and programs and reducing NRD cost share where appropriate
- * Acquisition of equipment from state and federal surplus sources

G) Coordination, Mechanisms/ Duplication

Natural Resources Districts have already adopted a wide range of mechanisms devoted to avoiding duplication between districts and sharing information about district activities. A natural resources district managers committee meets 5 to 6 times each year. One manager described this as "the pickup we meet over to discuss what works, what doesn't, and common concerns." The managers committee can also be a forum for conflict resolution and presentations/training on issues of common concern. Similarly the information-education personnel of Natural Resources Districts meet a half dozen or more times per year to discuss issues of common concern and work on joint activities.

Much of this activity is conducted through the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD). The NARD is primarily funded through the districts and has three full-time staff. It provides a major annual natural resources district conference and sponsors a number of other training activities for districts. It maintains strong relations with districts, regularly informing them of issues of common concern. It also helps develop district positions on natural resources related legislation.

The strong natural resources district representation on the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission also helps the Commission act as a coordination mechanism for districts. Activities such as a weekly legislative memo during sessions of the Unicameral and assistance with computing and electronic communications have provided an additional coordination mechanism.

A final informal but important coordination mechanism should be noted. That is the co-location of some Natural Resources District offices in the same building complex or nearby related state or federal field offices. This has involved such agencies as Natural Resources Conservation Service/Farm Service Agency offices, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, UNL Conservation and Survey Division

offices and Department of Water Resources offices. In summary, the districts are far from isolated and have supported a number of mechanisms that allow them not only to learn of relevant activity by others, but help them to avoid duplication and take joint action where needed.

Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

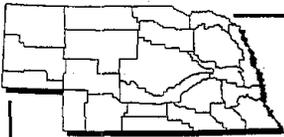
- * Three member committees could be set up to work with the counties
- * Develop a standardized groundwater and surface water quantity and quality network and monitoring program
- * Coordinate GIS implementation with cities and counties
- * Attend meetings of bordering NRDs once or twice each year
- * Contact other NRDs about their experiences before implementing new programs
- * Work more closely with Cooperative Extension on information/education
- * Use teleconferences, videotaping, regional conferences and central locations to reduce travel time and expense
- * Have NARD better coordinate meetings and training
- * Provide better information about state and federal data collection efforts in order to avoid NRD duplication

In addition to some of the items listed above, the surveys indicated the following NRD activities:

- * NRD Managers Committee information sharing efforts
- * NRD Information-Education Committee efforts

H) Consolidation With/Of Other Units of Government

A number of state, local and federal units of government deal with natural resources related topics. Consolidation has often been suggested a potential means of achieving efficiencies. Natural Resources Districts themselves are a result of the 1972 consolidation of 154 special purpose districts into 24 (now 23) NRDs. In 1997 the last groundwater conservation district was disbanded and its functions assumed by an NRD. Further consolidation of NRD activities with either other local units of government or local field office activities of federal or state govern-



ment is a possibility. For the most part we feel that other local units of government such as weed control districts, drainage districts, irrigation districts and county surveyors are functioning well and that attempts to consolidate their functions with those of natural resources districts would be expensive, cause confusion and not serve the public well.

We do, however, have one formal recommendation regarding those other local agencies. Many drainage districts have been inactive for long periods of time. The boundaries of an old unused drainage district don't matter until another governmental unit or an individual wants to do something with the land, but can't find the status of the old inactive district. Action is difficult when no one knows who is responsible for a ditch. In some instances even county records are not sufficiently helpful. The existence of such districts creates confusion. Therefore, we recommend that drainage districts that have been inactive for more than four years be officially disbanded.

The local field offices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) present a different type of challenge. Natural Resources Districts provide funds for clerks for those offices. The federal government is currently mandating co-location of those offices with Farm Service Agency field offices and certain other USDA Field Offices. We recommend that Natural Resources Districts should have input to the consolidation process, in part because of the funds districts provide for NRCS field offices and the currently committed funds those consolidations may release.

Commission Recommendations

** The federal government is mandating co-location of field offices for the Farm Services Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as some other USDA agencies. Natural resources districts should have input to the consolidation process in part because of the funds districts provide for the clerks in those offices. Those consolidations may free up some currently committed funds.*

** Drainage districts that have been inactive for more than four years should be officially disbanded.*

Alternatives Identified in Surveys/ Meetings

* Have NRDs assume duties of drainage districts

* Have NRDs assume duties of weed control boards

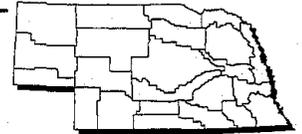
* Make provisions for irrigation districts to merge with natural resources districts by mutual consent and recommend those mergers take place where reasonable

* Have NRDs take over duties of county surveyors

* Urge consolidation of NRCS Field Offices and co-location with NRD offices

* Eliminate NRCS clerks and replace with NRD technicians

* Disband Natural Resources Districts



IX. SEVEN CHANGES MOST LIKELY TO ENHANCE NRDS THROUGH RESTRUCTURING AND COST EFFICIENCIES

(1) Natural Resources Districts should provide city, county, and village governments with information on NRD activities at least once every two years in order to account for electoral turnover.

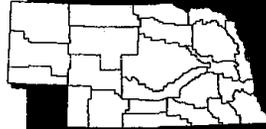
(2) Natural Resources District directors and staff should participate in continuing leadership training. We also recommend continuing staff training in financial management, personnel management, administration, and project/program management.

(3) Natural Resources Districts should share computer equipment, specialized machinery, personnel and expertise between districts and with other units of government.

(4) Natural Resources Districts should examine the idea of adopting a toll free number and implement this option if or where cost effective.

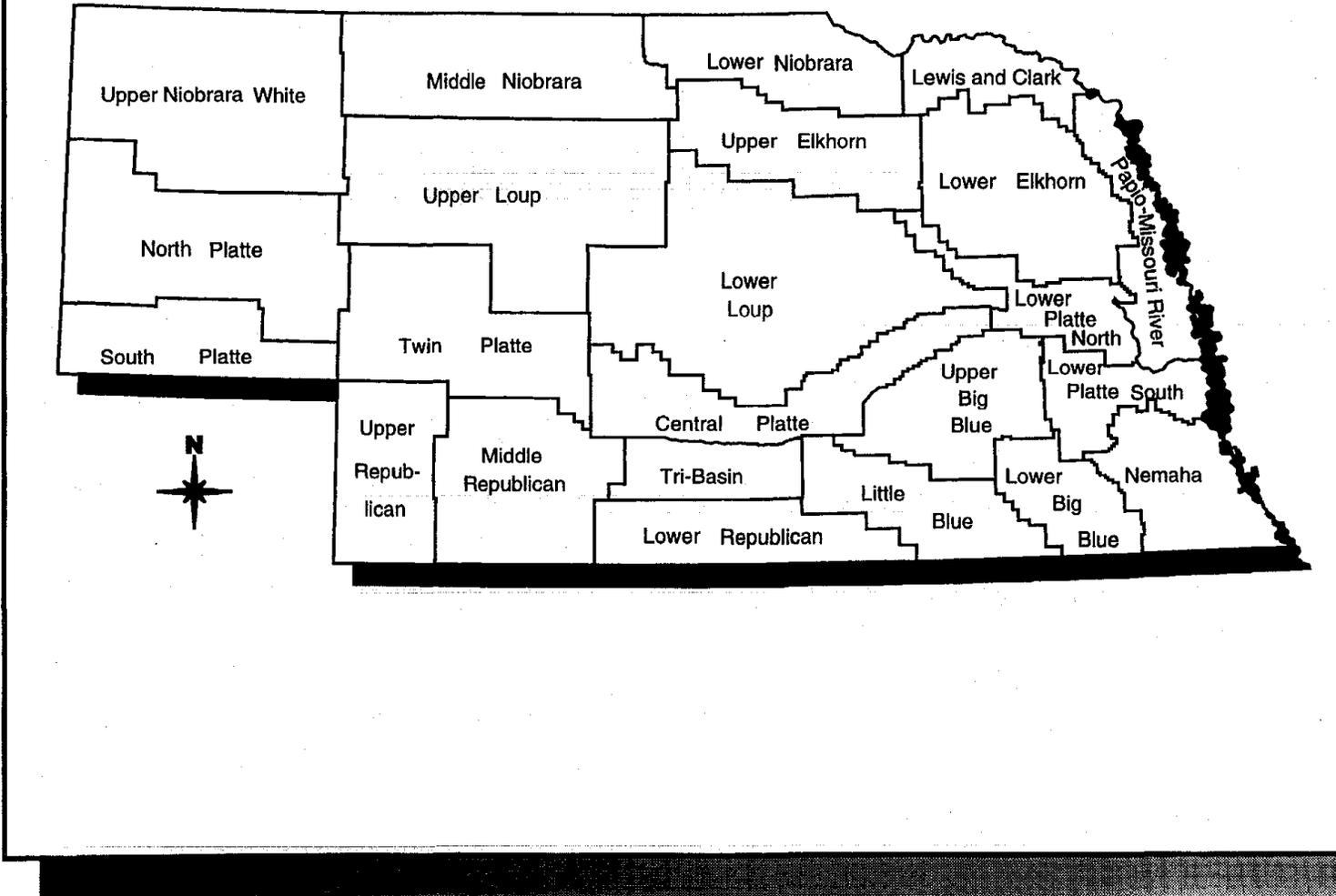
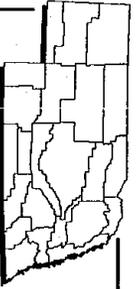
(5) Exempt Natural Resources Districts from sales tax.

(6) The Federal government is mandating co-location of field offices for the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service as well as other USDA agencies. Natural resources districts should have input to the consolidation process, in part because of the funds districts provide for the clerks in those offices. Those consolidations may free up some currently committed funds.

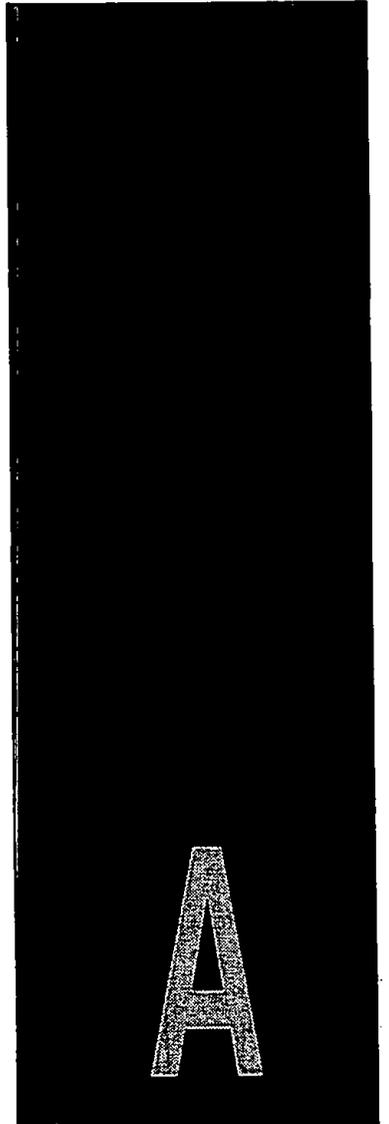


NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICTS

Figure 12



Appendix A



Survey of Municipalities- Summary of Results

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SUMMARY OF MUNICIPAL RESPONSES

1. **Has your municipality worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?**

Ninety-one responses were no, not applicable, or no answer.

- yes, Grafton school and community park playground equipment and landscaping project.
- shelterbelt planting
- yes, test wells to study the delineation of well areas
- yes, MoPac trail
- assisted in leveling ground on sewer lagoon slopes
- yes, primarily on flood control and drainage issues. The city and Central Platte NRD have worked together and cosponsored several flood control and drainage projects.
- yes, capping of old wells in village
- yes, we are working on a FACT BOOK for Petersburg and the area
- yes, purchase of trees
- yes, educational - Bruning has high level of nitrates in water
- yes, drainage
- yes, grant money for a concession stand in a new park area
- development and drilling of new municipal wells, abandonment of old wells, and trees for Arbor Day celebration
- yes, we have worked on several water protection/testing programs such as wellhead protection, well abandonment, safe drinking water awareness week, and restoration of wetland
- yes, river bank stabilization
- fire protection well and drainage
- worked together to store and disburse wood chips, water quality monitoring, and advice on trees that should be moved/removed
- partnered with the NRD on a drainage project and purchased trees from the NRD for city properties
- yes, nitrate concerns, tree planting program, landfill siting, and flood control project
- money for new trees and playground equipment in the Shelby park
- landfill, tree planting, and floodwater diversion
- floodplain study of the Platte River and funds for aerial mapping on a creek
- yes, transfer station, proposed new water tower, and floodpain issues
- yes, helped with the construction of the river project
- yes, well siting, nitrate testing, wellhead protection, plugging old wells and grass planting
- weed spraying certification
- flood control on Rawhide project
- yes, stormwater management
- rural water project
- flood control dam, levee project and bank stabilization
- yes, park land development and drainage project
- a dam to restore drainage through town
- NRD and city provided funds for the rebuilding of Atkinson State Lake
- drainage problems
- very helpful in working on a wellhead protection program for Bloomfield
- yes, Lost Creek flood control project
- yes, arboretum educational project, Arbor Day tree program
- drainage projects
- water quality designation and drainage project
- rebuilding of Union and No Name dike and cleaning a drainage ditch in the south part of Valley
- trees

- recreational trail and design of drainage project
- flood control projects in and around Central City, nitrate projects
- yes, flood control projects
- yes, source water quality assessment and protection
- trails and drainage
- helpful in obtaining a grant for city ballpark and assistance on floodplain matters
- yes, flood control
- water for trees and wellhead protection
- trailhead project for cowboy trail
- yes, recreation area development, park expansion, drainage, and trail development
- Elkhorn River and Pebble Creek flood protection levees
- yes, NRD agreed to a grant for park development, but project was never done
- flood plains
- water drainage through Riverside park
- yes, wetland preserve, nature trail development, Sacramento creek drainage study, and flood plain work
- yes, capped old wells and funds for park development
- tree planting
- groundwater study
- yes, wellhead protection
- yes, flood control
- yes, dam construction and nitrate testing
- upgrading of meters, checking well meters annually, and cost sharing on well abandonment
- water supply project from MUD and renovation of storm drainage
- yes, the NRD has provided assistance for the city flood plain management program, as well as technical assistance in the review of subdivision plats and sediment and erosion control on major projects before the planning board and city council
- yes, improvements to open drainways
- yes, engineering, funding for park program, water study, drainage study and community forestry
- yes, abandoned well closings
- yes, fire hydrant maintenance
- yes, flood control project, dredging lake, and creation of trail
- yes, park improvement

2. **Has your local NRD ever approached your municipality to ask about some activities that the two governments might work together on?**

One hundred eleven municipalities responded no, four did not answer, and seventeen responded yes, with no explanation.

- NRD keeps us informed of program availability
- yes, wellhead protection
- yes, capping of wells and other programs
- wellhead protection and drainage
- storm sewer drainage and work with a future highway project
- yes, we have frequent discussions
- trailhead project
- yes, water testing
- yes, flood control problem
- trails and drainage
- tree planting

- water quality testing with UNL assistance
- drainage project
- drainage and flood control
- yes, NRD has assisted with trees, grasses, and wildflowers for arboretum
- drainage project
- education relating to recycling program
- soil erosion/sedimentation ordinance assistance
- yes, proposed rural water supply project
- funding for Atkinson State Lake
- soil and water conservation to help with drainage and flood control
- clearing of drainage ditch
- yes, special protection area and nitrate testing
- yes, wellhead protection, test wells, nitrate and chemical testing of water
- yes, water testing
- yes, test wells to delineate groundwater areas
- yes, at the urging of the NRD monthly coordination meetings with city departments have been initiated. The NRD and the city have worked together on urban drainageway projects and flooding problems

3. **Has your municipality ever approached your NRD with a request to work with you on some activity of project of mutual interest? If so, what response was received?**

There were 85 no responses and nine yes responses that had no further explanation.

- yes, the response was positive and cooperative
- requested and received information regarding geology and existing wells in relation to a study for the new well field
- they agreed to help with Mopac negotiations
- yes, very good
- yes, on sewer lagoon property
- city approached NRD on help with Silver Creek channel improvements and they ultimately constructed project, also asked for and received help on development of city park
- yes, positive assistance
- yes, drainage problems
- yes, drainage situations and new building
- yes, most receptive on well testing and abandoned wells
- yes, water educational programs, abandoned wells and wetlands - all positive responses
- yes, they were willing to work with the city
- yes, very positive and willing to assist us to their fullest capacity
- yes, the NRD was willing to help when asked
- yes, on drainage projects
- yes, very good cooperation on tree planting and wildlife areas and assistance with contamination areas
- we contacted our NRD in regard to high nitrate level in our municipal well and no response was received
- yes, flood control project - the NRD did a very good job
- we have worked with NRD on wellhead protection siting of new well
- yes, on Lost Creek flood project that never moved ahead
- yes, they were more than helpful
- yes, favorable
- yes, the NRD has been very helpful in initiating needed programs from plugging old wells to tree planting
- ditch cleaning - positive response

- yes, good response on stormwater management
- yes, very responsive and helpful with financial assistance and contacting key people
- yes, good response and cooperation
- yes, partial funding on dam project
- yes, dispute over drainage at landfill site - NRD responded and helped
- storm drainage and retention cells in part of town
- yes, very responsive to city requests
- yes, shared cost on flood control project
- tree planting - worked well
- positive cooperation
- assistance in working with FEMA on floodplain issues
- yes, NRD staff is very helpful and professional
- yes, favorable
- yes, favorable response but NRD was limited in resources
- several projects - NRD was always positive in their response
- yes, a very good response
- yes, plugged old wells
- positive response regarding tree planting and landscaping
- yes, good response on trailhead project
- yes, we were always listened to, given good advice, and funded for some projects
- yes, a levee system for flood control. the response was very favorable
- yes, on water testing
- yes, on drainage and sealing abandoned wells
- NRD has acted as facilitator in efforts to acquire a 76 acre CRP tract for wetland preserve and nature trail
- advice and funding on developing a pedestrian bridge
- yes, very cooperative
- yes, assisted on rebuilding a meter
- yes, very cooperative and helpful on the storm drainage improvements
- yes, the city has worked with the NRD on a trails master plan as well as the implementation of that plan. The city and NRD have also worked together on water quality
- yes, the NRD was very cooperative
- rural water access, but it was not possible
- yes, we approached the NRD to help the city and county with a dam for flood control and recreation but nothing got done because the citizens in the area stopped it
- yes, parks, engineering, flood control, drainage, forestry and abandoned wells
- yes, response favorable
- yes, favorable

4. **Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD in your area could be of assistance to your municipal government?**

Eighty-five municipalities responded no, and twenty-seven did not answer.

- we are continuing to look at how the NRD might assist on some park improvements
- only water related
- controlling nitrates in the surrounding areas
- let me know what products/services/programs you offer - maybe there are some needs you could fill
- continue support of watersheds and nitrate testing
- let us know what services you can offer

- we have a problem of windblown dust at north edge of town - maybe some windbreaks would help
- They have helped us in everything we have asked
- help with drainage areas to control flooding
- well head protection
- jettys on the Elkhorn river to protect levee
- our NRD is excellent to work with and we do not want any changes
- tree spade, tree surveys
- the issue of floods
- water service - park enhancements
- they are very helpful as an advisory source
- recreational areas adjacent to the Papio creek within our jurisdiction
- continued work in source water protection, assessment and quality management
- If the NRD would provide municipalities with information about what services are available. Most people think the NRD is strictly agricultural
- continue with the "perspectives" from the LPSNRD. It is a valuable source of information for small communities
- continue to work on the nitrogen clarification project. This could save us millions of dollars if it will prove out
- channel clearing, funding assistance for erosion control, and drainage plans for future development
- in 1967 a large farm pond north of town washed out and now affects a Zone A flood area in town and the NRD has not helped with this problem
- help clean out Hawthorne Creek
- continue to provide us with the excellent service we now receive
- we need to talk more often on areas of concern, i.e. water supply, wastewater, and drainage
- don't really know what all they are involved with, but I'm sure they could be of assistance
- make all their services more accessible, i am not sure of every thing they do
- doing a good job
- change flood plain area
- groundwater monitoring
- we would be more than willing to talk to them about any agreements that would save tax dollars
- check periodically to see if help is needed
- we need help in solving drainage and future well development
- currently the village and LENRD are beginning work on bank stabilization project to protect lagoon and an old landfill
- don't know what assistance they could provide - what do they do
- they can give guidance and assistance to aid the smaller towns
- storm drainage, ditch cleaning, and planning drainage improvements
- water concerns, trees, water and wind erosion
- attend council meetings maybe once a quarter
- tree planting programs and educational programs on how citizens benefit from NRDs inside cities
- Mill creek needs straightened - there would need to be cooperation between Corps of Engineers, Roads, village and NRD
- do they come down and tell us how to keep ditches from washing
- planning for future development, drainage, well monitoring, education on water and fertilizer conservation, tree planting, urban runoff and flood control
- perhaps an education campaign to educate the public as to the purpose and function of the NRD would be beneficial. I believe if the public knew just what the NRD is all about, it would be better perceived
- the city has an inactive tree board that could use assistance from the NRD on a tree removal and replacement plan

- tree planting program for the village
- NRDs can help protect groundwater by establishing rules that possible contamination (hog units, feedlots, etc.) would have to follow
- assistance with test wells, siting potential areas for municipal wells
- keep us informed of what is available
- yes, a watershed problem
- working relationship is good
- assistance in our flood plain program
- they have never really approached our town board for anything
- we already enjoy a good working relationship
- weed control along cowboy trail
- need assistance stabilizing stream banks and improvement of stream habitats for trout
- no, our experience has been excellent
- yes, help with wastewater and water cleanup and drainage
- provide water testing
- inform the public more
- water supply
- implement a more progressive tree planning and planting project for small municipalities
- most small towns do not know what is available from the NRD. protection of our well field from chemicals, insecticides and other hazardous materials, capping of old wells

5. **Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?**

A total of 113 municipalities had no suggestions.

- come and see us - who is it?
- perhaps a little more exposure on projects eligible to municipalities
- believe the NRD is very efficient and service oriented. no ideas for improvement
- more involvement
- become more visible
- safety of people in Hamlet
- they seem to be doing a fine job
- public education on what they do
- disband the program
- they have been responsive to any needs of the city
- inform the municipalities of the programs available to them
- less costly studies should be done - put those dollars into needed projects
- articles in newspaper about activities and programs they have to offer. contact with local agencies. go to board meetings to talk over areas they can help
- we are not aware of what is done by NRD near or in our town
- they are excellent operators and we have a continuous working relationship
- have a liaison member of city council in their region be a part of their meetings. working together is going to be a priority with future budget restrictions
- start by becoming better known as to what they can and will do - education about the NRD and what they are capable of
- we are not familiar with their operation
- what do they actually do
- not familiar enough with their structure to answer
- develop and get more urban people involved as many dollars come from urban areas
- I believe the NRD is doing a fine job for the public and is operating as efficiently as possible

- more public awareness to programs available through the local NRDs
- they seem to have a very large board with lots of committees, not sure if that is an expensive item for them
- very successful, they have gone beyond our expectations
- put information in the local papers to inform people what they can do, and how they could be of service to the public
- NRDs must continue to let the public know that they are there to help and maintain the quality of the land and water in the NRD
- I question if their services available are fully known. we see no effort to sell their services
- NRD is very efficient, effective communication with the public and innovative
- let us know what is available
- send out a questionnaire periodically or send out a representative to visit with communities
- NRDs need to get the message out to communities as to their functions and capabilities to help communities or work with communities
- good cooperation has been received from the NRD. just keep up the good work for ~~the~~ planning
- I am very happy with the work the NRD has done for this community
- we are happy with their services
- attend city council meetings after an election or change in board to let us know how we can work together
- I feel they are doing a good job
- better inform us as a city when a large project such as the proposed lake site prior to a public meeting
- no, except very slow on the nitrate problem to the west of town
- I do not know if this community is aware of what the NRD could do for our community. what types of activities are available
- provide water testing free
- yes, try to work with the village boards and tell the public what they do for the taxpayer
- notice to the towns and a list of what services they could render and what funding is available for solving problems

6. **In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your municipality?**

A total of 81 municipalities had no response to this question.

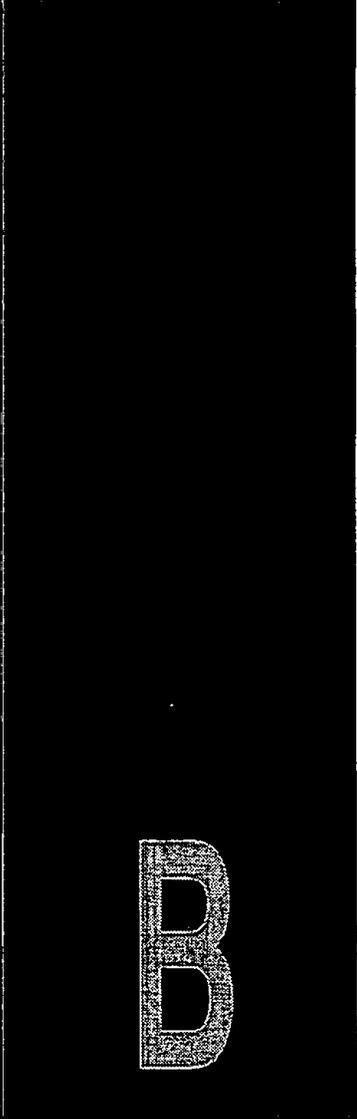
- all past dealings have resulted in long term benefits to the municipality, nothing has created any difficulties
- all of our dealings have been successful. we have had no difficulties
- they help when they can
- okay
- no past dealing that I am aware of
- the local NRD has been and continues to be very responsive to our needs
- they have always worked with us the most effective way they could. we have had no difficulties with them
- our NRD rep has become our "go to" guy for grant assistance for park development and resolving flood plain issues
- have never had any dealings with NRD
- have had good working relationship in the past. municipalities have difficulties acquiring more funding for solving problems that start in the rural areas and traverse the community. needs to be a joint effort with city, county and NRD

- not enough experiences to make any suggestions. our city has not experienced any difficulties dealing with NRD
- we have an appointed representative that attends meetings. nothing ever seems to be brought to the council regarding what is available or how communities could work together with NRD
- our dealings with our local NRD have been positive
- we feel we are great partners in the progress of this state
- we have good communication with the NRD
- our activity has all been positive
- they were very helpful with all questions and forms the village requested of them
- since I have been on the board we have only had positive dealings with them
- all past dealings with the NRD have been positive and successful
- the NRDs have always worked to provide their best available help and information possible with the resources and personnel they have
- to the best of my knowledge we have never received any type of service from the NRD. the one time we requested some help we were turned down
- the NRD has assisted the village in flood control projects by providing technical service as well as financial services. there have been no difficulties created in past dealings with the NRD
- the regulation of water users during a drought caused concern. there was a question that irrigators were receiving more consideration than industry and residential users
- a member of our local NRD displayed information which was entirely irrelevant to the village's dispute with FEMA
- in all dealings with the NRD, we have never experienced any problems and have only the utmost confidence and respect for them
- yes, we are currently working together with the county to resolve a twenty year drainage problem
- we have no dealings with the NRD
- when they built their current building, the city offered to bore under the highway and put a hydrant on their side of the highway, they would need to run a service line to the building. the city was refused and the NRD drilled a well with nitrates in the 60's instead. It gave people the wrong impression concerning city water costs. It also hindered fire protection west of the highway, but I do not believe the current people would do it the same way
- all dealings with our NRD have been very useful
- no ill feelings
- they have been very successful and helpful in working with us on drainage disputes
- NRD was very helpful
- our NRD always seems ready to help
- no problems that we are aware of
- most all dealings have been beneficial for the city
- financially successful, they are very supportive with technical advice and resource advice. also interested in projects and progress. there were some problems some years ago when the NRD was promoting the construction of some dams, but the attitude has changed and people are generally supportive now
- no past dealing that I know of
- past dealing have been responsive to needs and requests
- we have had good success in working with our NRD
- no difficulties
- NRDs are a good way to implement needed regulation without involving federal and distant state agencies. our NRD has been successful with the programs
- every time we have asked for help or suggestions, the NRD has been very prompt and helpful
- I do not know of any dealings with the NRD in the past

- our community has had no dealings with the NRD to my knowledge
- NRD was helpful in planning our floodplain ordinance and water grant application
- there is very little work I do with the NRD, I can't answer
- no difficulties, they have done a good job every time we have contacted them
- no dealings
- we have not had any past dealings with the NRD
- our community is aware of the services the NRD offers. at this time we have no projects where we need their assistance. we have talked to them some about storm water projects
- I believe we were disappointed a few years ago when we asked for assistance but were told that there were no funds for this type of project. As the budget preparer for the city I know only too well that all projects cannot be funded and cannot be added during the middle of a budget year. my personal contact with NRD employees has been most cordial
- the city has not really worked with the NRD very much, but the dealings we have had with them have been good
- they have been very helpful to us
- the river project was completed with the lowest cost possible to maintain the present river bank
- our local NRD does a fine job and is good to work with
- no complaints
- all of our dealings have been very good. they have a representative on our groundwater guardian team that is helpful
- our association with the NRD has been most positive
- the dealings have been very successful and no difficulties
- no problems
- good
- by working together with the NRD on our project has been a success
- good cooperation, good interaction
- they have provided us with information on certain issues. no difficulties
- no difficulties at this time. helped with our cost on trail
- we have had no problems
- relations with the NRD have been positive
- closest NRD is 50 miles away
- no real dealings with them
- excellent
- they did what we asked them to do
- there was a concern at one time that the NRD board was too large and did not provide fair representation. this has been improved due to a reduction in board members and a fairer representation
- all dealings successful - no problems
- as a result of this survey I contacted the NRD and was provided some good information and therefore this survey has been of help
- they have always been very helpful with any questions and willing to help when asked
- projects were completed successfully

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Appendix B



B

Survey of County Boards of Supervisors and Commissioners- Summary of Results

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SUMMARY OF COUNTY RESPONSES

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Only six counties responded "NO," with the remainder responding "YES." The following projects or programs were mentioned with road structures being mentioned by 17 of the 31 respondents:

- a. Road Structures
- b. Rural Water Projects
- c. Watersheds
- d. Drainage
- e. Water Quality Programs
- f. Tree Planting (living snow fences)
- g. Streambank Stabilization
- h. Comprehensive Plans
- i. Land Fill Planning & Siting

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Eight counties responded "NO" and twenty-three "YES."

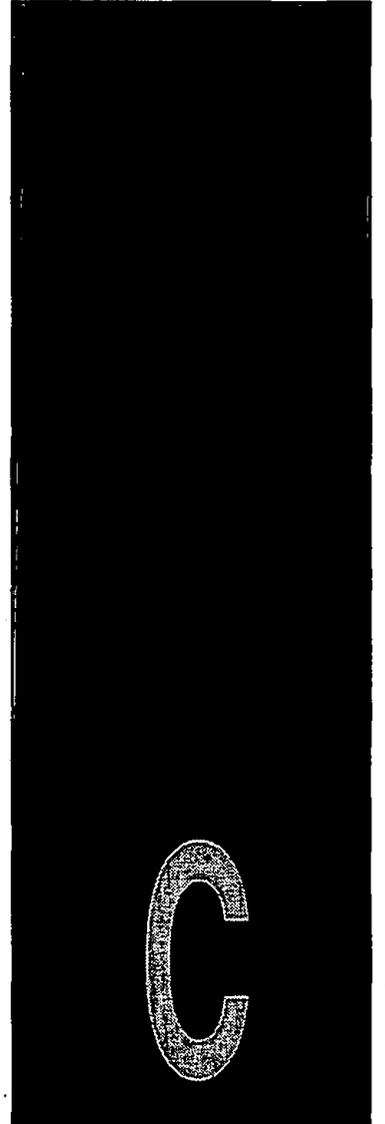
3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

- a. Perhaps meet annually with NRD Manager or rep.
- b. Help on design of bridges and culvert
- c. More help on cleaning drainage ditches
- d. Consolidate, same as counties should
- e. NRD, DEQ and counties need to work together on water quality related to land fills
- f. Promote interest in water quality
- g. Cost-sharing on road structures
- h. Don't get involved in trails or recreation projects
- i. Road structure planning, implementation and maintenance
- j. Hydrologic information for bridge and culvert design
- k. Water quality monitoring
- l. Assist counties in monitoring large livestock confinement facilities and lagoons
- m. Road ditch erosion
- n. Siltation of bridges, culverts and road ditches

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?
 - a. Solicit public input on projects and programs
 - b. Less duplication
 - c. Improve water quality monitoring
 - d. Silt removal from ditches, drains, culverts and bridges
 - e. Simplify procedures
 - f. More responsive on drainage concerns
 - g. Joint meetings on road issues
 - h. Be more frugal with tax dollars, especially in legal expenses
 - i. Control runoff to prevent siltation

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?
 - a. Cooperation on flood control and erosion issues
 - b. Rural areas are not well represented on NRD boards, but understand laws prevent that
 - c. Limit NRD activities to true natural resource issues
 - d. More aggressive in control of runoff
 - e. Cleaning of drains and help in sizing culverts and bridges

Appendix C



Survey of Natural Resources District Managers on Cooperation, Efficiency and Effectiveness- Responses/Results

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SUMMARY OF NRD RESPONSES

PLEASE LIST TWO OR MORE THINGS YOU FEEL YOUR NRD COULD DO TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND/OR EFFECTIVENESS

1. Amend groundwater regulations to require acreage reporting only at times of shortage.
2. Urge consolidation of NRCS field offices and co-location with NRD offices to save NRD support requirement and increase coordination and facility and equipment sharing.
3. Aggressively follow-up land treatment applications to assure timely design and construction.
4. Attend bordering NRD meetings once or twice each year for information and idea exchange.
5. Before implementation of any new programs or projects, network with other NRDs who have such programs to determine what works and what doesn't.
6. Increase information and education efforts to better acquaint patrons with district programs.
7. Co-locate with federal, state, and local agencies with similar interests or customer base to better serve public and increase coordination and sharing.
8. Use of interns from area post-secondary institutions for summer assistance or other short-term efforts.
9. Develop e-mail capability to include all NRD staff locations.
10. Provide irrigators with timely information on irrigation pump output, quickly and accurately.
11. Interlocal electronic information and form transfers with appropriate agencies.
12. Explore potential partnerships with private interests on projects and programs of mutual interest.
13. Cooperation and/or merger with drainage districts to enhance performance and coordinate efforts.
14. Explore potential pooled purchasing through NARD to receive maximum discounts.
15. Look toward compatibility of technical equipment to facilitate equipment and information sharing.
16. Look for ways to enhance revenue generating programs, e.g., tree planting, chemigation inspections.
17. Upgrade technical equipment to increase efficiency and improve product.
18. Improve investment of any surplus district funds by competitive negotiations.
19. Evaluate all programs and eliminate or change those that are not effective.
20. Share professional services with other NRDs or other governments.
21. Add Internet and e-mail access.
22. Share expensive and specialized equipment.
23. Electronic filing of reports and documents.

24. Periodically evaluate staff responsibilities and reassign or change responsibilities as needed.
25. Continued focus on safety and maintenance issues.
26. Aggressively pursue available resources to leverage NRD resources.
27. Use part-time or temporary assistance where advantageous.
28. Contract services when appropriate.
29. Better availability of cost-share funds to meet program needs.
30. Compatible equipment and data bases by NRDs, NRCS, FSA, and others so that information could be shared.
31. Regional government host for similar, but expensive programs, equipment, and records.
32. Better coordination of meetings and training by NARD.
33. Increased information sharing at conferences and workshops.
34. Better use of the interlocal cooperative agreements.
35. Support consolidation of state natural resource agencies to avoid duplicative efforts, reviews and authorities, e.g. wellhead protection, safe drinking water, groundwater wells, water quality, etc.
36. Increase training efforts to make better use of available technology.
37. Use of part-time professionals, share of professionals with other NRDs, or perhaps "circuit-rider" professionals employed by NARD.
38. Use of Conference Calls for staff and directors to save time and travel expense.

**PLEASE LIST EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE EFFORTS
YOUR NRD HAS UNDERTAKEN WITH OTHER NRDs
THAT HAVE RESULTED IN MORE
EFFICIENT AND/OR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS**

1. Purchase of insurance through agency providing consolidated package to all NRDs.
2. Providing staff services to neighboring NRDs on a cost basis that they do not possess.
3. Coordinating information and education efforts with other NRDs through Information and Education Committee.
4. Working with other NRDs and UN-L Extension for statewide water quality education and training for cooperators.
5. Cooperation on rural water supply projects - operation by one NRD of a system in two NRDs.
6. Sharing of information and experience on operation and maintenance of recreation areas.
7. NRD Managers Committee and its sub-committees provides an information sharing forum.
8. Cooperation on area ground water studies and educational programs.
9. Co-location of facilities with other federal, state and local agencies.
10. Periodic meetings with area NRD and NRCS personnel to develop plans and programs of mutual interest.
11. Joint sponsorship of teacher education workshops.
12. Joint sponsorship of information and education activities on a regional or statewide basis.
13. Interlocal agreements on areas of mutual interest (Republican River Water, Platte River, Lower Platte Corridor).
14. Chemigation value test kits were constructed by one NRD and made available to all NRDs.
15. Joint purchase of supplies to obtain volume discount.
16. Interlocal cooperative agreement for Platte River ice jam removal.
17. Assistance to counties on the design and funding of road structures.
18. Joint publication of newsletters and informational brochures.
19. Cooperation and joint efforts on developing and updating groundwater management plans.
20. Cooperative effort and funding of area technical studies of common interest.
21. Reciprocal agreements on operator certification for groundwater quality management.
22. Joint projects in two NRDs where one takes lead and administrative responsibility and costs are shared.
23. Sharing of cost of conservation assistance to NRCS.
24. Cooperative efforts to apply for grants from various sources for areas of common interest.

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2025 RELEASE UNDER E.O. 14176

**PLEASE LIST TWO OR MORE THINGS
THAT YOUR NRD HAS DONE TO INCREASE
EFFICIENCY AND/OR EFFECTIVENESS**

1. Use of computer technology to assist in mapping, modeling design, drafting, etc.
2. Local networking of computers.
3. Use of four wheelers for chemigation inspections.
4. Sharing of expensive and/or specialized equipment with other NRDs.
5. Cooperation on chemigation inspections where more efficient.
6. Cooperating with other NRDs and other agencies on projects and programs that are too extensive to accomplish alone.
7. Work with Board of Directors to develop comprehensive plan to better focus efforts and improve fiscal management and measurement of accomplishments.
8. Maintain joint office sites with other state, federal, and local agencies to increase cooperation, coordination, efficiency, and sharing of equipment, information, and facilities.
9. Sharing of lodging and transportation by both staff and board members and sometimes with personnel of other NRDs.
10. Maintenance of time, activity, and mileage logs to better manage staff efforts and to direct emphasis where needed.
11. Enter into agreements with local landowners and other groups to do maintenance or carry out other NRD responsibilities when it is more efficient.
12. Keep all program and project details as simple as possible for better customer acceptance.
13. Provide customer services in adjoining areas of other NRDs where it is more efficient and logical and serves the public better, e.g., tree planting, chemigation inspection, etc.
14. Downsizing of board of directors has decreased travel, per diem, and election costs. Individual members also have an increased feeling of responsibility.
15. Use of telecommunications/computer technology for e-mail, fax, voice mail, information transfer, internet capability, etc.
16. Staff training to maintain and enhance skills.
17. Use of NARD to provide information sharing, group efforts, administrative assistance, and group purchasing.
18. Toll-free "800" number for access to district office by all patrons.
19. Regular staff meetings to ensure coordination.
20. Purchase items jointly with other NRDs for reduced costs.
21. Develop and regularly review operating policies to make certain programs are being applied consistently.
22. Hold board and committee meetings on same day to reduce travel costs and time for directors and staff.
23. Develop effective personnel evaluation system to ensure that employees know what is expected and management and board knows what to expect.
24. Use of cellular telephones by field staff.

25. Acquisition and use of computer technology to improve operations in many areas - finances, budgeting, record keeping, planning, data analysis, project design, scheduling, etc.
26. Use of advisory groups on specific programs or projects to receive local input and enhance acceptance.
27. Offer assistance to other local governments or groups on areas of common interest where NRD may possess technical knowledge and expertise that others lack.
28. Require cost-sharing on most programs and projects and reduce NRD cost-share where appropriate.
29. Utilize interlocal cooperative agreements or other methods of cooperation on a variety of projects and programs.
30. Institute a program effectiveness system to evaluate programs on a regular basis and make changes as appropriate.
31. Use of "team" approach on project development and implementation.
32. Use of correctional facilities crews to perform appropriate tasks.
33. Formation of coalitions with other NRDs and other local groups to address problems and/or opportunities of mutual interest.
34. Acquisition of equipment from state and federal surplus sources.
35. Use of private contractors to perform some tasks where it is more efficient, e.g., tree planting, maintenance, fencing, etc.

**PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR IDEAS
OF HOW NRDs COULD BETTER COOPERATE
WITH OTHER NRDs
AND OTHER LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT
TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC
IN A MORE EFFICIENT AND/OR EFFECTIVE MANNER**

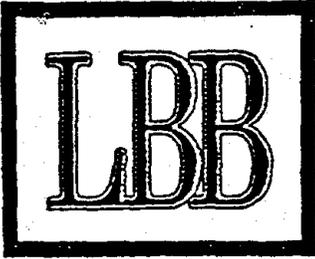
1. More staff training sessions and idea exchanges through NARD.
2. Coordinate implementation of GIS with cities and counties.
3. Cooperate with urban areas on water quality issues.
4. Provide counties with stream hydrology for use in bridge and culvert design.
5. Improve telecommunications capability (e-mail, Fax, Teleconference, etc.).
6. Sharing of professional expertise between districts.
7. Accelerate approval and inspection process by Game and Parks Commission on WHIP Program.
8. Sharing database formats and software.
9. Better coordination and financing of mandated programs.
10. Sharing of expensive and specialized equipment.
11. Work with counties and other interests on zoning and other issues related to livestock confinement facilities.
12. Hold more meetings in a central location like Broken Bow.
13. Explore cooperative purchasing programs to allow NRDs to make purchases at discounts.
14. Eliminate NRCS Clerks and replace with NRD technicians.
15. Better coordination of statewide meetings to reduce travel costs.
16. Compatibility of equipment between agencies to better facilitate sharing and information interchange.
17. Work more closely with extension on information, education, and demonstration projects.
18. Sharing purchases and utilization of software.
19. Development of standardized groundwater and surface water quantity and quality network and monitoring program.
20. Better information about state and federal data collection efforts so as to avoid duplicative efforts by NRDs.
21. Explore means of reducing travel time and expense to meetings, training sessions, etc. by holding regional meetings, teleconferences, video taping, etc.
22. Cooperation between NRDs and other units of government on seeking and utilizing grant monies.
23. County weed authorities, county surveyors, and drainage districts could be phased out and their responsibilities absorbed by NRDs.

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**PLEASE LIST EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE EFFORTS
YOUR NRD HAS UNDERTAKEN
WITH OTHER UNITS OF GOVERNMENT
THAT HAVE RESULTED IN MORE EFFICIENT
OR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS**

1. Assisted municipalities in acquiring flood hazard mitigation grants and shared in local costs for flood control works.
2. Provided engineering and hydrology input for storm water drainage and sizing of bridges and culverts for municipalities and counties.
3. Provided assistance and coordination to municipalities and counties in solid waste planning.
4. Cooperated with USGS on water quality and monitoring well installation.
5. Assist municipalities in acquiring aerial photography and mapping.
6. Cost-share and technical assistance to counties and municipalities on flood control and/or erosion projects.
7. Provide technical assistance, comments, and data to municipalities and counties on floodplain issues.
8. Provide technical assistance to communities on water quality issues.
9. Review and comment on county one- and six-year road plans for areas of possible joint efforts.
10. Work with DEQ and EPA on various water quality programs or studies (319, GWMA, SPA).
11. Assistance to communities to improve parks and other recreational areas.
12. Cooperative agreements with NRCS to provide technical assistance in their areas of expertise.
13. Participation with various interests to develop the USDA-EQIP.
14. Cooperation with cities, counties and Game & Parks Commission on the development of trail systems.
15. Assistance to cities on the development and enforcement of erosion and sediment control ordinances.
16. Assistance to counties on weed control programs.
17. Cooperative programs of various types with youth groups such as FFA, 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.
18. Support and cooperation with programs, such as Envirothon, Project Wild, etc.
19. Educational programs and assistance to schools.
20. Wildlife habitat and wetlands development with Game and Parks Commission and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
21. Providing equipment (grass drills and tree planters) for use by counties, municipalities, and schools free-of-charge for their projects.
22. Participation in the Nebraska Mandates Management Initiative.
23. Agreement with the state forester to cost-share on the cost of an NRD forester.

24. Assist municipalities with wellhead protection programs.
25. Agreement with Bureau of Reclamation to establish a recreation program on Bureau property.
26. Participate with extension in land and range judging programs.
27. Participation in leafy spurge task force.
28. Cooperative efforts with irrigation districts on water quality, education, water use efficiency, etc.
29. Agreement with UN-L Entomology on musk thistle control.
30. Participate in development and maintenance of arboretums.
31. Fund soil survey programs with counties, other NRDs, UN-L, and NRCS.
32. Participate administratively and financially with Game and Parks Commission in Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program.
33. Provide material to churches for soil stewardship program.
34. Provide technical and financial assistance to RC&Ds.
35. Participate with native American tribal groups on various projects and programs.
36. Urban conservation programs.
37. Various groundwater studies with UN-L Conservation & Survey Division.
38. Participation in household hazardous waste disposal projects.
39. Rainwater Basin Joint Venture.



Lower Big Blue

Natural Resources District

Established in 1972 for the Development and Conservation of Soil and Water Resources

December 30, 1997

Vince Kramper
L.B. 1085 Committee Chair
Nebraska Natural Resources Commission
P.O. Box 94876
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4876

RE: L.B. 1085 Response

Dear Vince:

Here are my thoughts on the questionnaire you sent out regarding the second part of the L.B. 1085 study.

Attached are the responses to the five questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Ronald Fleecs', written over a horizontal line.

L. Ronald Fleecs, Manager

LRF/jf

Enclosure

cc: Richard Jiskra, NRC Representative

Response #1

Tree Plantings

Worked with other bordering NRDs on tree planting and ordering trees. Would plant trees in other NRDs, if found to be more feasible.

Chemigation

Checked chemigation equipment in bordering NRD if more efficient for us to check.

Equipment Sharing

Provided use of tiller for tree planting to other NRDs, along with equipment to check inside of culvert pipes in dams for rust or leakage. Used grass drills of other NRD instead of investing in our own drill.

Response #2

- Share personnel in times of need for chemigation, water sampling, etc. if shown to be more efficient.
- Attend bordering NRD meetings once or twice a year to exchange ideas and programs.

Response #3

- Worked with Little Blue NRD on mutual water supply projects and received their expertise in developing such projects.
- Provided information to other NRDs on management of recreation areas, development of facilities, and other management ideas to save money in operation of facilities.

Response #4

- Provided cost-share and technical assistance to units of government for erosion control projects and/or flood control projects.
- Village of DeWitt - drainage problems within village.
- Village of Wilber - cost-share assistance with village and Saline County for road structure to prevent flooding in Wilber.
- City of Crete - Developed flood control project northeast of Crete to prevent flood in north portion of Crete.
- Worked with Tobias, Wymore, Beatrice, and Clatonia on water quality problems.
- Provided City of Beatrice with technical expertise in sanitary landfill sites, worked with city on environmental concerns after site was developed.
- Provide flood plan data for Village of Odell, Crete, Swanton, DeWitt, and Beatrice.
- Cost shared with counties to construct road dams to replace bridges and culverts.
- Review county one-and-six-year plans to provide comments on flood control dams above road and/or bridge improvements and potential flood control dams where road modifications would need to be made to comply with state law.

Response #5

- Review other local units of government requests to evaluate whether NRD can assist or provide services that would benefit public in an effective and efficient manner.



D. J. J.

LOWER ELKHORN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1204 — 700 West Benjamin Avenue, Country Club Plaza

Phone: (402) 371-7313 FAX: (402) 371-0653 — NORFOLK, NE 68702-1204

RECEIVED

DEC 29 1997

December 24, 1997

TO : VINCE KRAMPER, LB 1085 CHAIR

NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMISSION

FROM: STAN STAAB

SUBJECT: LB 1085 INPUT REQUEST

Please accept my apology for this late response to your request for District input to the 1085 Study. My only excuse is the fact that I was involved with the hog confinement issue preparing a paper/presentation for the recent Conference in Columbus and we also moved into our offices in the Lifelong Learning Center on the Northeast Community College Campus. Other than that, it's just plain business as usual.

As you may know, the Lower Elkhorn has always worked to be as efficient as possible, while trying to reduce or eliminate duplication of services. Delivering program/projects as effectively as possible is always a difficult challenge, but I believe we have tried to make good faith efforts in this regard.

The following responses will hopefully serve to inform and educate all interested parties regarding District information and positions related to these issues:

The District has worked extensively to develop and refine our LONG RANGE PLAN, which is revised annually. Please refer to this enclosed document for several important features of our renewed efforts to be more effective and efficient especially with regard to many various agency partnerships.

I. INCREASED EFFICIENCY:

Concentrated planning efforts by the Board and Staff to utilize the annual long range plan in a comprehensive manner over the last five years has led to far better coordination of budgeting, related to all programs and projects.

Greater efficiency is being achieved by closely following our plan to combine line items in the budget review process (which is started earlier in the year) and this method also permits tracking of each program and project, not only for fiscal management but actually "Measuring" success at mid-point and more importantly at the end of the fiscal year. Budget and staffing adjustments can then be better defined and adjusted as necessary.

C-15



Member of Nebraska Association of Resources Districts



For the first time in FY 1997, USDA – NRCS, considered the major partner of the NRD, worked jointly to incorporate their annual work plan into the District's Long Range Plan with the purpose of cooperating on common goals and completing many joint programs and projects.

NRD and NRCS Staff work closely on many projects with the District providing several important pieces of equipment used for engineering, survey work and mapping. Used computers were also provided to one field office to enhance workload.

Our five NRD / NRCS Field office secretaries are now utilized in a more efficient manner to assist with many NRD programs as well as USDA priorities. For example the secretaries now understand several forestry, well sealing and other water quality programs and therefore cooperators are better served.

The Nebraska Department of Water Resources has cooperated since 1978 in maintaining two staff members in the Lower Elkhorn NRD office. Acting as associates to the NRD Board and Staff, these State employees are involved with stream gauging, dam safety inspections, flood watch, and many other surface water activities. These DWR staff is very important to our overall natural resources management.

Another important position is the University of Nebraska –Lincoln Conservation and Survey hydro geologist formerly officed with the NRD staff (since the late 1970's) and now part of the UNL staff in the Learning Center. This engineering position is extremely valuable to all of Northeast Nebraska providing advice and expertise to the NRD on many groundwater issues. All irrigation well registrations are kept on file in this office, but immediately available to NRD staff and others by request. Critical wellhead protection studies for several communities and the rural water system are now under way utilizing skills of all professional staffers in the partner agencies, with Conservation and Survey as the lead advisor.

The NRD has cooperated and cost – shared with most of the counties in the last 25 years to construct road dams to replace old, unsafe bridges. This 75% NRD – 25% county split has resulted in the construction of 69 dams that greatly enhance conservation. The dams are designed by the NRCS with respective counties providing land rights and landowner negotiations. This is a very successful program for all involved.

Several important projects are managed in cooperation with the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission including the District owned Willow Creek Lake and Recreation Area, which is operated under lease as a State Recreation Area. Game and Parks Staff also manage the fisheries for NRD owned Maskenthine and Pilger lakes. A very important and successful cost –share program to improve and increase wildlife habitat (WHIP) has been jointly managed for more than 20 years by NRD and G&P Staff.

Cooperation between NRD's is increasing as Staff communicates through out the year to seek more efficient ways to deliver programs to all citizens. Examples are regular

meetings of the Manager's Committee, Information and Education Coordinators and most recently, the Water Resources Managers.

II. EFFORTS TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY :

In early December of 1997, the Lower Elkhorn NRD moved into new and permanent offices in the Life Long Learning Center on the campus of Northeast Community College in Norfolk. This complex consists of six office partners (LENRD, Madison-Stanton UNL Extension Service, UNL Northeast Education Research and Extension Center specialists (NERC), Wayne State College, ESU # 8, and Northeast Community College) with more than 50 staff. This 42,000 + sq. ft. center also includes a major conference area and 6 distance learning classrooms complete with state of the art high technology. This technology is of course available to the office partners. For example, two-way interactive video, satellite uplink/downlink and broadcast origination will soon be available. Utilization of this technology rich environment by office partners and many others will be extremely important to conduct landowner and agency training while providing efficient cooperation for many years into the future.

Cooperation with several partners in the Learning Center will greatly enhance efficiency in several programs that NRD's provide for rural and urban landowners/cooperators. NRD Staff will work closely with NERC, especially their water resources and forestry specialists. A new feature is the water resources lab, which will be used jointly by the partners for surface and groundwater quality testing, and eventually bio-assessments. Hopefully even limited soil samples can be tested in this lab.

The NRD has cost shared with University of Nebraska - Lincoln Extension Service and the Nebraska Forest Service providing an office and position of NRD Forester. This position has served the entire District for more than 3 years and will continue in that capacity working closely with NRD staff. In addition, the immediate supervisor for this position is assigned to a multi - county area and is part of the NERAC staff in the Learning Center.

The NRD water quality resources efforts have expanded to include a new position, which actually will be a UNL Extension Educator assigned to an office in the NRD area. This position will be directly supervised by NRD staff, but officially will be an Extension staff appointment. This is now possible because of the move to the Learning Center. The unique agreement will provide greatly needed expertise to assist with education and various types of water quality programs throughout the District.

The NRD's Chemigation Program is unique with respect to the management approach of contracting with a landowner /farmer who conducts the chemigation inspections. He is paid on a per well basis for each inspection and sets his own schedule contacting chemigators as necessary to personally observe each system for proper equipment and management technique. This approach is very efficient with NRD water resources staff

supervising his overall activities and not requiring NRD staff to be in the field during the chemigation season.

A cooperative intern program with Wayne State College and the NRD provided five undergraduate biology students with great opportunities to "work and learn" while assisting with the NRD's surface water quality nitrate monitoring program. As a result of this past summer's program, several of the students now have chosen to pursue graduate studies in the field of natural resources management. This is very rewarding to the NRD.

The NRD Planning Subcommittee will now directly guide the relatively new EQIP effort with all interested groups and agencies invited to participate in formulating new priority areas and related planning. This new approach will provide a direct link to those interested in securing USDA funds for the landowners and to this area of Northeast Nebraska, while permitting the NRD Board to make bottom line decisions.

A new agreement with Dodge County and the Village of Nickerson is focused on finding solutions for flooding that continues to threaten homes, business locations, roads and agriculture. The floods are occurring with more frequency from the huge Maple Creek Watershed to the west.

III. COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER NRDs:

The NRD also administers the largest rural water system in the State in terms of geographical size. The Logan East Rural Water System reaches from near Bancroft to Fontanelle, a distance of more than 35 miles covering parts of Burt, Dodge and Washington counties. More than 700 miles of buried waterlines serve 1200 rural homes and livestock operations. Two small towns are also served by the system, which is managed by three full time staff located at an office in "Downtown Oakland". A large portion of the system is located in the Papio-Missouri River NRD without any consideration of political boundaries. The Thurston County Rural Water System is generally located in the Lower Elkhorn NRD and is managed by the Papio-Missouri River NRD, again with mutual understanding and respect for each other's projects.

Statewide activities between the NRDs are planned annually by the Information and Education Coordinators across the state. Some of these activities include: water festivals; Husker Harvest Days; Envirothon; State Fair; and other educational activities.

Water managers from four northeast Nebraska NRDs meet on a regular basis to plan joint programs and projects, including improved techniques to manage the new groundwater quality management areas.

IV. COOPERATIVE EFFORTS WITH OTHER AGENCIES:

Several cooperative programs with USDA – NRCS have been on going for many years. The WAE Program (While Actually Employed) which is funded by the NRD has provided many young people the opportunity to work and learn in the natural resources career oriented atmosphere of NRCS offices. This program provides valuable staff/manpower to NRCS in a training setting. Several people have continued their careers with NRCS as permanent Staff or have gone on to other similar careers.

The NRD participates in many other programs with NRCS and other agencies as outlined in the new USDA brochure "Nebraska Conservation Toolbox". The NRD participates in all of these programs, most of which are cost –shared by the District. Please refer to this excellent summary prepared by NRCS I&E Staff.

The NRD Planning Subcommittee will now directly guide the relatively new EQIP effort with all interested groups and agencies invited to participate in formulating new priority areas and related planning. This new approach will provide a direct link to those interested in securing USDA funds for the landowners and to this area of Northeast Nebraska, while permitting the NRD Board to coordinate the process.

Completing the new Cowboy Trail from Norfolk to Chadron is a high priority for several agencies that are involved including Game and Parks as lead with their efforts mandated by the Legislature. The NRD is working with the City of Norfolk and the State Department of Roads as well as several affected companies regarding land rights to bring the final 2.2 miles of trail into Norfolk's Ta Ha Zouka Park . This will provide an established trailhead for the 320 mile trail which is the longest hiking /biking trail in the United States and is set to be an extremely popular attraction for users from around the country.

Urban Conservation is a relatively new effort in this NRD, however significant progress is now being made, especially with the City of Norfolk. Cost –share programs are now offered to address erosion control and recreation needs including inner –city trails. A model sediment and erosion control ordinance was developed by the NRD and is now under consideration by city officials. These programs are offered to all of the towns and cities within the District.

The NRD recently completed the Skyview Wetlands Project with the City of Norfolk, Norfolk High School FFA, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the USDA-NRCS. This wetland enhancement was designed by the NRCS to act as bio-filter for the 50 surface acre urban lake, which is a valuable part of Norfolk's city park system. The FFA classes were very involved in the promotion and planning and actually presented the proposal to the Nebraska Environmental Trust who funded the project. Another important partner was G&P who acted as advisor and also worked with the students. This project was a great example of efficiency and maximum teamwork from all partners.

The District is an active participant in Governor Nelson's "NEBRASKA MANDATES MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE" which is a statewide effort to assist the smaller communities providing assistance to improve infra-structure, especially in the area of drinking water and sanitary disposal. New strategies are needed for wellhead protection, especially to protect drinking water from high nitrates. This effort has involved 13 small towns and 1 rural water system in the Lower Elkhorn NRD. More activity is expected as the NMMI becomes more accepted and word spreads among the smaller governments on this National Model which has been endorsed by EPA, American Consulting Engineers Council, UNL and UNO.

The village of Osmond (Pierce County) has cooperated with the NRD for several years as their drinking water supply wells are monitored for nitrates by NRD staff as a back-up to Osmond city staff and their sampling. A very intensive study of the city's water supply was completed by the NRD and Conservation -Survey Staff in the late 1980's as efforts were made to improve the drinking water source.

Several very important flood control projects have been completed (or are in various stages of planning) in cooperation with cities and towns and the primary designer, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Funding is also obtained from Congress through the Corps programs. Flood control levees are completed for Scribner and Howells, with planning under way for Pender and Dodge. The community of Wakefield is also working with the NRD and the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission to construct a levee in the near future. The NRC also assisted with funding for Scribner and Howells and has been a very helpful partner.

A long-term agreement between the U.S. Geological Survey and the NRD has provided valuable information on static water levels from selected recorder wells around the District.

V. IDEAS FOR IMPROVED COOPERATION WITH NRDs /AGENCIES:

Schedule regular meetings with partners on a monthly basis.

Improve communication utilizing computer technology, ie: E-Mail; two-way interactive video; satellite conferencing, etc.

Streamline and coordinate agendas to maximize meeting efficiency.

Utilize central locations for meetings with other agencies and NRDs.

Reduce travel time as much as possible.

Utilize NRC Staff for planning in cooperation with the NRD's.

UPPER NIOBRARA - WHITE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

L.B. 1085 INPUT

1. Two or more things that our NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.
 - Computerized Program Processing
 - GIS Software
 - Staff Training via workshops, seminars
 - NRD & NRCS Joint Staff Meetings
 - Public Education, Press Releases & Public Service Announcements
 - Board Meeting Packets for Directors
 - Accounting Software

2. Two or more things that we feel our NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.
 - Centrex Plus System for Phone Service
 - Departmentalize
 - Utilize GPS Units
 - Self supporting programs (No property tax subsidies)
 - Internet capabilities

3. Examples of cooperative efforts our NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that resulted in increased efficiency and/or effectiveness.
 - Environmental Education Institute
 - Nitrogen Certification
 - Collaborate with neighboring NRDs on Chemigation Inspections
 - LB 961 (Natural Resources Enhancement Fund) ad-hoc committee
 - NARD
 - NRC

4. Examples of cooperative efforts that our NRD has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.
 - Conservation and Survey Division (water level measurements)
 - University of Nebraska Lincoln
 - Extension Education (Materials, Test Plots, Info. Meetings)
 - United States Geological Survey (recorder well instrumentation)
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service (technical assistance)
 - Nebraska Association of Resource Districts (Legislative Issues)
 - Natural Resources Commission (State Programs and Funding)
 - Nebraska Game and Parks (Wildlife Habitat Program)
 - Department of Water Resources (public hearings, well registration)
 - Department of Environmental Quality (studies, chemigation regs. and forms)
 - Nebraska Forest Service (Tree Promotion)
 - Department of Roads (Living Snow Fences, Road Structures)

5. Our ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

- Government ID Cards (govt. discount rates)
- Political Sub-division purchasing power/authority
 - computers, vehicles etc.
- Availability of Government one day air service (west to east)
 - alleviate excess staff travel expense and lodging
- Hold all agency meetings in Broken Bow (centrally locate)
- Availability of State funding to implement new legislative mandates
- Video Conferencing



UPPER BIG BLUE

Natural Resources District

105 Lincoln Ave.
York, Nebraska 68467
(402) 362-6601

MEMO

To: Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chairman
From: John C. Turnbull *JCT*
Subject: LB 1085 - Response to Input Request
Date: December 10, 1997

1. **Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

Initiated aerial photography and digitized terrain modeling to develop detailed mapping for district projects (1"=100' scale). The consultant does the aerial work and computer mapping. Our staff surveys the horizontal and vertical controls. The resulting computer map files are provided to our staff for project planning and design. This method costs about the same as complete field surveys and manual mapping, but the time for projects has been cut from 1 or 2 years to 90 days, while maintaining the same accuracy.

Surveying with electronic total station, with electronic field notes. Data downloaded to office computers for design and mapping.

Use of AUTOCAD to replace manual drafting.

Networked and upgraded all the computers in the office. Now a computer at every desk with Internet capability.

Continuing spring well measurements and water testing for nitrates programs after the groundwater conservation districts dissolution, with no addition in staff.

Use of 4 wheelers in chemigation inspections.

2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Amend groundwater regulations to only require irrigated acre reporting at times of groundwater shortage to save time of maintaining records which are only relevant at times of stiffer regulation.

Urge consolidation of NRCS field offices in order to reduce federal overheads, use existing NRCS staff more efficiently, and reduce NRD clerical staff. Provide centralized technical design services for NRCS clientele by locating 2 or 3 NRD engineering technicians in the NRD headquarters office to design land treatment practices for county NRCS offices. Dispatch design team to area of work.

Aggressively follow up land treatment applications to assure timely design and construction.

3. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that have resulted in more efficient and/or effective operations.

Purchased general liability, fire and casualty, auto, errors and omissions, and umbrella insurance from insurance agency providing same package coverages to majority of NRDs, at substantial savings.

Providing staff engineering design services for storm water drainage for Butler County, David City, and Lower Platte North NRD in area of Northwest Drainage of old Central Butler Resources Development Fund Project. Sharing costs of staff time with Lower Platte North NRD. City and County funding land rights and construction.

Coordinating Information and Education efforts with other districts through NARD I & E staff committee.

Working with other districts and University Extension through NARD to develop statewide water quality education and training program for farm and ranch operators. For use in groundwater management areas.

4. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.

Acquired and administered FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinated with state and federal agencies, and shared in the local cost for flood control works in Harvard. City carried out local contracts for engineering and construction.

Acquired and administered FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinated with state and federal agencies, shared in the local cost, and provided certain technical services for flood control works in Sutton. City carried out local contracts for engineering construction.

Acquired and currently administering FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinating with state and federal agencies, sharing in the local cost, and providing certain technical services including detailed mapping for floodplain buyout in Seward. City is providing share of local funds and carrying out details of buyout program.

Providing storm water drainage engineering for Seward in new housing areas on north side of City. Coordinating design with Plum Creek flood plain buyout program.

Providing storm water drainage engineering for Henderson. City is in planning stages of annexation of industrial and commercial sites.

Providing engineering on bridge works for York County at District reservoir site. County is constructing bridge works.

Contracted for aerial photography of entire communities when district involved in mapping of a portion of community. Digitized terrain maps (scale 1"=100') provided to Seward, David City, Henderson, and Aurora for use by them or their consultants in developing plans and designs for storm water drainage, sewer systems, street layouts and design, and utilities. Coordinated map data interpretation with cities engineering consultants.

Assisted and coordinated the efforts of 8 counties and many communities in solid waste planning and regionalization of landfills. Area now served by 4 major landfills (3 private and 1 public) instead of several per county.

Cooperated with USGS on district wide water quality study and monitoring well installation for nitrate monitoring.

5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

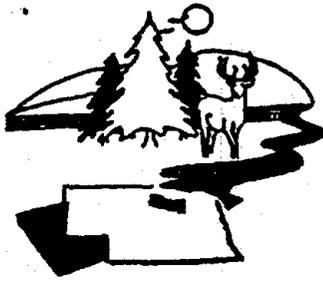
More staff training sessions and idea exchange through the NARD.

Coordinate implementation of GIS with counties and cities for use of common data bases. Initially use for access to legal descriptions and property owners.

Cooperate with urban areas on water quality treatment.

Provide counties with stream hydrology data for use in their bridge and culvert designs.

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Upper Elkhorn Natural Resources District

301 N. Harrison Street - O'Neill, Nebraska 68763
(402) 336-3867 - FAX (402) 336-1832

December 9, 1997

TO: Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chair

FROM: Dennis Schueth, General Manager Upper Elkhorn NRD

RESPONSE: LB 1085 Meeting and Input Request

FIRST SET OF QUESTIONS--LB 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD (UENRD) has cooperated with various local, state & federal agencies and applied for grants to accomplish tasks that we currently did not have the finances, time or expertise to accomplish alone.

The Holt County Groundwater Education Program (HCGEP) has made the UENRD more effective in the goals of the district. This program is partially funded through grant money from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and administered by Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). The agencies involved are the Lower Niobrara and Upper Elkhorn NRD, Northeast Research Education Center -- Concord, Holt County Natural Resource Conservation Service, Holt County Extension Service and the Conservation Survey Division which offer in-kind services to the project. The HCGEP has helped all parties involved promote irrigation and nitrogen best management practices (BMP's). This program is on the fourth year of a five year project.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD is enlisting the aid of the University of Nebraska Conservation & Survey Division (CSD) to help develop a groundwater database relating to quality, quantity and other programs. When this database is completed it will make record keeping more efficient and data more accessible to the general public.

For the past 10 years the Upper Elkhorn NRD and the Northeast Research Education Center at Concord (NEREC) has agreed to do research on nitrogen and irrigation management practices within the District. This research has been very helpful in educating the area producers, staff and board of directors on fertilizer and irrigation management for this area. With this agreement, the District does not need to hire a person with specific expertise to do plot research, therefore saving money and time.

(Question number 1 continued)

Project studies such as the Bazile Triangle, a cooperative effort between Lower & Upper Elkhorn, Lewis & Clark, Lower Niobrara NRDs, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the CSD has also increased our effectiveness. The data collected from this endeavor showed the need for education for nitrogen and irrigation BMPs. Funding became available for cooperators in the project area for three years through a federal program known as Special Practice 53 which was administered by the Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service (ASCS). Without the cooperation of all parties involved this source of funding would not of been available for cooperators to try new BMPs.

To promote wildlife habitat areas within the UENRD an agreement with the Nebraska Game & Parks (NG&P) was initiated. This program known as the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program has been developed where NG&Ps funds 75% and the NRD funds 25% of the cost for improving wildlife habitat. This program has made a total of \$33,750/year for wildlife habitat improvement. Without the help of the NG&P, this NRD alone would not have access to that kind of funding to improve wildlife habitat.

The UENRD has purchased computers for all staff members to improve office efficiency. All accounting is now being done by computers and with everyone having access to a computer, reports can be maintained and generated faster. The UENRD also has access to the internet which is very beneficial in researching information for specific projects.

This may be a minor detail, but our NRD tries to car pool or share lodging arrangements to reduce the cost of various meetings.

2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

I do not know how to accomplish this for sure, because we have developed a district newsletter and have used radio and newspaper releases to bring more awareness about the NRD. Although I still believe there are some people who need to become more educated on the importance of NRDs and that we stand for local control on a lot of issues. Without this awareness and educational effort, it may be easy for the general public to have an preconceived opinion of the importance or non importance of the NRD system.

The UENRD needs to make sure we have enough funding, man-power, expertise, computers, and equipment to complete the responsibilities and goals of the NRDs effectively and efficiently.

Before the Upper Elkhorn NRD purchases any new equipment or develops any new programs we normally review what the other NRDs are currently doing. There is no need to reinvent the wheel if another NRD has researched the equipment or similar problem

(Question number 2 continued)

and found a satisfactory solution. Using this approach on various issues has saved time and money.

It would be nice to have similar conservation programs, accounting practices, computer capabilities and staff, etc. but this will not occur because the NRDs are based on local control and local needs.

3. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that resulted in increased efficiency and/or effectiveness.

There are a lot of issues where the NRDs work cooperatively with, probably one of the best examples is through the Nebraska Association Resource District (NARD). The NARD has a big effect on proposed or preparing legislation and keeping the goals of all the districts in focus and unified. The NARD also handles the retirement and health insurance policies for the majority of the districts which has been very effective.

Most NRDs are in the process of developing nitrogen certification educational classes for their Groundwater Management Plans. Instead of all NRD's doing their own educational program the NRDs teamed up with the University of Nebraska which in turn received a grant to work on this endeavor. This project is still continuing and a finished product is due shortly.

The Holt County Groundwater Education Program which is funded by EPA and administered by NDEQ, has helped all parties involved promote BMP's for irrigation and nitrogen applications. This program is on the fourth year of a five year project. The agencies involved are the Lower Niobrara and Upper Elkhorn NRD, Northeast Research Education Center -- Concord, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Holt County Extension Service and the University of Nebraska Conservation Survey Division.

The Nebraska Water Conservation Cooperative was formed to oppose an unreasonable instream flow application request by the NG&P Commission. The Cooperative has been very successful to date, because legislation regarding instream flows was passed by state senators. The Coalition was also able to find flaws in the NG&P's Application. NRDs acting alone would not of had this big of an impact or the finances to contest NG&P's application the way this Coalition has. The full impact of the Coalition will not be known until Mike Jess, DWR makes his final ruling in 1998. Members of this Cooperative included Lower Elkhorn, Lower Loup, Upper Loup, North Platte, Tri-Basin and Central Platte NRDs and many other agencies and organizations.

Bazile Triangle Study -- Water study done in Northern Antelope (Lewis & Clark, Lower & Upper Elkhorn and Lower Niobrara NRDs) Description of the project has already been listed.

4. Please list examples of cooperative efforts that your NRD has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.

Some cooperative efforts have already been described in question number one.

The Holt County Groundwater Education Program which is funded by EPA and administered by DEQ has helped all parties involved promote BMP's for irrigation and nitrogen applications. This program is on the fourth year of a five year project. The agencies involved are the Lower Niobrara and Upper Elkhorn NRD, Northeast Research Education Center -- Concord, Natural Resource County Service, Holt County Extension Service and the Conservation Survey Division.

Sandhills Task Force -- The Upper Elkhorn NRD signed off with the FWS, NRCS and G&P on an Environmental Trust Application. This application was successful in obtaining funds to rebuild dam structures on Cache Creek. This same Task Force is being utilized to develop wetland riparian areas within the district using FWS funds.

Goose Lake Pump -- Joint effort between the UENRD and NG&P in maintaining the water level of the lake has been successful. An irrigation well was installed by the UENRD and the agencies involved share the cost of the pumping.

Working with various area cities to accomplish a goal, study or project such as the City of Atkinson. City of Atkinson was looking for partners in rebuilding the Atkinson State Lake. With the cooperation of local volunteers and city-local-state government this project was successful and has turned into a nice recreational park.

The UENRD has worked with other towns such as Chambers, Bassett, O'Neill, Stuart, Ewing, Page, Brunswick and Newport to either enhance recreational areas, improve water quality or flood protection. Working together does have its benefits and adds to the overall goal of the project.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD has teamed up with the NRCS develop a joint brochure to describe various local, state and federal programs.

The NRDs and other forms of government have teamed up to work on various local and state water festivals such as: Waterfall of Knowledge, H2O Days, Wonderful World of Water, Children's Groundwater Festival and State & National Envirothons. List of participants for these programs but not all inclusive are: UN-L Extension, Conservation & Survey Division, G&P, DEQ, NRDs, Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Wayne State College, private citizens and etc. These festivals require a large work force and a vast amount of knowledge about the natural resources so a lot of talent or expertise is required at the private, local, state and federal levels. These types of programs are very successful in conveying the importance of the natural resources. Without the full

(Question number 4 continued)

cooperation of everyone involved these types of programs would not occur at the level they are now.

We are currently working on a cooperative agreement with the NRCS to purchase some of their GPS systems. This will be very beneficial for the UENRD because maintenance is handled by NRCS and the accuracy will be more precise at a cheaper rate. Up to a year ago NRDs were not able to use or purchase these types of GPS units.

The Upper Elkhorn NRD, like most NRDs utilize the NRCS staff members for their area of expertise. The Upper Elkhorn NRD relies heavily on the NRCS expertise in the range and engineer departments. This type of relationship is possible because the NRD's pay for the NRCS field clerks in exchange for this service. It is financially impossible for the UENRD to hire experts in every field and we have benefited from this working relationship.

5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

I believe NRDs are one of the most efficient forms of government already. The NRDs cooperate with various levels of government when the need arises and initiates participation whenever possible. This level of cooperation varies based on finances, staff expertise and goals of the project.

The NRDs are getting to be more regulatory and it appears they will continue moving in that direction. Along with more regulation will come the need to hire staff for more specific issues. By this occurring it only appears that the NRDs will have to work closer together and potentially share staff or equipment to defer the cost for that expertise. The thought of sharing staff and equipment has been discussed between the LNNRD and UENRD.

There is the potential for local governments to benefit from army or state surplus equipment. The Upper Elkhorn NRD has been the recipient of Army Surplus equipment. The district was able to acquire two pickups for the asking and was able to pass one on to another local government entity. By no means do you want to take a long trip in these vehicles, but they get the job done. Some of the districts office equipment (desk, chairs, drafting tables, tables and credenzas) are government surplus.

SECOND SET OF QUESTIONS -- LB 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE:

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

It has been on a limited basis, however when drainage concerns have been brought up we usually work together to help solve the problem with whomever is involved.

We have planted trees for living snow fences along various roadways in some of our counties.

The local Holt County Cooperative Extension Office has been very helpful with the Holt County Groundwater Education Program. This program has been described earlier.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

We are working together more since the livestock confinement issue has arisen but generally no.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

I believe in the future we may be able to work more on road structures and living snow fences.

Since the NRDs are the recipients of the Natural Resources Enhancement Funds we are purchasing some equipment that may interest them and we could share or rent out at a low rate.

Even though the Cowboy Trail is not a high priority item for the district, it is a controversial item amongst the board of directors, local tax-payers and adjacent landowners. Since the trail is here, I believe the Upper Elkhorn NRD could work closer together with other agencies to enhance this trail. This assistance may be in the form of in-kind services whether then financial.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Some how we have to promote the importance of the natural resources to the people within the district and state. This needs to be accomplished through the adults and the children. The districts have used various types of media such as: tours, radio, newsletters, individual invitations and local papers to get information out to the public.

(Question number 4 continued)

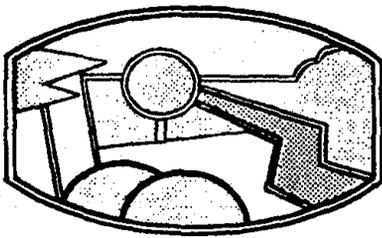
Since property taxes are a hot issue, the organizations that are partially funded by tax dollars and have not or are not operating more efficiently than they were 5 or 10 years ago are in for a surprise. The local elected officials should know and determine how effective or efficient their organization is and make the appropriate changes if needed.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

I believe this whole questionnaire has shown how cooperation between NRDs has benefited the districts involved and has been very positive.

A potential problem, although minor in the UENRD is where counties are divided between two or more NRDs. Some counties may be divided amongst several NRDs which offer similar but different programs. This poses a problem for landowners who have property in more than one NRD. Landowners are not the only ones affected by this situation, it may affect other potential local, state and federal government programs

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LEWIS & CLARK

Natural Resources District

608 N. Robinson
PO Box 518
Hartington, NE 68739
Phone (402) 254-6758
Fax (402) 254-6759

Vince Kramper
RR 1 Box 338
Dakota City, Nebraska 68731

Dear Vince:

I am responding to your request on LB 1085 input - Phase II. The following information can be elaborated or verified if you feel it necessary, but relates to the Lewis & Clark NRD perspective.

1 Things done for efficiency or effectiveness

- a) LCNRD assumes tree planting operation in LENRD portions of Dixon, Cedar and Knox for customer ease and NRCS simplicity.
- b) provide clerical and field staff and equipment to NRCS to facilitate delivery of conservation practices to landowners by technical professionals
- c) Simplify program options and details for ease in public communications and understanding.

2 Future means of efficiency or effectiveness

- a) Interlocal agreement with counties on road structure - other projects
- b) Interoffice electronic form processing with NRCS-NRC with NSWCP, WWDF, and other programs.

3. Examples of NRD cooperation with other NRD

- a) LCNRD initiated Bazile Triangle Groundwater Study (UNL Cons & Survey #68) with 3 neighbor NRDs to monitor and correlate nitrate contamination in geographic area common to all
- b) worked together with LNNRD on provide RW service from West Knox System to residents in LCNRD using interlocal cooperative agreement.
- c) worked with LENRD to host tree workshops and information brochures together
- d) joint purchase of conservation mulch stakes via CPNRD for volume discount.

4 Examples of Cooperation with other agencies

- a) Acted as local sponsor with Corps of Engineers on Missouri River Bank Protection to secure land rights for \$2.6 million Section 32 project. Worked with local Missouri River Bank Protection Association, landowners and county government for mutual coordination and maintenance
- c) worked with County board on watershed project, degradation studies, boat ramps and soil survey acceleration efforts
- d) Cooperate with NE Game and Parks Commission on Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project and three Wildlife Management Areas built the LCNRD.
- e) Provide funding and input to Grassland Management education efforts with Knox Co Extension Service - Also hosted area Range and Soil Judging contests.

Kramper letter
December 5, 1997
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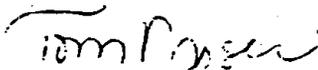
- f) worked with area schools on Tree planting projects. GW education and outdoor classrooms.
- g) Provide material to 20 churches annually for promoting ethical care of natural resources
- h) Worked with Northeast RC&D on Cedar Revetment and other projects.
- I) Cooperated with Santee Sioux Tribe on Natural Resource Enhancement Projects, Water Supply and Cost share Program
- j) Utilized Midwest Assistance Program out of the Center for Rural Affairs office to fund a preliminary feasibility study for our original Rural Water Project.

5. Future means of cooperation on public service

- a) LCNRD intends to develop Community Assistance Program and work more on Wellhead Protection Efforts with District villages.
- b) Work with Neighbor NRDs on providing or extending rural water services beyond district lines.
- c) Coordinate with other NRDs for tree program and other materials purchases to get volume discounts
- d) NRD intends to provide input to zoning efforts and Livestock Confinement issues regarding natural resource impacts.
- e) Cooperate with UNL Water Center on groundwater study in Creighton area to determine scope and range of Nitrate-Pesticide contamination.

Vince, there are probably other items that I've inadvertently omitted here, but hopefully these points will give your committee some discussion opportunities. As a small District, we have learned to be open to help from a wide array of sources to utilize outside technical and financial assistance. Let me know if you need clarification on any of this.

Sincerely,



Tom Moser
General Manager

ms

cc NARD



**LOWER NIOBRARA
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT**

410 Walnut Street
P.O. Box 350

Butte, Nebraska 68722 - 0350
Phone (402)775-2343

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects.
 - a. Road side erosion. The NRD sells grass to the county at or below cost.
 - b. The NRD does not charge the county for use of equipment for road side seedings.
 - c. NRD participates in county government day.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together.
 - a. Yes, critical area treatment structures to alleviate roadside erosion.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?
 - a. Through information and education programs.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their services to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?
 - a. Through the sharing of information and employees.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?
 - a. The local NRD and the county work together on concerns of mutual interest.



**LOWER NIOBRARA
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT**

410 Walnut Street
P.O. Box 350

Butte, Nebraska 68722 - 0350
Phone (402)775-2343

L. B. 1085 Meeting and Input Request

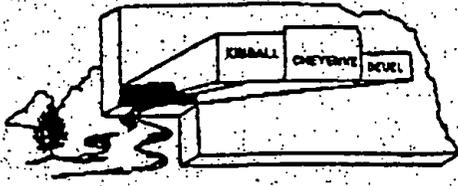
1. To increase efficiency and /or effectiveness the LNNRD has:
 - a. Added a Water Resources Coordinator to our staff to implement our Groundwater Quality Management Plan.
 - b. Purchased technical equipment to make staff more efficient.
 - c. Purchase select items with four other NRD's to reduce cost to us and to the producer.
 - d. Purchase items in bulk, when ever possible, to reduce cost.
 - e. Offer free nitrate analysis to the public.

2. To further increase our efficiency and/or effectiveness we could:
 - a. Work closer with neighboring NRD's on chemigation and nitrogen certification.
 - b. Add internet access.
 - c. Share equipment with other NRD's that is cost prohibitive to purchase individually.
 - d. Share professional services with other NRD's.

3. Examples of cooperative efforts with other NRDs include:
 - a. The Holt County Groundwater Education Program (HCGEP) is a 319 project shared between the LNNRD and the UENRD.
 - b. The LNNRD Water Quality Committee worked in conjunction with the UENRD Water Quality Committee on developing similar Groundwater Quality Management Plans.
 - c. A water quality study was conducted in the Brazile Triangle which was a cooperative effort between LNNRD, UENRD and LCNRD.
 - d. LNNRD and UENRD jointly supported a 1976 Baseline Survey of the Groundwater Chemistry in Holt County.

4. Cooperative efforts with other units of government include:
 - a. We are currently co-located with the Boyd County NRCS office which we work in conjunction with on most soil and water conservation issues and programs.
 - b. We worked closely with the Extension Service in development of our GQMP and in implementing our nitrogen certification classes.
 - c. Work with NRCS and FSA on WQIP and EQIP.
 - d. Provide clerical assistance to four NRCS offices in exchange for technical assistance.

5. The LNNRD could better cooperate with other NRDs and local units of government by:
 - a. Sharing information and ideas on programs and projects.
 - b. Keeping counties better informed of policies and programs.
 - c. Work with all units of government on information and education programs.



SOUTH PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

551 Parkland Drive, PO Box 294 Sidney, Nebraska 69162
(308) 254-2377 FAX (308) 254-2783

November 10, 1997

Vince Kramper, LB1085 Committee Chair
Natural Resources Commission
P.O. Box 94876
Lincoln, NE 68509-4876

Re: LB1085 Input Request

Dear Mr. Kramper:

I have reviewed your memorandum regarding the second LB1085 study and discussed this matter with my Board of Directors at their regular meeting Tuesday, December 9, 1997. The following responses are provided to the five specific items you posed in your memorandum.

1. List things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

- Installation of advanced office equipment and computer technology
- Cooperative working relationship with private, state and federal natural resources partners
- Long range implementation planning process that involves director and staff participation
- Develops annual staff goals and visions with periodic reviews
- Administration of the district's Personnel Policies and maintenance of current job descriptions
- Administration of the district's Operating Policies
- Administration of the district's Safety and Loss Prevention Program
- Hold staff accountable for increased efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Staff and director networking—board and committee structure
- Maintain cost analysis evaluation of programs
- Hold board and committee meetings on the same day
- Hold regular staff meetings and scheduling
- Resubdistricting

2. List things that your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

- Continually seek project and program interlocal agreements with other entities
- Contract services when deemed necessary or appropriate by the board of directors
- Increase use of part-time assistance
- Enhance importance of existing Internship Program
- Possible structured flex time policy for staff to meet customers and/or staff time schedules and needs
- Seek outside consultation to determine the effectiveness and/or efficiency of district staffing and operations. Use Certified Public Accountant to identify strong and weak areas of the district
- Pursue aggressively with available resources options for grant funding to leverage district funds to execute projects and programs
- Keep major purchases and bids under a structured environment
- Continued focus on safety and maintenance

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To	Vince Kramper	From	Rod Horn
Co.	NRC	Co.	South Platte NRD
Dept.		Phone #	308-254-2377
Fax #	402-471-3132	Fax #	308-254-2783

3. List examples of cooperative efforts your district has undertaken with other NRDs that resulted in increased efficiency and/or effectiveness.

- Projects and Programs administration across district boundaries
 Examples: 1. Chemigation Inspections and Conservation Tree/Shrub Plantings
 2. Information/Education Programs through the Federal 319 NPS Program with several entities in Colorado
- Cooperative Hydrology Study of the Platte River and Basin in Nebraska (Environmental Trust Fund application approval pending)
- Car pool with other NRD directors/staff and/or other individuals to similar functions
- Use of technology exchange (example: E-mail, fax, etc.)
- Hold specialized program round tables (example: tree planters)
- Use of conference calls to help reduce traveling expenses

4. Cooperative efforts with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient and effective operations

<u>Cooperating Entity(ies)</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Project Description</u>
USDA-NRCS County Offices	?-1997	Soil/water conservation and natural resources management
NE Game & Parks Commission	?-1997	Wildlife Habitat Program
UNL Conservation & Survey Division	?-1997	Cooperative Water Well Observation Program
NE Forest Service	?-1997	Conservation plantings/Urban Forestry Programs
Cheyenne County Commissioners NRCS/NRC	1980-86	Cheyenne County Soil Survey
City of Sidney	1981-97	Representation on Sidney Tree Board
Deuel County Commissioners UNL Conservation & Survey Division NRCS/NRC	1994-97	Deuel County Soil Survey
City of Bayard City of Bridgeport Village of Broadwater Village of Bushnell City of Chappell Village of Dalton Village of Dix Village of Gurley City of Kimball Village of Lewellen Village of Lodgepole City of Oshkosh Village of Potter City of Sidney	1992	Feasibility study on the development of a regional landfill

LB1085 Input Request

November 10, 1997

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Cheyenne County
Deuel County
Garden County
Kimball County
Morrill County

City of Sidney Cheyenne County Commissioners	1990-97	West Sidney Gas Plant- Hydrocarbon contamination concerns
Cooperative Weather Observer for National Weather Service	1992-97	Monitoring rain gauge station
NDEQ, DWR, NRC, NRCS, Game & Parks Commission,	1993	A Study of Nonpoint Source Ground Water Contamination in Deuel County, Nebraska: A Special Protection Area Report
City of Sidney	1993	Community Forestry Program
Village of Potter	1994-97	Community Forestry Program
Village of Big Springs	1994-96	Community Forestry Program
City of Chappell	1993-97	Community Forestry Program
City of Kimball	1995-97	Community Forestry Program
City of Sidney NE Forest Service	1993-97	Conservation Tree Planting-water well field
Deuel County Panhandle Area Development District/ RC&D	1993	RC&D McFee Roadstructure
Lower Platte South Water Conservancy District - Sterling, Colorado Colorado State University - Cooperative Extension Panhandle Area Development District/ RC&D	1995-97	Federal 319 NPS Project
NDEQ, DWR, NRC, NRCS, Game & Parks Commission	1997	A Study of Nonpoint Source Ground Water Contamination in Eastern Cheyenne County: A Ground Water Management Area Report
Village of Gurley NE Mandates Management Initiative	1997	Dealing w/ EDB/Benzene contamination and well capacity issues
City of Kimball	1997	Wellhead Protection Program

Cheyenne County Commissioners	1997	Comprehensive Planning and Zoning
Bessey Nursery Advisory Committee		Conservation tree planning
Kimball County Local Emergency Operations Plan	1997	Emergency preparedness

5. Provide ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

- Work with public power districts to search for ways to develop interlocal cooperation and agreements
- Work more aggressively with cities/villages and counties about activities that the agencies might work together. Not only for new projects, but also established projects.
- Expand office/shop facilities to accommodate other partners to provide quality service to customers
- Share personnel, vehicles and equipment through cooperative agreements
- NARD/NRD Cooperative Purchasing
- Seek Interlocal Agreements
- Have specialized position(s) within several districts (example: hydrologist for all Panhandle districts)
- Do not duplicate efforts
- Increase outreach program

Respectfully,



Rod L. Horn
General Manager

RLH/s

pc: Dean Edson, NARD Executive Director



UPPER BIG BLUE

Natural Resources District

105 Lincoln Ave.
York, Nebraska 68467
(402) 362-6601

MEMO

To: Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chairman
From: John C. Turnbull *John*
Subject: LB 1085 - Response to Input Request
Date: December 10, 1997

1. Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Initiated aerial photography and digitized terrain modeling to develop detailed mapping for district projects (1"=100' scale). The consultant does the aerial work and computer mapping. Our staff surveys the horizontal and vertical controls. The resulting computer map files are provided to our staff for project planning and design. This method costs about the same as complete field surveys and manual mapping, but the time for projects has been cut from 1 or 2 years to 90 days, while maintaining the same accuracy.

Surveying with electronic total station, with electronic field notes. Data downloaded to office computers for design and mapping.

Use of AUTOCAD to replace manual drafting.

Networked and upgraded all the computers in the office. Now a computer at every desk with Internet capability.

Continuing spring well measurements and water testing for nitrates programs after the groundwater conservation districts dissolution, with no addition in staff.

Use of 4 wheelers in chemigation inspections.

2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Amend groundwater regulations to only require irrigated acre reporting at times of groundwater shortage to save time of maintaining records which are only relevant at times of stiffer regulation.

Urge consolidation of NRCS field offices in order to reduce federal overheads, use existing NRCS staff more efficiently, and reduce NRD clerical staff. Provide centralized technical design services for NRCS clientele by locating 2 or 3 NRD engineering technicians in the NRD headquarters office to design land treatment practices for county NRCS offices. Dispatch design team to area of work.

Aggressively follow up land treatment applications to assure timely design and construction.

3. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that have resulted in more efficient and/or effective operations.

Purchased general liability, fire and casualty, auto, errors and omissions, and umbrella insurance from insurance agency providing same package coverages to majority of NRDs, at substantial savings.

Providing staff engineering design services for storm water drainage for Butler County, David City, and Lower Platte North NRD in area of Northwest Drainage of old Central Butler Resources Development Fund Project. Sharing costs of staff time with Lower Platte North NRD. City and County funding land rights and construction.

Coordinating Information and Education efforts with other districts through NARD I & E staff committee.

Working with other districts and University Extension through NARD to develop statewide water quality education and training program for farm and ranch operators. For use in groundwater management areas.

4. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.

Acquired and administered FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinated with state and federal agencies, and shared in the local cost for flood control works in Harvard. City carried out local contracts for engineering and construction.

Acquired and administered FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinated with state and federal agencies, shared in the local cost, and provided certain technical services for flood control works in Sutton. City carried out local contracts for engineering construction.

Acquired and currently administering FEMA flood hazard mitigation grant, coordinating with state and federal agencies, sharing in the local cost, and providing certain technical services including detailed mapping for floodplain buyout in Seward. City is providing share of local funds and carrying out details of buyout program.

Providing storm water drainage engineering for Seward in new housing areas on north side of City. Coordinating design with Plum Creek flood plain buyout program.

Providing storm water drainage engineering for Henderson. City is in planning stages of annexation of industrial and commercial sites.

Providing engineering on bridge works for York County at District reservoir site. County is constructing bridge works.

Contracted for aerial photography of entire communities when district involved in mapping of a portion of community. Digitized terrain maps (scale 1"=100') provided to Seward, David City, Henderson, and Aurora for use by them or their consultants in developing plans and designs for storm water drainage, sewer systems, street layouts and design, and utilities. Coordinated map data interpretation with cities engineering consultants.

Assisted and coordinated the efforts of 8 counties and many communities in solid waste planning and regionalization of landfills. Area now served by 4 major landfills (3 private and 1 public) instead of several per county.

Cooperated with USGS on district wide water quality study and monitoring well installation for nitrate monitoring.

5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

More staff training sessions and idea exchange through the NARD.

Coordinate implementation of GIS with counties and cities for use of common data bases. Initially use for access to legal descriptions and property owners.

Cooperate with urban areas on water quality treatment.

Provide counties with stream hydrology data for use in their bridge and culvert designs.

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LOWER PLATTE NORTH

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

511 COMMERCIAL PARK ROAD, P.O. BOX 126, WAHOO, NEBRASKA 68066-0126
PHONE (402) 443-4675 • FAX (402) 443-5339

E-MAIL lpnprd@nrcdec.nrc.state.ne.us

M E M O R A N D U M

RECEIVED

DEC 10 1997

NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCE-COMMISSION

To: Dayle Williamson
From: John Miyoshi
Subject: LB 1085 Input Response
Date: December 9, 1997

1. To increase efficiency the District has:

- ☞ Reduced Board size from 21 to 19.
- ☞ Rather than fund wholly, the District now cost-shares on most projects with either individual(s) or other units of government.
- ☞ Offer as a service assistance with FEMA applications, technical assistance, grants and other assistance to small units of government where we have more expertise.
- ☞ More use of interlocal agreements for cooperative projects.

2. Things our District could do to be more efficient:

- ☞ Physically combine location with other units of government. NRCS, FSA, county zoning, flood plain management.
- ☞ Regional government host for similar, but expensive programs. GIS, permits, land records.
- ☞ Cooperative use of specialized personnel and equipment.

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3. Cooperative efforts with other NRD's:

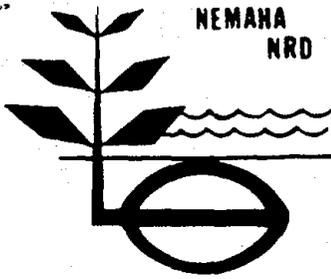
- ☛ Platte River Corridor Alliance.
- ☛ Platte River Corps of Engineers Study.
- ☛ Employees; NRCS clerks, technicians and part time help.
- ☛ Elkhorn River Breakout Project.
- ☛ Conservation cost-share for landowners who live on boundary
- ☛ Cooperative tree planting efforts for bordering landowners.

4. Cooperative effort with other units of government.

- ☛ Platte River Corridor Alliance
- ☛ Lower Platte Instream water users.
- ☛ County Road Structure program
- ☛ Construction and operation of Rawhide flood control project.
- ☛ Flood studies.
- ☛ Community Forestry Program

5. Possible cooperative efforts.

- ☛ Sharing of employees with special skills such as engineering, GIS, computers.
- ☛ Sharing of special use equipment such as back hoe, dozers, wood chipper.



nemaha

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

125 Jackson • P.O. Box 717 • Tecumseh, Nebraska 68450

Telephone: (402) 335-3325 • Fax: (402) 335-3265

December 4, 1997

Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chair
% Natural Resources Commission
310 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94876
Lincoln, NE 68509-4876

Dear Vince:

Following is a response to your questionnaire:

1. The Nemaha NRD is continually striving to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Internally we restructure our staff organization to take advantage of individual strengths and teamwork, utilize computerization to free up staff time for projects, and coordinate travel and projects to minimize travel expenses. We also use in-house training to keep skills current while reducing costs. The staff is also encouraged to coordinate scheduling to take advantage of favorable weather or other timing factors. External to the staff operation we seek as many partnerships and grant funds as possible.
2. Two things that the NRD can do, and are planned, is to make greater use of a voice mail/answering system and computer link ups with NRC and others.
3. One of the greatest examples of cooperation between NRDs is through the state association. Not only do staff from different NRDs get together to share information and do joint projects but specific programs such as trees, WHIP, and Chemigation are sometimes shared. Do not underestimate this cooperation that we tend to take for granted. This saves each District thousands of dollars per year and is not routinely done by counties or school districts.

C-49



4. The NRDs work closely with the counties. We have built numerous road structures with the counties that have saved the counties money as well as provided grade stabilization and flood control. Other components of our watershed development as well as land treatment have been coordinated with the counties for mutual benefits. We also work closely with the NRCS, the Corps of Engineers, State Forest Service, the Game and Parks Commission, County Extension, and DEQ which allows programs to be carried out that could not be done independently.
5. NRDs and other units of local government need to continue to maintain strong partnerships, strive to make programs and projects compatible, identify and reduce duplication of services, and do a better job of directing the public to the agency that can help them.

I hope that this summary will be helpful to you. If you have any questions I would be pleased to meet with you.

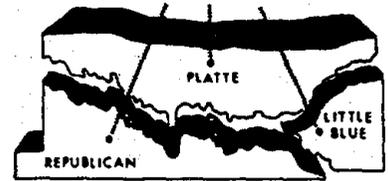
Sincerely,



Paul Rohrbaugh
General Manager

Tri-Basin NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1308 Second Street
Holdrege, Nebraska 68949
Telephone (308) 995-6688
Fax (308) 995-6992



Memo

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DICK HELMS
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GARY LINDSTROM
Wilcox, Nebraska

DAVID NICKEL
Kearney, Nebraska

DAVID OLSEN
Minden, Nebraska

DAVID RAFFETY
Kearney, Nebraska

LARRY REYNOLDS
Lexington, Nebraska

RAY WINZ
Holdrege, Nebraska

To: Mr. Vince Kramper, LB 1085 committee chairman

From: John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD

John Thorburn

CC: TBNRD Directors

Date: 12/04/97

Re: LB 1085 survey

Please find enclosed Tri-Basin NRD's response to your survey request. If you have questions, or you need additional information, feel free to contact me at the number listed above.

I really appreciate all the work that your committee has done on behalf of the NRDs by conducting these studies. I realize what a thankless job this has been for you folks. In spite of that, you have made a good effort to represent the views and concerns of both large and small districts. Thank you.

Tri-Basin NRD Response to LB 1085
Phase II Survey Request

1. Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

The staff and directors of Tri-Basin NRD constantly strive to keep the NRD operating at peak efficiency and to ensure that the greatest possible return is realized for every tax dollar spent. For example, our NRD, in cooperation with local NRCS personnel, has developed a system to rate cost-share applications. This system allows us to compare the projected conservation benefits of one application against another. The rating system also produces a cost to benefit ratio for each application. This system helps us to select those applications which will provide the greatest conservation benefits for the lowest cost. The rating system is used to prioritize expenditures of NSWCP (\$75,000/FY1997-98) and local cost-share funds (\$21,000/FY 1997-98).

Another example of improving operational efficiency is our conservation tree mulch laying program. Conservation mulch is a biodegradable plastic that is laid down on new tree plantings to conserve water and prevent weed and grass competition. The program has always been a moneymaker for the district, but it was difficult to find temporary help to man a crew. There were also considerable expenses for insurance and equipment.

We hired a contractor to lay mulch in 1997. This allowed us to continue to provide this important service, saved the NRD more than \$20,000 in expenses in FY 1996-97 and still turned a profit for the district. Comparable savings are expected in the current fiscal year.

We have also saved our constituents money simply by consulting with them on a regular basis. Tri-Basin NRD operates four Improvement Project Areas (IPAs) to improve cropland drainage. The district maintains the drainage ditches and assesses benefited landowners for expenses. By meeting regularly with our IPA constituents, we found that the most effective way to maintain these ditches was to target a few trouble spots each year, rather than clean out ditches on a set schedule. While it is difficult to precisely quantify the savings achieved through targeted maintenance, they would likely amount to several thousand dollars a year.

I could list several other more mundane, but significant cost saving strategies. These include purchasing supplies in bulk quantities when possible, buying office equipment from state and federal surplus, and pursuing grant funds for special projects.

2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Tri-Basin's staff and directors are always looking for ways to save money and/or improve effectiveness of our programs and services. I hope that the responses to this survey will be shared among all NRDs so that we can learn about and evaluate some techniques that other districts have implemented.

3. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that resulted in increased efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Tri-Basin NRD's cooperative efforts with other NRDs take many forms. Recent cooperative efforts have primarily involved studies. Three studies are in progress.

On the Platte side of the district, Tri-Basin is sponsoring a study of water quality in Platte River tributaries in cooperation with Central Platte NRD (CPNRD) and USGS. CPNRD and Tri-Basin are also developing a network of groundwater observation wells along the Platte River. Tri-Basin is also a member of a coalition of NRDs and other organizations who are applying for a grant to conduct a hydrology study throughout the Platte River basin.

Tri-Basin NRD is also participating, along with the other three Republican Basin NRDs, in a comprehensive investigation of groundwater/surface water interaction for that basin. Tri-Basin is an active member of the Nebraska Republican Basin Water Management Districts, an informal association of four NRDs and four irrigation districts. This group's meetings provide a valuable forum for the districts to work cooperatively on water resource issues. The meetings also provide an opportunity for the organizations to keep in touch and update each other about ongoing projects and programs.

Tri-Basin NRD and Lower Republican NRD, along with UNL Cooperative Extension, co-sponsor a "Water Jamboree". The Water Jamboree is an annual, two day, educational field program that teaches fifth grade students about water resources. Over 500 students from nearly every school in both districts attend this event.

Tri-Basin and neighboring NRDs cooperate on an almost daily basis in various ways. We share information and contacts. We try to support each other's legislative efforts. We occasionally swap chemigation inspections and tree planting jobs between districts. We carpool to meetings. Cooperation is part of this NRD's way of doing business.

4. Please list examples of cooperative efforts that your NRD has undertaken with other units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

Tri-Basin NRD works closely with local, state and federal government agencies. A list of cooperative efforts that fall into this category would run several pages. Following are just a few significant recent examples.

Natural Resources Districts have always been closely associated with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Tri-Basin provides three field office secretaries to NRCS offices within the district. The secretaries free up NRCS technicians so that they can spend more time in the field working with constituents. We also cooperatively fund an NRCS Irrigation Water Management Specialist (IWMS) position, along with Central Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID). This specialist provides assistance to help farmers improve the efficiency of their irrigation systems and their irrigation methods. Our IWMS position is a great cooperative success story. Through his efforts, we have provided information to hundreds of farmers and saved millions of gallons of groundwater and surface water.

CNPPID and Tri-Basin are currently working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on a project to improve water management at Funk Waterfowl Production Area. This project involves creating an outlet for the Funk Lagoon basin and clearing five miles of creek channel. The project is being constructed by CNPPID, with operations and maintenance work to be done by Tri-Basin and Fish and Wildlife. Farmers along Lost Creek will also benefit from improved drainage.

A final example of cooperation between units of government involves Tri-Basin, the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RBJV, which is itself a good example of inter-agency cooperation) and the City of Holdrege. The city would like to convert their old landfill into a park. Adjacent to the landfill is a large wetland, which was drained in the 1970's. Tri-Basin is currently working with the city and RBJV to restore the wetland. The city and the NRD have also applied for an Environmental Trust grant to aid the restoration, and to develop facilities for handicapped accessible wildlife viewing.

5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other units of local government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

There are always opportunities to increase "horizontal integration" and to reduce redundancy of services between local units of government. Some smaller local government agencies, such as county weed superintendents, county surveyors and drainage districts could be phased out and their functions absorbed by NRDs without great difficulty. There is also a need for increased regular communication between municipalities, counties and NRDs. Undoubtedly, the information provided by this survey, if it is distributed to NRDs, will also give us some new ideas.

TWIN PLATTE

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

UNITED NEBRASKA BANK CENTER
111 SOUTH DEWEY STREET
P.O. BOX 1347
NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA 69103-1347
PHONE 308/535-8080

December 7, 1997

Vince Kramper
NE Natural Resources Commission
P O Box 94876
Lincoln NE 68509-4876

Dear Vince:

I am responding to your letter dated November 18, 1997 requesting information for the LB 1085 Committee in regard to the second LB 1085 study which is to address issues of efficiency, duplication and program effectiveness.

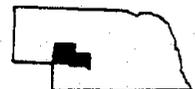
- 1. Please list two or more things that your Natural Resources District has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

The utilization of computer technology has significantly increased the efficiency for the District. The utilization of computer technology has allowed the District to reduce the number of support personnel and has allowed the District to continue to add programs as well as to maintain exiting programs without adding additional technical personnel funded by the District. The utilization of computer technology has also increased the effectiveness in the delivery of programs.

The utilization of cellular phones has increased the efficiency for the District. As an example, the utilization of cellular phones allows the personnel in the field to add appointments and reduces the need for return trips. The utilization of cellular phones has also increased the effectiveness in the delivery of programs.

The Chemigation Program inspections procedure has been changed to allow the rotation of inspections scheduled to include all of a producers sites in one year, rather than the previous method that rotated the inspections such that a producer could have a site inspected every year. The previous method was originally thought to be necessary to insure compliance, but experience has proven that all the inspections for a producer can be done in one year which improved the efficiency of the District's operation as well as the efficiency of the producers time.

C-55



The District's Ground Water Program has been significantly expanded during the last two years which has increased the effectiveness of the Program. The District's Ground Water Management Plan is based on target areas for townships. When elevated levels of contamination occur or when declining ground water levels occur, a target area is established and one-on-one contacts, advisory committees and enhanced information and education activities are carried out in the target area. The re-assignment of existing personnel and the addition of new personnel with outside funding through the Nebraska Enhancement Fund and a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency funded 319 Project has allowed the District to provide a more effective Ground Water Program.

2. **Please list two or more things that you feel your Natural Resources District could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

The effectiveness of programs could be increased with additional cost-share funds. The availability of Federal funds has been reduced and the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program funds are not adequate to meet the demands in the District. As an example, the District's Tree Program sales have decreased due to a shortage of cost-share funds.

The effectiveness of all the programs could possibly be increased with a dedicated Information and Education Program. Currently, all of the District's personnel provides information and education for the programs they work in, but their time is limited due to the ongoing demands of the programs they are assigned to carry out.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the District's personnel could be increased by updating the computer equipment and software.

3. **Please list examples of cooperative efforts your Natural Resources District has undertaken with other Natural Resources Districts that resulted in increased efficiency and or effectiveness.**

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is 96 miles from the east boarder to the west boarder and 69 miles from the south boarder to the north boarder. These distances make it difficult for cooperative efforts with other Natural Resources Districts. These distances, however, have allowed for one area of cooperation. If a neighboring District has a request for a tree planting near our boarder, and they do not have any other planting sites near that site, if our District has some other planting sites in the area, we will cross the boarder and do the site if requested by the District. Due to distances, this cooperation can significantly increase efficiency.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District recently built a water model in a trailer that was funded by a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant. The trailer has been used throughout the Twin Platte Natural Resources District as well as in the Central Platte Natural Resources District and the Upper Loup Natural Resources District. I anticipate that the trailer will continue to be used in all of our neighboring Natural Resources Districts.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is cooperating with the Central Platte, Tri-Basin, South Platte and North Platte Natural Resources Districts in a application to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund for a project titled "Cooperative Hydrology of the Platte River". If funding is approved by the Environmental Trust Fund, the three year project would receive funding from the five Natural Resources Districts as well as other sponsors and partners and would be carried out by the five Natural Resources Districts as well as other sponsors and partners.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and U.S. Geological Survey, has developed the Platte/Republican Ground Water Computer model.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Upper Loup Natural Resources District and in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and U.S. Geological Survey, has developed the South Central Sandhills Ground Water Computer model.

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District cooperates with the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in providing Secretarial support in the North Platte Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office.

4. **Please list examples of cooperative efforts that your Natural Resources District has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.**

Refer to the attached list title "Twin Platte Natural Resources District - Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies".

5. **Please provide your ideas of how Natural Resources Districts could better cooperate with other Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.**

Although I believe that there is always ways to improve any operation, I am finding it difficult to come up with ideas of how Natural Resources Districts could better cooperate with other Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner, as I continually ask myself this question and when I have had ideas, I have sought to implement them where possible or feasible. The only idea that I have at this time is I believe that Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government could realize financial savings and efficiencies and improve operations and effectiveness by sharing purchases and utilization of computer software.

I believe that the Twin Platte Natural Resources District is carrying out excellent cost effective programs.

I appreciated the opportunity to provide you information in regard to the Commission's study of Natural Resources Districts. I would be happy to discuss the activities of the District with you or the Special Committee you chair or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Kent O. Miller, P.E.
General Manager

Enclosure

cc+encl. Mike Mosel, NARD Board President
Richard Beran, Lower Loup NRD
John Turnbull, Upper Big Blue NRD
LeRoy Pieper, NNRC
Richard Mercer, NNRC
Clifford Welsh, NNRC
Dean Edson, NARD

KOM:AS:VK120897.WPS

TWIN PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
 Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies

IN COOPERATION WITH	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	TWIN PLATTE NRD SERVICES
City of Ogallala	Ogallala Watershed	Prepared and facilitated submitting the application to the Nebraska Resources Development Fund. Provided funds for the local cost-share for the dams built.
City of Ogallala	Ogallala Watershed	Initiated and facilitated the preparation of the Flood Plain Management Study and the Natural Resources Plan and Environmental Assessment prepared by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Provided 50% of the funds for the required aerial photography.
City of Ogallala and Ogallala Schools	Outdoor Classroom	Initiated and continue to facilitate the development of an outdoor classroom along the South Platte River at Ogallala, NE.
City of Ogallala	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
City of North Platte	Storm Water Drainage	Provided funds for aerial photography.
City of North Platte	Trails	Initiated development and design for a trails system. Provided funding. Continuing cooperation with City and Chamber Trails Committee.

**Twin Platte Natural Resources District
Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies**

City of North Platte	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
City of Hershey	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
City of Hershey	Storm Water Drainage	Funded a design for a storm water drainage project.
City of Paxton	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
City of Sutherland	Storm Water Drainage	Funded a design for a storm water drainage project.
City of Sutherland	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
City of Brule	Brule Watershed	Initiated and facilitating an analysis by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service of the drainage into the City of Brule.
City of Brule	Brule Watershed	Initiated and facilitated additional land treatment measures. Provided funds to the land owner for the landowners costs. City of Brule will assist the landowner with maintenance needs in the future.
City of Brady	Nature Area	Assisted in the development of nature area.
Schools within the Twin Platte NRD	Scholarships	Scholarships for teachers for continuing education in Soil and Water Conservation.
Schools within the Twin Platte NRD	Information	Information and materials for teachers and students for Soil and Water Conservation.

**Twin Platte Natural Resources District
Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies**

Schools within the Twin Platte NRD	High Plains Water Expo	Coordinated by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with various local agencies. An annual one day event in North Platte for middle school students.
Platte Valley Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Keith and Lincoln Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Paxton-Hershey Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Suburban Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
University of Nebraska	Range Tours	Facilitate and provide resources in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service for Range Tours for producers.
University of Nebraska	Ground Water	Provided funding and personnel assistance for development of ground water computer models.
University of Nebraska	Ground Water	Provided funding and personnel assistance for development of a ground water quality data base and monitoring program.

**Twin Platte Natural Resources District
Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies**

Nebraska Natural Resources Commission Cost-Share Program

Facilitate and implement the Nebraska Soil and Water Conservation Program.

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Cost-Share Program

Facilitate and implement the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. Provide 25% of the funds for the contracts with landowners.

Natural Resources Conservation Service Technical Assistance

Develop priorities and provide personnel to carry out the Districts Soil and Water Conservation Program.

United State Geological Survey Ground Water

Provided funding and personnel assistance for development of ground water computer models.

United State Geological Survey. Ground Water

Provide funding and personnel assistance for ground water monitoring.

KOM:AS.CA120897 WPS

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Usually Road structures. If conditions are right for this type of Dam, the local NRD will participate by funding the cost of CMP. Also drainage structures for relatively large areas.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

~~Yes, Drainage ditches for large areas involving local flooding.~~

Yes, Drainage ditches for large areas involving local flooding.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Many drainage ditches that were constructed years ago with public funds in one form or another ~~are~~ are in need of maintenance. These ditches are located on private property and really have no value toward county roads. As NRDs are contacted by private concerns on these matters, the NRDs could be more responsive.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Be more responsive to private owners on obsolete design concerns. Possibly initiate more study on small contained structures.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

None.

DEC 05 1997

NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCE-COMMISSION

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

No particular projects as of now but County would consider doing so as needed.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Not recently.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

No specific comments in this area but again, open to possibilities.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Our North Platte Natural Resources District does a fine job.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Our NRD provides reports and materials of interest and directs letters to the County Board as needed. No problems to date.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?
Yes - Both Upper Big Blue & Central Platte - on flood control dam projects on & off county roads

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?
Not aware

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?
Continue with financial assistance and personnel

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?
be frugal with tax dollars - legal expenses solicit public input on projects before final decisions

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?
Central Platte has been the most cooperative with Polk County on solving problems of flooding and erosion near Platte river

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UPPER REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1. Actions the URNRD has taken to increase efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency

- a. Acquired state-of-the-art computer hardware and software to modernize word processing procedures, budget planning and preparation, and communications. This has eliminated much handwriting of material as an intermediate step to final copy word processing; essentially eliminated use of the adding machine, filling in of budget forms with pencil and then by typewriter; and cut down cost of and time involved with communications through the use of e-mail.
- b. Reassigned some personnel in order to improve equipment maintenance; to more fully utilize the skills and time of the staff; and to cut down on over-time pay to some individuals while others were being underutilized.

Effectiveness

- a. Established a District-wide water quality management plan, adopted rules and regulations to carry out the plan, and instituted an intensive education and information program to improve the overall effectiveness of the plan and the rules and regulations.
- b. Extended most water quantity control rules and regulations to areas not previously covered, making the moratorium on new wells and metering effective throughout the District. This action will help to diminish the rate of the decline in groundwater levels in the District.
- c. The use of new computer hardware has enabled the staff to conduct improved analyses of data and information, and to provide more extensive and useful information to the Board and to the public.

2. Actions the URNRD could undertake to increase efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency

- a. Have staff participate in more workshops, training sessions, and interaction with the staffs of other NRDs to develop new ideas and to improve their ability to utilize current and forthcoming technology in their jobs. The work of this NRD is continually expanding in scope and in complexity. Thus, the capability of the staff must continually be up-graded to meet these demands. Training sessions (some specifically oriented to NRD staffs and others of a more general nature) of one-day, one week, or even longer are needed. If the capabilities of the URNRD staff members to deal with the new challenges are not enhanced, the effectiveness of this NRD will -- over time -- decline.

Effectiveness

- a. The staff needs to conduct more analyses of existing data and analyses to assist the Board and the public to better understand implications of alternative groundwater quality and quantity management approaches. This relates to the need, as specified in 2a., for more education and training for staff in such procedures.
- b. The use of part-time professionals for special needs would improve the work of the NRD, and would assist in the learning process for current staff to meet these special need in the future. Perhaps funds are needed to enable the NARD to hire a few specially trained "circuit riders" to travel to individual NRDs for a week or so to provide assistance and training in certain matters.

3. Cooperative efforts with other NRDs

Efficiency

- a. On a regular basis, NRDs in the Republican River Basin (RRB) exchange ideas on management programs, computer needs, and other on-going activities. This has allowed each NRD to gain from the experiences of others NRDs, rather than "starting from scratch" on issues that are new to it, but on-going in other NRDs. This cooperation improves efficiency, quality and effectiveness of all NRDs in the RRB.

Effectiveness

- a. Cooperation among RRB NRDs in attaining a grant from the Environmental Trust Fund for research on the interrelationship of ground and surface water in the Basin.
- b. The establishment of the RRB Coalition to share ideas and to develop effective management plans for the Basin. The Coalition has provided the base for the development of a proposal aimed at settlement of the Kansas-Nebraska Republican River conflict without going through the costs and risks of a Supreme Court Case.

4. Examples of current cooperative efforts with other government units

- a. A joint educational program with NRCS.
- b. Sharing of equipment and personnel between NRCS and the URNRD.
- c. Sponsorship of workshops, field days, judging contests, and other activities jointly with the Extension Service, NRCS, and the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center.
- d. State agencies such as the Natural Resources Commission, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the University of Nebraska provide continual, excellent, and essential assistance to and cooperation with the URNRD.
- e. Federal agencies such as the USGS and the NRCS also provide continual, excellent and essential assistance to and cooperation with the URNRD.

NOTE: *Any reduction in the funding for the above state and federal agencies/units that would diminish their assistance to and cooperation with NRDs would clearly have a serious detrimental effect on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of URNRD programs*

5. Actions that could improve cooperation among NRDs, and between NRDs and other agencies and result in more efficient and effective services the public

The issues and problems faced by NRDs are continually changing, and in many instances becoming more complex. There is no way for NRDs to effectively and efficiently face these challenges without continual education and training programs for NRD staff members. Without such education and training, NRDs will gradually become less and less capable of dealing with the new challenges. It has often been stated that when an agency stops getting better, it will soon stop being good. This reflects the need for continual up-grading of skills, abilities and understanding of issues and problems on the part of NRD staffs -- including managers and other personnel.

There are many excellent meetings, conferences and workshops held each year that would provide highly useful information to NRD staff members. However, Nebraska is a large state and NRDs have limited funds and staff time for travel to a "central" location for a meeting, workshop, or seminar that would enhance abilities and effectiveness of NRD personnel. It is not feasible to cover travel, food and lodging for all appropriate NRD staff members to a meeting 200 miles away. Some possible options that would help in this dilemma are:

- a. Instead of holding one meeting/conference on a topic it would be helpful if state and/or federal agencies would hold several "regional" meetings across the state on the same topic for NRD staff members. This would make it possible for all appropriate NRD personnel to attend meetings rather than only the managers or a few technicians. Such meetings would provide for the exchange of ideas among staff members of different NRDs, and would enhance the understanding on the part of participating agencies of NRD programs and problems.
- b. Of course, holding regional meetings such as those described above might impose unreasonable time and funding costs on participating state and federal government agencies. An alternative would be to initiate a program on the part of these agencies to develop and utilize distance-learning facilities for interaction with and training for NRD staff members. Perhaps there should be a goal among the NRC, the NARD office, and state and federal agencies to regularly utilize long-distance interactive communication technology to make available at least the most relevant parts of all meetings, conferences, and workshops to NRD staff members who (because of distance) are unable to travel to these events. Staff members from several NRDs could gather in a facility closer to their districts, hear the presentations, and interact with presenters with questions and comments just as if they were in attendance. Perhaps a committee with members from appropriate agencies (and with NRD representation) should be appointed to move rapidly toward utilizing such interactive communication technology on a regular basis.

- c. As a short-term alternative to (a) and (b) above, it should immediately be possible for the NARD or NRC to provide access to publicly sponsored (i.e. by state, extension, university, and federal agencies/units) meetings and even legislative hearings by recording such events on good quality video tapes. These tapes could be made available either free or at a cost to NRDs. The NRDs could then individually or cooperatively use the tapes for information sessions in which all appropriate staff members could participate. This could be a relatively low-cost way of enabling NRDs to take advantage of the tremendous body of important information that is made available through meetings, conferences, seminars and hearings each year. The number and quality of such events are adequate; but the distribution of knowledge presented at such events is generally not adequate.

NOTE: *Any one or all of the three alternatives (i.e. 5a, 5b, and/or 5c) outlined here would contribute to cooperation between NRDs and other units of government and would enhance the ability of NRDs to meet existing and forthcoming challenges. The improved skills and knowledge gained by NRD staff members would certainly provide NRDs with a stronger base for providing more efficient and effective service to present and future generations.*

L. B. 1085 RESPONSES FOR LITTLE BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1. Activities to Improve Efficiency and/or Effectiveness:

The Little Blue NRD has restructured our staff responsibilities to best match individual talents with program needs. We have also reduced secretarial staff by 1/2 full time employee to better meet time requirements, save money and increase efficiency.

In order to reduce staff and director expenses, our staff and board members often shares conference lodging and transportation. We also share lodging and transportation with other districts from time to time. (The managers of the Little Blue and Lower Republican have done this several times.) Board members are encouraged to share rides to meetings and activities.

The district recently adopted a policy of trading our vehicles at around 150,000 miles instead of the previous 100,000 miles because the vehicles are well maintained and we felt that would reduce capital expenses over the long term.

The district began maintaining time, activity and mileage logs in 1994 to determine accomplishments and if time is being effectively utilized. These records also aid us in planning and budgeting needs for programs.

2. What Could Our NRD Do To Improve Efficiency and/or Effectiveness:

This is the most difficult question of this request because if we felt there was a better way of doing business, we would make changes if possible. However, it is always good to evaluate this.

I believe better communications amongst staff, board and the public could foster better efficiencies and/or effectiveness. This is an ongoing challenge.

We have talked about ways of consolidating staff trips from the office to the field or meetings, but unfortunately, due to the diversity of activities and projects that are going on, combining trips many times may cause more inefficiencies. We do it when possible. Nothing else comes to mind right now.

3. Cooperative Efforts Between NRDs :

Tree Planting Programs (Ongoing) - We have made arrangements with adjoining NRDs to plant trees in entire counties which are closest to our district headquarters to aid in efficiency and reduce cooperator confusion. LBNRD plants all of Nuckolls County and LRNRD plants all of Webster County. LBNRD plants all of Adams County tree jobs.

Chemigation Program - (Ongoing) - LBNRD works cooperatively with adjoining districts to spot check new and renewal chemigation systems. This is done as an efficiency measure to reduce doubling of appointments, time requirements in scheduling and for convenience for operators.

Special Protection Area, Superior/Hardy Area - (Ongoing) - Cooperative effort with the Lower Republican NRD to address high nitrates in a 32 square mile area which crosses district lines. Currently the LBNRD conducts operator training and educational activities because we have an Information and Education staff person, and LRNRD conducts the water sampling requirements and handles operator annual reports because of their technical expertise.

Little Blue Public Water Project - (1976 - Present) Rural water project developed jointly with the Lower Big Blue NRD in 1978. Because the project over-lapped both district boundaries, the LBNRD took the leadership role and signed an Interlocal Agreement with the LBBNRD to administer the delivery and management of the entire project. Now, because of interest in a rural water project in the Beatrice area, the LBNRD has provided guidance to the Lower Big Blue NRD staff and local advisory committee to help get their project off the ground.

4. Cooperative Efforts With Other Governmental Entities:

The cooperative arrangement between the NRD and the NRCS provides that we employ the full time secretaries in the county field offices to help administer district programs close to the field needs. The NRD also provides funds for technical assistance to aid in design and layout for conservation practices which are being implemented as a result of district originated cost-share programs. The NRCS on the other hand provides office space, vehicles, equipment and supplies for these employees to do their work to everyone's benefit.

The district cooperates with cities to address specific resources problems. **An example is the McNish Park Improvement Project, Fairbury (1997)-** The district provided cost assistance for construction and made application to NDEQ for 319 Water Quality funding for a unique urban erosion demonstration project. Also, the sponsors worked with the local Wal-Mart to raise public awareness of effects of urban runoff from parking lots into the park and obtained some funding through a Wal-Mart-originated battery recycling project for publicity. Total cost was \$24,000; DEQ's share - \$5,000, City and District split the remainder or about \$9,500 each.

In cooperation with counties, the NRD offers assistance for road dams, 404 permit applications and various other projects. **The Nuckolls County Hazard Mitigation Project - (1994 - 1996) is an example of this type of venture. -** The district covered engineering costs and provided assistance for obtaining 404 permits to complete a hazard mitigation project with Nuckolls County and FEMA. The project was designed to protect three new county bridges which were damaged slightly in the 1993 flood. The NRDs cost was \$3,675 but the benefits in terms of positive relations and public perception was great.

5. Future Ideas For Improving Entity Cooperation to Become More Efficient:

Frankly, I believe the NRDs do an excellent job of cooperating on projects and programs.

I believe the process initiated by the NRDs to develop the suggested guidelines for the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund for NRC consideration, went well and was an efficient and effective approach. This approach should be used if similar opportunities evolve in the future.

I've often thought that it would be nice if several district's could hire and share an engineer for design of smaller practices which fall in the cracks between what NRCS will do and what justifies a consulting firm to design; such things as bank erosion protection, drainage outlet structures, road dams, etc.. Such a person may be able to assist county road departments or villages with small projects as well and actually help local governments save costs.

One of the areas that our staff feels there could be an improvement in efficiency is in our Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. This is a very popular program within our district. Currently there is a back log of contracts waiting for approval. Because the Game and Parks Commission's area representative has a large area to cover, it has been difficult for him to inspect and assess projects in a timely manner. We feel the program has suffered as a result.

We have occasionally experienced other entities that are not very cooperative for one reason or another, but I expect some of the problem are personalities, not a result of opportunities. We will continue to work with all entities where we feel cooperative efforts can be of benefit to our constituents.

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L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

*Yes
Mainly drainage*

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Yes

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

*They have been very good
about helping when needed*

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

*Have helped when asked and are
very good to assist*

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L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

yes

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

yes

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

No

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

No

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

No

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

County & NRD cooperated with a Road Structure North of Gore Co Industrial Park. Have worked Together on other watershed projects where Dams were involved.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Road Structures

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

In supplying information on drainage Areas where Flood Control Dams are built or drainage Areas in design of County Structures

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

None at this Time.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

For most part - Each have cooperated Together on projects. - Some had some difficulties 20-30 years on Road closings. Passing roads of watershed dams.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

~~NO~~ *yes*
Road structures
Rural Water etc.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

~~NO~~ *yes*

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

~~NO~~
Local agreements
Open communication maybe meet
once a yr.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

NO

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

NO

Very professional -
They follow the plan.

Jim Huggenberger - Chair

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5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient or effective manner.

Look at the possibility of developing a cooperative purchasing program which may allow NRD to buy equipment/vehicles at lower costs.

More sharing of NRD equipment with other districts.

Eliminate NRCS Clerks replace with NRD technicians

Better coordination of statewide meeting schedule to reduce travel costs for some NRDs, ie meetings on back to back days, carpooling, centralized locations etc.

Receive more communication from other NRD on their projects and how the NRD might assist

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Lower Loup Natural Resources District

NO. HIGHWAY 11, HADAR INDUSTRIAL PARK
PHONE (308) 728-3221

P.O. BOX 210, ORD, NEBRASKA 68862-0210
FAX (308) 728-5669

November 26, 1997

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NEBRASKA NATURAL
SOURCE-COMMISSION

TO: Gayle Starr, NRC
FROM: Richard J. Beran, General Manager, Lower Loup NRD
SUBJECT: Response to LB-1085 Questionnaire

1. **PLEASE LIST TWO OR MORE THINGS THAT YOUR NRD HAS DONE TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND/OR EFFECTIVENESS.**
 - a. Initiated a maintenance agreement with Duncan East Improvement Project Area landowners to do maintenance work. This resulted in the NRD not having to transport equipment and personnel. We reduced costs and provided more timely maintenance.
 - b. Upgraded the office computer system so that we could transfer documents between NNRC and other State agencies.
 - c. Changed employees' work stations to better accommodate ag producers in problem areas.
2. **PLEASE LIST TWO OR MORE THINGS THAT YOU FEEL YOUR NRD COULD DO TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND/OR EFFECTIVENESS.**
 - a. Provide irrigators with timely information on irrigation pump output quickly and accurately.
 - b. Install an E-mail program within the nine Federal offices where the District has permanent staff.
3. **PLEASE LIST EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE EFFORTS YOUR NRD HAS UNDERTAKEN WITH OTHER NRDS THAT RESULTED IN INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND/OR EFFECTIVENESS.**
 - a. Entered into interlocal agreements to oppose the Game & Parks Instream Flow Application on the Platte, Loup and Elkhorn Rivers.
 - b. We have mutual agreements with neighboring NRDS on chemigation inspections, static water level reporting, and water quality testing.
 - c. We carpool to interstate and intrastate meetings.
 - d. We hold joint employee benefit meetings to reduce travel distance and time.

e. We constructed chemigation valve test kits for all statewide chemigation inspectors.

4. PLEASE LIST EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE EFFORTS THAT YOUR NRD HAS UNDERTAKEN WITH OTHER UNITS OF GOVERNMENT THAT HAVE RESULTED IN MORE EFFICIENT OR EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS.

- a. We are a part of and participate in the Nebraska Mandates Management Initiative.
- b. Entered into an interlocal agreement with the City of Columbus whereby the City extended already-in-place maintenance into an improvement project.
- c. Assisted several counties with the construction of road structures to replace bridges.
- d. Made available at no cost a grassland drill for County government to seed road right-of-way.
- e. Provide City and Village government with engineering assistance on drainage and erosion control.
- f. Provide assistance to County and municipal governments on streambank erosion.
- g. Provide municipal governments with development of wellhead protection.
- h. Agreement with the State Forester to co-share an NRD Forester position.
- i. Memorandum of Understanding and Gratuitous Agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to provide joint use of personnel.
- j. Interlocal Agreement with four NRDs to co-sponsor secretarial and technical staff.
- k. Interlocal agreement with Dept. of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation to establish a recreation program.
- l. Share educational and certification of nitrogen management programs.
- m. Educational programs with Cooperative Extension on Land and Range Judging Programs.
- n. Cooperative efforts with the City of Columbus and the Village of Dannebrog on soccer field and trails development.
- o. Cooperate with Happy Jack Chalk Mine development.
- p. Develop education programs with Loup Basin Resource staff that includes NRD and five Irrigation Districts.
- q. Coordinate programs with the Leafy Spurge Task Force.

- r. We have membership in and have established Statewide Arboretums.
 - s. Had working agreements with the University of Nebraska Entomology Dept. on biological control of musk thistle.
5. PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR IDEAS OF HOW NRDS COULD BETTER COOPERATE WITH OTHER NRDS AND OTHER LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC IN A MORE EFFICIENT AND/OR EFFECTIVE MANNER.
- a. Utilize professional staff between NRDs when appropriate.
 - b. Share equipment such as GPS and sonic flow meters.

ch

LOWER PLATTE SOUTH
NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT



3125 Portia St., Box 83581, Lincoln NE 68501-3581
(402) 476-2729 • FAX (402) 476-6454

Memorandum

Date: December 2, 1997
To: Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chair
From: Glenn D. Johnson, General Manager *GJ*
Subject: Response to LB 1085 Input Request

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input at this early stage in the second phase of the LB 1085 Study and report preparation. I will follow the outline of your November 18 memo in this response. Some of these responses are activities that make the NRD more effective in carrying out its mission and actions; others help the NRD be more efficient in terms of cost, staffing, overall effort; and others provide a way to be both more efficient and effective.

1. Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

The NRD's planning process includes use of strategic planning and the setting of priorities. The Long Range Implementation Plan and the annual budget and long range budget are closely tied together.

The District is using a program performance evaluation process to review existing programs and make appropriate changes to the programs.

The NRD's subcommittee structure was overhauled to clearly define areas of responsibility and reduce the number of subcommittees.

The team approach has been used in the implementation of the NRD's ground water management plan.

Use of technology, such as GPS, computers, cellular phones, GIS mapping.

The use of citizen advisory committees for several projects and programs have made those projects and programs more effective in implementation.

The use of a crew from the NE Department of Corrections under an Agreement to perform operation and maintenance on NRD projects.

- 2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

More coordination through the NARD of meetings, training, etc.

More and better use of electronic communication between the office and the Directors, between the office and other NRDs and agencies.

Sharing of specialized equipment and personnel with other NRDs or agencies or private sector.

Better use of the Interlocal Agreement authorities.

Increased information sharing at conferences and workshops

Support consolidation of state natural resources agencies into one Natural Resources Agency to avoid duplicative effort, reviews, and splintered authorities (e.g wellhead protection, safe drinking water, and groundwater wells)

- 3. Please list examples of cooperative efforts your NRD has undertaken with other NRDs that resulted in increased efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

The Lower Platte River Corridor Alliance, with two other NRDs and eight state agencies.

The Platte River Ice Jam Agreement with two other NRDs and five counties.

Cooperative information and education efforts with various NRDs.

Conservation technical staffing in NRCS offices

Chemigation, well decommissioning, and tree planting services across NRD borders by mutual agreement.

Interlocal Agreement with the Pappio-Missouri River NRD on the ownership, planning and development of the Rock Island Railroad Bridge over the Platte River as a recreation trail.

Cooperating in the installation and operation of ground water monitoring wells near the borders.

- 4. Please list examples of cooperative efforts that your NRD has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.**

The Antelope Valley Major Investment Study in Lincoln with the City and the University of Nebraska.

Platte River Ice Jam Agreement with two other NRDs and five counties.

Community Water System Protection Area agreements and implementation with Valparaiso, Ceresco, and Cass Rural Water District .

Acquisition of flood plain and relocation of buildings with the City of Ashland.

Planning, construction, and operation of road structures.

Community Forestry program.

Trails development and management with Lincoln, Elmwood, Valparaiso, and Eagle.

Division of urban stormwater planning, development, and operation with Lincoln.

Operation of stream gage network.

Section 319 , Clean Lakes Coordinator position with Lancaster County.

- 5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.**

Development of a standardized, comprehensive surface water flow and quality network and monitoring program.

Development of a standardized, comprehensive ground water flow and quality network and monitoring program.

Sharing of specialized equipment and personnel.

Improved and more consistent communications between agencies. (e.g. being informed of NDEQ water sampling efforts and results within NRD could help avoid duplication)

We noted the LP1085 Questionnaire for Counties which was enclosed with the November 18 memo. Hopefully, a similar questionnaire was sent to the villages and cities, as this NRD has an even greater level of cooperation with them.

GDJ/gdj

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

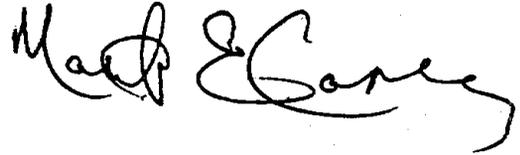
1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

(over)

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?
3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?
4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?
5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

To Whom It May Concern,

In the past several months, Thurston County has been involved in several meetings with other counties as well as various other subdivisions, to discuss the possibility of shared resources, combined services, etc., to fulfill our obligation under LB 1085. We believe that this process along with public hearings, is the proper way to meet those obligations, and that those obligations can't be met by simply sending out a questionnaire and having someone else do it for you. If you wish to meet with the County Board to discuss consolidation of services, or property tax savings, please call the county clerk's office at 385-2343.



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NEBRASKA NATURAL
SOURCE-COMMISSION

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION FROM SUSPECTED OIL & GAS ACTIVITIES
TREE PLANTINGS ON COUNTY PROPERTY AND COOPERATION WITH THE
EXTENSION OFFICE ON XEROSCAPE DISPLAY AT THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

YES WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON THE FIRST UPGRADE OF OUR
COMPREHENSIVE COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING IN 20 YEARS.
SPNRD HAVE THANKFULLY AGREED TO HELP

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

WE ARE IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE SOUTH PLATTE NRD

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

CONSIDERING THE AREA THEY COVER, I BELIEVE THEY ARE VERY RESPONSIVE
AND VERY EFFICIENT

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

I BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN EXEMPLARY IN THERE RELATIONSHIP WITH
OUR COUNTY

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes - construction of road lanes to replace bridge

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

No

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

(Council but - same problem counties are going to have - will affect tax payers in many ways)

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

No

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

a couple of dams to control flood damage and replace a bridge with a flood control dam

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Nothing

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

NO

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

NRD + DEQ + county should work together on water quality conservation private owned land fall

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

NO

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

NO

NA

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

NO

Grant County

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

NO
But would be interested in what
you have to offer

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?
Yes, Buffalo Creek Project (watershed) Chalkrock Lake
2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together? Not recently, several years ago they did on the two projects above.
3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government? Better communication and improved relations in areas of cooperation. Promote an interest in underground water quality.
4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently? Less duplication of expenses.
5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county? Favorably - None

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

None

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Yes - Kaminon River matter

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Revenue

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

*Improve their water quality monitoring &
Improve water monitoring*

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

None.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes - Dams to replace small Bridges
 Cost sharing on Terraces, Water ways,
 Tiling of one private Dam - could be others
 that I don't know about

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

NOT that I know of in last 15 yrs.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

~~None~~ Cost sharing for more Road Structures

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Get out of using money for trails (Recreation)
 when now farmers farm so many acres - that
 some of those acres may be 10 miles from home
 Small Bridges may require them to go around
 several sections of land to get there.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Cost sharing on Road Structures

Not following the wishes of Community on 7G
 Dam Site.

Rural hebr. can not be adequately served
 because of make up NRD Boards & don't C-97

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?
 WE HAVE CONTACTED THE NRD ON THREE (3) ROAD STRUCTURE PROGRAMS. OUR INTENT IS TO REMOVE BRIDGES AND BUILD ROAD DAMS THAT WOULD SAVE THE TAXPAYER MONEY AND GIVE BOTH FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER RELATED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. THESE REQUEST HAVE BEEN ON FILE FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO(2) YEARS AND HAVE NOT HAD ANY CONFORMATION OF COOPERATIVE FUNDING AS YET.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?
 OUR LOCAL NRD HAS NOT APPROACHED NEMAHA COUNTY ABOUT ACTIVITIES THAT MIGHT BE WORKED ON TOGETHER.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?
 OUR NRD COULD BE A VALUABLE ASSET TO OUR COUNTY IF WE COULD COME TOGETHER ON ROAD STRUCTURE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND MAINTAINING.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?
 I BELIEVE NRD COULD IMPROVE THEIR SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC BY INITIATING A PROGRAM TO OFFER SOME ASSISTANCE IN A SILT REMOVAL PROGRAM ON EXISTING ROAD STRUCTURES. IF SUCH A PROGRAM WAS INITIATED, I BELIEVE THAT FLOOD CONTROL WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED AS THE DEPTH OF THESE STRUCTURES WOULD HOLD BACK A GREAT DEAL MORE WATER AND FURTHER THAT FISH POPULATIONS COULD BE ENHANCED AND RECREATIONAL FISHING WOULD BE ENJOYED BY THE PUBLIC.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?
 I BELIEVE OUR PAST DEALINGS WITH NRD OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN PLEASANT AND CORDIAL.

SUMMARY COMMENT: I THINK NRD PROJECTS SHOULD BE FOR WHAT THE NAME IMPLIES: NATURAL RESOURCES AS DEFINED BY AMERICAN COLLEGE DICTIONARY, THE WEALTH OF A COUNTRY CONSISTING OF LAND, FORESTS, MINES, WATER, AND ENERGY RESOURCES.

THE MONIES CURRENTLY BEING SPENT ON THE STEAMBOAT TRACE TRAIL BETWEEN NEBRASKA CITY AND BROWNVILLE SHOULD NOT BE COMING FROM NRD.

IT SEEMS MORE APPROPRIATE THAT GAME & PARKS OR A RECREATIONAL ARM OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE UNDERTAKING A PHYSICAL FITNESS AND WILDLIFE VIEW PROGRAM.

John & George

RECEIVED

11/5/97

NOV 21 1997

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCE-COMMISSION

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

DAM-CONSTRUCTION
ELIMINATION-OF-BRIDGES-WITH
ROAD-TOP-DAMS

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

YES

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

POSSIBLE-INTER-LOCAL-AGREEMENTS.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

NO.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

THE-COOPERATION-ON-PROJECTS-HELPING
ELIVIAE-POSSIBLE-FLOODING.
SOME-CONCERN-ON-THE-ACQUISITION-OF-LAND
FOR-FUTURE-DAM-SITES. Russell, Henry

BOONVILLE LOUISIANA
ALBION NE

11/5/97

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Living Snow fences
Bank Stabilization on Creek & River Beds

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

We have usually approached them.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

We would like to see the NRD assist in Drainage calculations for Bridges & Tubes - since all of the maps are available to the NRD.

Assist the DEP and County in monitoring Large Livestock Confinements Lagoons & Monitor wells.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Not at the Present time

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Tree Planting & Living Snowbreaks

Myra Zouche
Henry Thimmon
Charles Homelke

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Knox County has been involved with numerous roadway drainage structures in place of bridges.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Yes, the County has given them our 1 & 5 year planning construction to study and maybe work together on some drainage structure.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

They could work with the county on some problem with roadway ditch erosion or creek bank stabilization.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

It would help if they would inform the County on their regulations as to what help is available to public roads. Maybe a joint meeting of officials would be beneficial.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

All projects have been successful to my knowledge. On relocating a new bridge structure there has been some conflict.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

NO

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

NO

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

NO

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

NO

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

NO

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes, we have worked cooperatively with the NRD, on watersheds.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Yes

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Nothing in addition to what we presently do work together on.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

No

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

We feel that the NRD "Lower Big Blue", has been very cooperative & has provided helpful information on all projects we have worked on together. These have included tiling, for water flow to county ditches, terracing as well as watersheds.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?
NO

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together? NO

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government? NO

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently? NO

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county? NO

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes, but haven't been requested to do any projects.

We would co-operate if approached with a sensible project.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

no

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Build a series of small dams on County roads.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Be more realistic about the size of structures they do build.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

*No dealings that I can recall.
Created no difficulties.*

Earl Gilker
Colfax Co

11/5/97

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

YES -
ROAD STRUCTURES
GRADE RETENTION STRUCTURE
DRAINAGE RISER PIPES

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

YES

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

MORE ROAD STRUCTURE PLANNING & FUNDING

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

NRD's have been good to work with.
More road structures are needed.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Gosper County has worked together with the NRD in Holkroye on several dams on county roads in the past.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together? We have been approached

on a project north of Smithfield to help stop erosion that will make its way to the county road if something isn't done about it. We had agreed to pay the cost of the drop down structure on this project.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government? I would like to see them help out in providing

some type of cost share on drop down structures in the county ditches to help control irrigation + terrace blocks that are being opened up to drain in the ditches that cause a serious erosion problem and is dangerous to the traveling public if they would happen to go off in one of these ditches.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county? They have helped share on cost of several dams. So this

part I felt has been successful. I would like to see them become more aggressive in the control of runoff and the landowners have terraces put in and then several years down the road they open up the blocks close to the road and drain the water into the ditch instead of the natural course it took before the terraces were put in. I would like to see them either work with the landowner to develop some cost effective way to drain the terraces or provide assistance to the local government in controlling

this runoff, I talking about irrigation and terrace runoff

RECEIVED

DEC 02 1997

**NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCE-COMMISSION**

C-109

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

yes, drainage structures

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

yes, NRD does drain cleaning and county furnishes culverts for road crossings.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

By the cleaning of drains and sizing and replacement of culverts. The NRD has not caused any difficulties to the county.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

On some occasions we have the NRD's input on dam sites that are close to our roads or when a request for a dam is used for a roadway

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

So far we have never had any duplication of practices. The NRD's will some time need and cover a large shouldering project.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

NO

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

The Lower Nebrara & upper Elkhorn NRD's work together and I think they are very efficient

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

*First question - very positive!
Second - NO:*

*JEAN FUNK
SUPERVISOR DIST. 7
HOLT COUNTY C-111*

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes.

Flood control projects including dikes and roadway drop structures.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Yes.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

It would be very beneficial if the NRD could assist the County in computing drainage areas and silt loss from adjacent property for proposed structures.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

NRD Lower Platte North works extremely well with us. The NRD Lower Platte South seems to have a more complicated procedure for approving projects. It would be helpful if they could simplify their procedure.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Our dealings have been excellent with both NRDs.

UPPER REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1. Actions the URNRD has taken to increase efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency

- a. Acquired state-of-the-art computer hardware and software to modernize word processing procedures, budget planning and preparation, and communications. This has eliminated much handwriting of material as an intermediate step to final copy word processing; essentially eliminated use of the adding machine, filling in of budget forms with pencil and then by typewriter; and cut down cost of and time involved with communications through the use of e-mail.
- b. Reassigned some personnel in order to improve equipment maintenance; to more fully utilize the skills and time of the staff; and to cut down on over-time pay to some individuals while others were being underutilized.

Effectiveness

- a. Established a District-wide water quality management plan, adopted rules and regulations to carry out the plan, and instituted an intensive education and information program to improve the overall effectiveness of the plan and the rules and regulations.
- b. Extended most water quantity control rules and regulations to areas not previously covered, making the moratorium on new wells and metering effective throughout the District. This action will help to diminish the rate of the decline in groundwater levels in the District.
- c. The use of new computer hardware has enabled the staff to conduct improved analyses of data and information, and to provide more extensive and useful information to the Board and to the public.

2. Actions the URNRD could undertake to increase efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency

- a. Have staff participate in more workshops, training sessions, and interaction with the staffs of other NRDs to develop new ideas and to improve their ability to utilize current and forthcoming technology in their jobs. The work of this NRD is continually expanding in scope and in complexity. Thus, the capability of the staff must continually be up-graded to meet these demands. Training sessions (some specifically oriented to NRD staffs and others of a more general nature) of one-day, one week, or even longer are needed. If the capabilities of the URNRD staff members to deal with the new challenges are not enhanced, the effectiveness of this NRD will -- over time -- decline.

Effectiveness

- a. The staff needs to conduct more analyses of existing data and analyses to assist the Board and the public to better understand implications of alternative groundwater quality and quantity management approaches. This relates to the need, as specified in 2a., for more education and training for staff in such procedures.
- b. The use of part-time professionals for special needs would improve the work of the NRD, and would assist in the learning process for current staff to meet these special need in the future. Perhaps funds are needed to enable the NARD to hire a few specially trained "circuit riders" to travel to individual NRDs for a week or so to provide assistance and training in certain matters.

3. Cooperative efforts with other NRDs

Efficiency

- a. On a regular basis, NRDs in the Republican River Basin (RRB) exchange ideas on management programs, computer needs, and other on-going activities. This has allowed each NRD to gain from the experiences of others NRDs, rather than "starting from scratch" on issues that are new to it, but on-going in other NRDs. This cooperation improves efficiency, quality and effectiveness of all NRDs in the RRB.

Effectiveness

- a. Cooperation among RRB NRDs in attaining a grant from the Environmental Trust Fund for research on the interrelationship of ground and surface water in the Basin.
- b. The establishment of the RRB Coalition to share ideas and to develop effective management plans for the Basin. The Coalition has provided the base for the development of a proposal aimed at settlement of the Kansas-Nebraska Republican River conflict without going through the costs and risks of a Supreme Court Case.

4. Examples of current cooperative efforts with other government units

- a. A joint educational program with NRCS.
- b. Sharing of equipment and personnel between NRCS and the URNRD.
- c. Sponsorship of workshops, field days, judging contests, and other activities jointly with the Extension Service, NRCS, and the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center.
- d. State agencies such as the Natural Resources Commission, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Environmental Quality, and the University of Nebraska provide continual, excellent, and essential assistance to and cooperation with the URNRD.
- e. Federal agencies such as the USGS and the NRCS also provide continual, excellent and essential assistance to and cooperation with the URNRD.

NOTE: *Any reduction in the funding for the above state and federal agencies/units that would diminish their assistance to and cooperation with NRDs would clearly have a serious detrimental effect on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of URNRD programs*

5. Actions that could improve cooperation among NRDs, and between NRDs and other agencies and result in more efficient and effective services the public

The issues and problems faced by NRDs are continually changing, and in many instances becoming more complex. There is no way for NRDs to effectively and efficiently face these challenges without continual education and training programs for NRD staff members. Without such education and training, NRDs will gradually become less and less capable of dealing with the new challenges. It has often been stated that when an agency stops getting better, it will soon stop being good. This reflects the need for continual up-grading of skills, abilities and understanding of issues and problems on the part of NRD staffs -- including managers and other personnel.

There are many excellent meetings, conferences and workshops held each year that would provide highly useful information to NRD staff members. However, Nebraska is a large state and NRDs have limited funds and staff time for travel to a "central" location for a meeting, workshop, or seminar that would enhance abilities and effectiveness of NRD personnel. It is not feasible to cover travel, food and lodging for all appropriate NRD staff members to a meeting 200 miles away. Some possible options that would help in this dilemma are:

- a. Instead of holding one meeting/conference on a topic it would be helpful if state and/or federal agencies would hold several "regional" meetings across the state on the same topic for NRD staff members. This would make it possible for all appropriate NRD personnel to attend meetings rather than only the managers or a few technicians. Such meetings would provide for the exchange of ideas among staff members of different NRDs, and would enhance the understanding on the part of participating agencies of NRD programs and problems.
- b. Of course, holding regional meetings such as those described above might impose unreasonable time and funding costs on participating state and federal government agencies. An alternative would be to initiate a program on the part of these agencies to develop and utilize distance-learning facilities for interaction with and training for NRD staff members. Perhaps there should be a goal among the NRC, the NARD office, and state and federal agencies to regularly utilize long-distance interactive communication technology to make available at least the most relevant parts of all meetings, conferences, and workshops to NRD staff members who (because of distance) are unable to travel to these events. Staff members from several NRDs could gather in a facility closer to their districts, hear the presentations, and interact with presenters with questions and comments just as if they were in attendance. Perhaps a committee with members from appropriate agencies (and with NRD representation) should be appointed to move rapidly toward utilizing such interactive communication technology on a regular basis.

- c. As a short-term alternative to(a) and (b) above, it should immediately be possible for the NARD or NRC to provide access to publicly sponsored (i.e. by state, extension, university, and federal agencies/units) meetings and even legislative hearings by recording such events on good quality video tapes. These tapes could be made available either free or at a cost to NRDs. The NRDs could then individually or cooperatively use the tapes for information sessions in which all appropriate staff members could participate. This could be a relatively low-cost way of enabling NRDs to take advantage of the tremendous body of important information that is made available through meetings, conferences, seminars and hearings each year. The number and quality of such events are adequate; but the distribution of knowledge presented at such events is generally not adequate.

NOTE: *Any one or all of the three alternatives (i.e. 5a, 5b, and/or 5c) outlined here would contribute to cooperation between NRDs and other units of government and would enhance the ability of NRDs to meet existing and forthcoming challenges. The improved skills and knowledge gained by NRD staff members would certainly provide NRDs with a stronger base for providing more efficient and effective service to present and future generations.*

L. B. 1085 RESPONSES FOR LITTLE BLUE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1. Activities to Improve Efficiency and/or Effectiveness:

The Little Blue NRD has restructured our staff responsibilities to best match individual talents with program needs. We have also reduced secretarial staff by 1/2 full time employee to better meet time requirements, save money and increase efficiency.

In order to reduce staff and director expenses, our staff and board members often shares conference lodging and transportation. We also share lodging and transportation with other districts from time to time. (The managers of the Little Blue and Lower Republican have done this several times.) Board members are encouraged to share rides to meetings and activities.

The district recently adopted a policy of trading our vehicles at around 150,000 miles instead of the previous 100,000 miles because the vehicles are well maintained and we felt that would reduce capital expenses over the long term.

The district began maintaining time, activity and mileage logs in 1994 to determine accomplishments and if time is being effectively utilized. These records also aid us in planning and budgeting needs for programs.

2. What Could Our NRD Do To Improve Efficiency and/or Effectiveness:

This is the most difficult question of this request because if we felt there was a better way of doing business, we would make changes if possible. However, it is always good to evaluate this.

I believe better communications amongst staff, board and the public could foster better efficiencies and/or effectiveness. This is an ongoing challenge.

We have talked about ways of consolidating staff trips from the office to the field or meetings, but unfortunately, due to the diversity of activities and projects that are going on, combining trips many times may cause more inefficiencies. We do it when possible. Nothing else comes to mind right now.

3. Cooperative Efforts Between NRDs :

Tree Planting Programs (Ongoing) - We have made arrangements with adjoining NRDs to plant trees in entire counties which are closest to our district headquarters to aid in efficiency and reduce cooperater confusion. LBNRD plants all of Nuckolls County and LRNRD plants all of Webster County. LBNRD plants all of Adams County tree jobs.

Chemigation Program - (Ongoing) - LBNRD works cooperatively with adjoining districts to spot check new and renewal chemigation systems. This is done as an efficiency measure to reduce doubling of appointments, time requirements in scheduling and for convenience for operators.

Special Protection Area, Superior/Hardy Area - (Ongoing) - Cooperative effort with the Lower Republican NRD to address high nitrates in a 32 square mile area which crosses district lines. Currently the LBNRD conducts operator training and educational activities because we have an Information and Education staff person, and LRNRD conducts the water sampling requirements and handles operator annual reports because of their technical expertise.

Little Blue Public Water Project - (1976 - Present) Rural water project developed jointly with the Lower Big Blue NRD in 1978. Because the project over-lapped both district boundaries, the LBNRD took the leadership role and signed an Interlocal Agreement with the LBBNRD to administer the delivery and management of the entire project. Now, because of interest in a rural water project in the Beatrice area, the LBNRD has provided guidance to the Lower Big Blue NRD staff and local advisory committee to help get their project off the ground.

4. Cooperative Efforts With Other Governmental Entities:

The cooperative arrangement between the NRD and the NRCS provides that we employ the full time secretaries in the county field offices to help administer district programs close to the field needs. The NRD also provides funds for technical assistance to aid in design and layout for conservation practices which are being implemented as a result of district originated cost-share programs. The NRCS on the other hand provides office space, vehicles, equipment and supplies for these employees to do their work to everyone's benefit.

The district cooperates with cities to address specific resources problems. **An example is the McNish Park Improvement Project, Fairbury (1997)**- The district provided cost assistance for construction and made application to NDEQ for 319 Water Quality funding for a unique urban erosion demonstration project. Also, the sponsors worked with the local Wal-Mart to raise public awareness of effects of urban runoff from parking lots into the park and obtained some funding through a Wal-Mart-originated battery recycling project for publicity. Total cost was \$24,000; DEQ's share - \$5,000, City and District split the remainder or about \$9,500 each.

In cooperation with counties, the NRD offers assistance for road dams, 404 permit applications and various other projects. **The Nuckolls County Hazard Mitigation Project - (1994 - 1996) is an example of this type of venture.** - The district covered engineering costs and provided assistance for obtaining 404 permits to complete a hazard mitigation project with Nuckolls County and FEMA. The project was designed to protect three new county bridges which were damaged slightly in the 1993 flood. The NRDs cost was \$3,675 but the benefits in terms of positive relations and public perception was great.

5. Future Ideas For Improving Entity Cooperation to Become More Efficient:

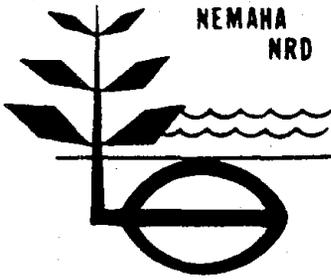
Frankly, I believe the NRDs do an excellent job of cooperating on projects and programs.

I believe the process initiated by the NRDs to develop the suggested guidelines for the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund for NRC consideration, went well and was an efficient and effective approach. This approach should be used if similar opportunities evolve in the future.

I've often thought that it would be nice if several district's could hire and share an engineer for design of smaller practices which fall in the cracks between what NRCS will do and what justifies a consulting firm to design; such things as bank erosion protection, drainage outlet structures, road dams, etc.. Such a person may be able to assist county road departments or villages with small projects as well and actually help local governments save costs.

One of the areas that our staff feels there could be an improvement in efficiency is in our Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. This is a very popular program within our district. Currently there is a back log of contracts waiting for approval. Because the Game and Parks Commission's area representative has a large area to cover, it has been difficult for him to inspect and assess projects in a timely manner. We feel the program has suffered as a result.

We have occasionally experienced other entities that are not very cooperative for one reason or another, but I expect some of the problem are personalities, not a result of opportunities. We will continue to work with all entities where we feel cooperative efforts can be of benefit to our constituents..



nemaha

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

125 Jackson • P.O. Box 717 • Tecumseh, Nebraska 68450

Telephone: (402) 335-3325 • Fax: (402) 335-3265

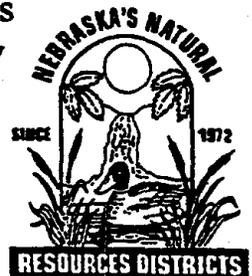
December 4, 1997

Vince Kramper, LB 1085 Committee Chair
% Natural Resources Commission
310 Centennial Mall South
P.O. Box 94876
Lincoln, NE 68509-4876

Dear Vince:

Following is a response to your questionnaire:

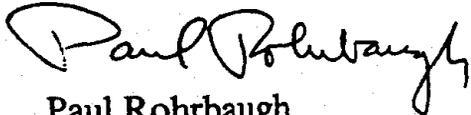
1. The Nemaha NRD is continually striving to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Internally we restructure our staff organization to take advantage of individual strengths and teamwork, utilize computerization to free up staff time for projects, and coordinate travel and projects to minimize travel expenses. We also use in-house training to keep skills current while reducing costs. The staff is also encouraged to coordinate scheduling to take advantage of favorable weather or other timing factors. External to the staff operation we seek as many partnerships and grant funds as possible.
2. Two things that the NRD can do, and are planned, is to make greater use of a voice mail/answering system and computer link ups with NRC and others.
3. One of the greatest examples of cooperation between NRDs is through the state association. Not only do staff from different NRDs get together to share information and do joint projects but specific programs such as trees, WHIP, and Chemigation are sometimes shared. Do not underestimate this cooperation that we tend to take for granted. This saves each District thousands of dollars per year and is not routinely done by counties or school districts.



4. The NRDs work closely with the counties. We have built numerous road structures with the counties that have saved the counties money as well as provided grade stabilization and flood control. Other components of our watershed development as well as land treatment have been coordinated with the counties for mutual benefits. We also work closely with the NRCS, the Corps of Engineers, State Forest Service, the Game and Parks Commission, County Extension, and DEQ which allows programs to be carried out that could not be done independently.
5. NRDs and other units of local government need to continue to maintain strong partnerships, strive to make programs and projects compatible, identify and reduce duplication of services, and do a better job of directing the public to the agency that can help them.

I hope that this summary will be helpful to you. If you have any questions I would be pleased to meet with you.

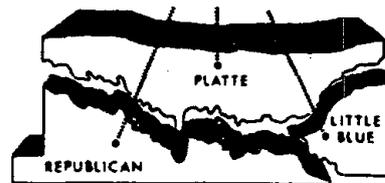
Sincerely,



Paul Rohrbaugh
General Manager

Tri-Basin NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

1308 Second Street
Holdrege, Nebraska 68949
Telephone (308) 995-6688
Fax (308) 995-6992



Memo

General Manager
JOHN THORBURN

To: Mr. Vince Kramper, LB 1085 committee chairman

Chairman
KAY LAVENE
Bertrand, Nebraska

From: John Thorburn, Tri-Basin NRD

John Thorburn

CC: TBNRD Directors

Vice Chairman
DAVID NELSON
Upland, Nebraska

Date: 12/04/97

Re: LB 1085 survey

Secretary
PHYLLIS JOHNSON
Bertrand, Nebraska

Treasurer
BRADLEY LUNDEEN
Wilcox, Nebraska

Please find enclosed Tri-Basin NRD's response to your survey request. If you have questions, or you need additional information, feel free to contact me at the number listed above.

RUSSELL IDEAL
Loomis, Nebraska

I really appreciate all the work that your committee has done on behalf of the NRDs by conducting these studies. I realize what a thankless job this has been for you folks. In spite of that, you have made a good effort to represent the views and concerns of both large and small districts. Thank you.

HAROLD D. ERICKSON
Holdrege, Nebraska

DICK HELMS
Arapahoe, Nebraska

GARY LINDSTROM
Wilcox, Nebraska

DAVID NICKEL
Kearney, Nebraska

DAVID OLSEN
Minden, Nebraska

DAVID RAFFETY
Kearney, Nebraska

LARRY REYNOLDS
Lexington, Nebraska

RAY WINZ
Holdrege, Nebraska

Natural Resources Districts have always been closely associated with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Tri-Basin provides three field office secretaries to NRCS offices within the district. The secretaries free up NRCS technicians so that they can spend more time in the field working with constituents. We also cooperatively fund an NRCS Irrigation Water Management Specialist (IWMS) position, along with Central Public Power and Irrigation District (CNPPID). This specialist provides assistance to help farmers improve the efficiency of their irrigation systems and their irrigation methods. Our IWMS position is a great cooperative success story. Through his efforts, we have provided information to hundreds of farmers and saved millions of gallons of groundwater and surface water.

CNPPID and Tri-Basin are currently working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on a project to improve water management at Funk Waterfowl Production Area. This project involves creating an outlet for the Funk Lagoon basin and clearing five miles of creek channel. The project is being constructed by CNPPID, with operations and maintenance work to be done by Tri-Basin and Fish and Wildlife. Farmers along Lost Creek will also benefit from improved drainage.

A final example of cooperation between units of government involves Tri-Basin, the Rainwater Basin Joint Venture (RBJV, which is itself a good example of inter-agency cooperation) and the City of Holdrege. The city would like to convert their old landfill into a park. Adjacent to the landfill is a large wetland, which was drained in the 1970's. Tri-Basin is currently working with the city and RBJV to restore the wetland. The city and the NRD have also applied for an Environmental Trust grant to aid the restoration, and to develop facilities for handicapped accessible wildlife viewing.

5. Please provide your ideas of how NRDs could better cooperate with other NRDs and other units of local government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.

There are always opportunities to increase "horizontal integration" and to reduce redundancy of services between local units of government. Some smaller local government agencies, such as county weed superintendents, county surveyors and drainage districts could be phased out and their functions absorbed by NRDs without great difficulty. There is also a need for increased regular communication between municipalities, counties and NRDs. Undoubtedly, the information provided by this survey, if it is distributed to NRDs, will also give us some new ideas.

TWIN PLATTE

NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

UNITED NEBRASKA BANK CENTER
111 SOUTH DEWEY STREET
P.O. BOX 1347
NORTH PLATTE, NEBRASKA 69103-1347
PHONE 308/535-8000

December 7, 1997

Vince Kramper
NE Natural Resources Commission
P O Box 94876
Lincoln NE 68509-4876

Dear Vince:

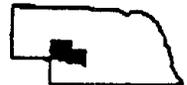
I am responding to your letter dated November 18, 1997 requesting information for the LB 1085 Committee in regard to the second LB 1085 study which is to address issues of efficiency, duplication and program effectiveness.

1. **Please list two or more things that your Natural Resources District has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.**

The utilization of computer technology has significantly increased the efficiency for the District. The utilization of computer technology has allowed the District to reduce the number of support personnel and has allowed the District to continue to add programs as well as to maintain exiting programs without adding additional technical personnel funded by the District. The utilization of computer technology has also increased the effectiveness in the delivery of programs.

The utilization of cellular phones has increased the efficiency for the District. As an example, the utilization of cellular phones allows the personnel in the field to add appointments and reduces the need for return trips. The utilization of cellular phones has also increased the effectiveness in the delivery of programs.

The Chemigation Program inspections procedure has been changed to allow the rotation of inspections scheduled to include all of a producers sites in one year, rather than the previous method that rotated the inspections such that a producer could have a site inspected every year. The previous method was originally thought to be necessary to insure compliance, but experience has proven that all the inspections for a producer can be done in one year which improved the efficiency of the District's operation as well as the efficiency of the producers time.



Tri-Basin NRD Response to LB 1085
Phase II Survey Request

1. Please list two or more things that your NRD has done to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

The staff and directors of Tri-Basin NRD constantly strive to keep the NRD operating at peak efficiency and to ensure that the greatest possible return is realized for every tax dollar spent. For example, our NRD, in cooperation with local NRCS personnel, has developed a system to rate cost-share applications. This system allows us to compare the projected conservation benefits of one application against another. The rating system also produces a cost to benefit ratio for each application. This system helps us to select those applications which will provide the greatest conservation benefits for the lowest cost. The rating system is used to prioritize expenditures of NSWCP (\$75,000/FY1997-98) and local cost-share funds (\$21,000/FY 1997-98).

Another example of improving operational efficiency is our conservation tree mulch laying program. Conservation mulch is a biodegradable plastic that is laid down on new tree plantings to conserve water and prevent weed and grass competition. The program has always been a moneymaker for the district, but it was difficult to find temporary help to man a crew. There were also considerable expenses for insurance and equipment.

We hired a contractor to lay mulch in 1997. This allowed us to continue to provide this important service, saved the NRD more than \$20,000 in expenses in FY 1996-97 and still turned a profit for the district. Comparable savings are expected in the current fiscal year.

We have also saved our constituents money simply by consulting with them on a regular basis. Tri-Basin NRD operates four Improvement Project Areas (IPAs) to improve cropland drainage. The district maintains the drainage ditches and assesses benefited landowners for expenses. By meeting regularly with our IPA constituents, we found that the most effective way to maintain these ditches was to target a few trouble spots each year, rather than clean out ditches on a set schedule. While it is difficult to precisely quantify the savings achieved through targeted maintenance, they would likely amount to several thousand dollars a year.

I could list several other more mundane, but significant cost saving strategies. These include purchasing supplies in bulk quantities when possible, buying office equipment from state and federal surplus, and pursuing grant funds for special projects.

2. Please list two or more things that you feel your NRD could do to increase efficiency and/or effectiveness.

Vince Kramper, NE Natural Resources Commission
December 7, 1997 - Page 3

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District recently built a water model in a trailer that was funded by a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant. The trailer has been used throughout the Twin Platte Natural Resources District as well as in the Central Platte Natural Resources District and the Upper Loup Natural Resources District. I anticipate that the trailer will continue to be used in all of our neighboring Natural Resources Districts.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District is cooperating with the Central Platte, Tri-Basin, South Platte and North Platte Natural Resources Districts in a application to the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund for a project titled "Cooperative Hydrology of the Platte River". If funding is approved by the Environmental Trust Fund, the three year project would receive funding from the five Natural Resources Districts as well as other sponsors and partners and would be carried out by the five Natural Resources Districts as well as other sponsors and partners.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Middle Republican Natural Resources District and in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and U.S. Geological Survey, has developed the Platte/Republican Ground Water Computer model.

The Twin Platte Natural Resources District, in cooperation with the Upper Loup Natural Resources District and in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and U.S. Geological Survey, has developed the South Central Sandhills Ground Water Computer model.

The Middle Republican Natural Resources District cooperates with the Twin Platte Natural Resources District in providing Secretarial support in the North Platte Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office.

4. **Please list examples of cooperative efforts that your Natural Resources District has undertaken with other units of government that have resulted in more efficient or effective operations.**

Refer to the attached list title "Twin Platte Natural Resources District - Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies".

5. **Please provide your ideas of how Natural Resources Districts could better cooperate with other Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner.**

Vince Kramper, NE Natural Resources Commission
December 7, 1997 - Page 4

Although I believe that there is always ways to improve any operation, I am finding it difficult to come up with ideas of how Natural Resources Districts could better cooperate with other Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government to provide services to the public in a more efficient and/or effective manner, as I continually ask myself this question and when I have had ideas, I have sought to implement them where possible or feasible. The only idea that I have at this time is I believe that Natural Resources Districts and other local units of government could realize financial savings and efficiencies and improve operations and effectiveness by sharing purchases and utilization of computer software.

I believe that the Twin Platte Natural Resources District is carrying out excellent cost effective programs.

I appreciated the opportunity to provide you information in regard to the Commission's study of Natural Resources Districts. I would be happy to discuss the activities of the District with you or the Special Committee you chair or provide additional information.

Sincerely,



Kent O. Miller, P.E.
General Manager

Enclosure

cc+encl. Mike Mosel, NARD Board President
Richard Beran, Lower Loup NRD
John Turnbull, Upper Big Blue NRD
LeRoy Pieper, NNRC
Richard Mercer, NNRC
Clifford Welsh, NNRC
Dean Edson, NARD

KOM:AS:VK120897.WPS

TWIN PLATTE NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT
 Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies

12-08-1997 08:30AM FRUIT TWIN PLATTE NRD 10 2 1 484 514 246 1.000

		IN COOPERATION WITH	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	TWIN PLATTE NRD SERVICES
stry Program	Provide funding and tec planting in the City.			
stry Program	Provide funding and tec planting in the City.			
er Drainage	Funded a design for a st	City of Ogallala	Ogallala Watershed	Prepared and facilitated submitting the application to the Nebraska Resources Development Fund. Provided funds for the local cost-share for the dams built.
stry Program	Provide funding and tec planting in the City.			
er Drainage	Funded a design for a st	City of Ogallala	Ogallala Watershed	Initiated and facilitated the preparation of the Flood Plain Management Study and the Natural Resources Plan and Environmental Assessment prepared by the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Provided 50% of the funds for the required aerial photography.
stry Program	Provide funding and tec planting in the City.			
shed	Initiated and facilitating Natural Resources Con drainage into the City o			
shed	Initiated and facilitated measures. Provided fu landowners costs. City landowner with mainte	City of Ogallala and Ogallala Schools	Outdoor Classroom	Initiated and continue to facilitate the development of an outdoor classroom along the South Platte River at Ogallala, NE.
		City of Ogallala	Urban Forestry Program	Provide funding and technical assistance for tree planting in the City.
ca	Assisted in the develop	City of North Platte	Storm Water Drainage	Provided funds for aerial photography.
ps	Scholarships for teache Soil and Water Conser	City of North Platte	Trails	Initiated development and design for a trails system. Provided funding. Continuing cooperation with City and Chamber Trails Committee.
ion	Information and materi for Soil and Water Con			

**Twin Platte Natural Resources District
Projects in Cooperation with Other Government Agencies**

Schools within the Twin Platte NRD	High Plains Water Expo	Coordinated by the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service in cooperation with various local agencies. An annual one day event in North Platte for middle school students.
Platte Valley Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Keith and Lincoln Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Paxton-Hershey Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
Suburban Irrigation District	Ground Water Recharge	Prepared applications and the required supporting documentation for obtaining an incidental ground water recharge water right.
University of Nebraska	Range Tours	Facilitate and provide resources in cooperation with the University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service for Range Tours for producers.
University of Nebraska	Ground Water	Provided funding and personnel assistance for development of ground water computer models.
University of Nebraska	Ground Water	Provided funding and personnel assistance for development of a ground water quality data base and monitoring program.

C-129

RECEIVED

11/5/97

DEC 05 1997

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

NEBRASKA NATURAL
RESOURCE-COMMISSION

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

No particular projects as of now but County would consider doing so as needed.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Not recently.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

No specific comments in this area but again, open to possibilities.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Our North Platte Natural Resources District does a fine job.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Our NRD provides reports and materials of interest and directs letters to the County Board as needed. No problems to date.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Usually Road structures. If conditions are right for this type of Dam, the local NRD will participate by funding the cost of CMP. Also drainage structures for relatively large areas.

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

~~Yes, drainage ditches for large areas involving local flooding.~~

Yes, Drainage ditches for large areas involving local flooding.

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Many drainage ditches that were constructed years ago with public funds in one form or another are in need of maintenance. These ditches are located on private property and really have no value toward county roads. As NRDs are contacted by private concerns on these matters, the NRDs could be more responsive.

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

Be more responsive to private owners on obsolete drainage concerns. Possibly initiate more study on small containment structures.

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

None.

L.B. 1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Has your county worked cooperatively with the NRD in your area on projects or programs of mutual interest? If so, what types of programs or projects?

Yes - Both Upper Big Blue & Central Platte - on flood control dam projects on & off county roads

2. Has your local NRD(s) ever approached your county to ask about some activities that the two governments might work on together?

Not aware

3. Do you have any ideas as to how the NRD(s) in your area could be of assistance to your county government?

Continue with financial assistance and personnel

4. Do you have any suggestions as to how your NRD(s) might improve their service to the public or how they might operate more efficiently?

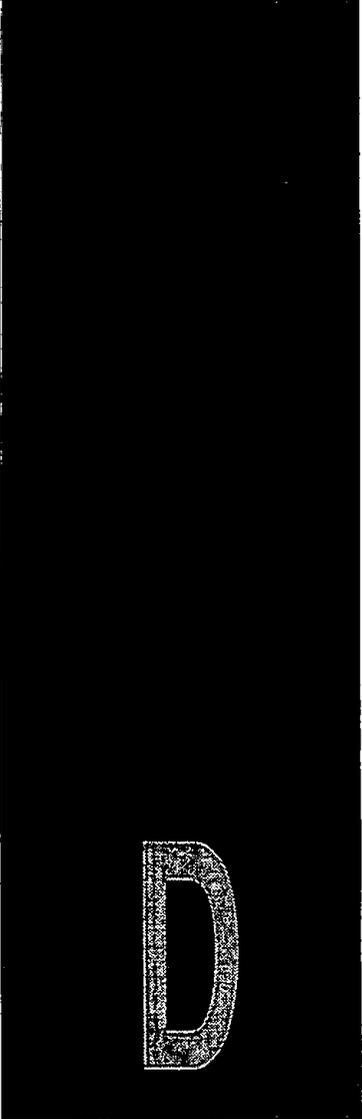
be frugal with tax dollars - legal expenses solicit public input on projects before final decisions

5. In what respects have you considered your past dealings with NRDs successful? Are there any instances where past dealings with NRDs have created any difficulties for your county?

Central Platte has been the most cooperative with Polk County on solving problems of flooding, and erosion near Platte river

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Appendix D



D

Survey of Natural Resources District Managers on NRD Accomplishments- Survey Form

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1085 QUESTIONNAIRE

NRD INFORMATION FOR THE LAST FIVE YEARS: *(July 1, 1993 through June 30, 1998)*

1. Number of trees sold _____
(whether they were planted by the NRD or by the cooperator).
2. Number of dams cost-shared by the NRD _____
3. District dollars expended on land treatment \$ _____
(not including the state NSWCP funds).
4. Number and miles of recreational trails in which the NRD participated:
(either through sponsorship, financial assistance or technical assistance).

Number	Miles
--------	-------

5. Number of road structures in which the NRD participated with local governments.

6. Flood Plain Involvement (buyout programs, technical assistance on zoning, permit review, etc.) _____
7. Number and miles of channel improvements.

Number	Miles
--------	-------

8. Number of public use areas in which the NRD provided assistance to other governmental units (city parks, etc.) _____
9. Well permits issued in each of the last FIVE Years:
(for those NRDs that are responsible for permitting wells)

1993 _____ 1994 _____ 1995 _____ 1996 _____ 1997 _____

10. Other _____

NRD INFORMATION FOR THE LAST YEAR OR CURRENT STATUS:

1. Number of wells currently being monitored for: quality _____
quantity _____
2. Current number and acres of public use areas being maintained.

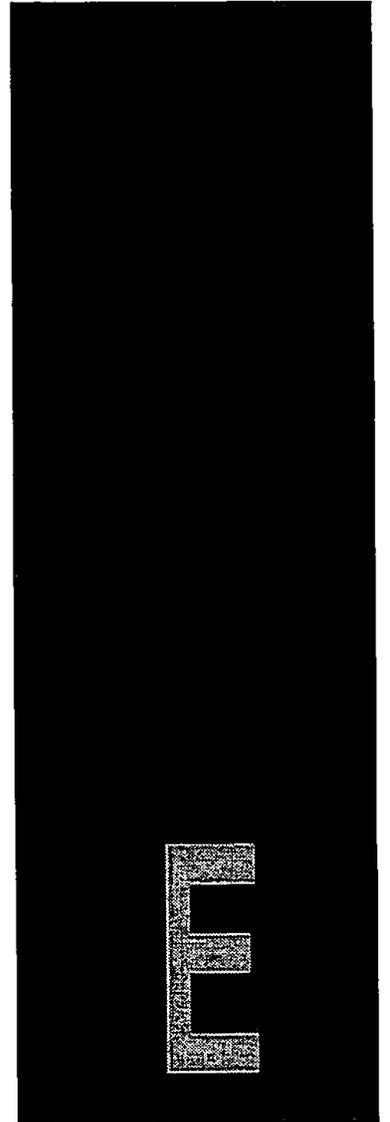
Number	Acres
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3. Number of chemigation permits issued in *Calendar Year 1997*. _____
4. Number of research projects in which the NRD is currently participating.

5. Other Projects & Programs: _____

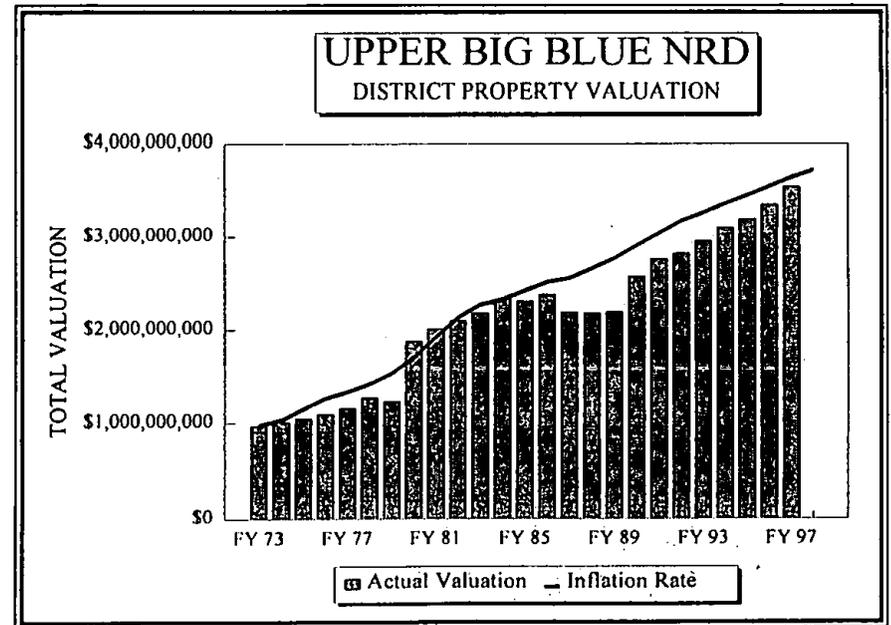
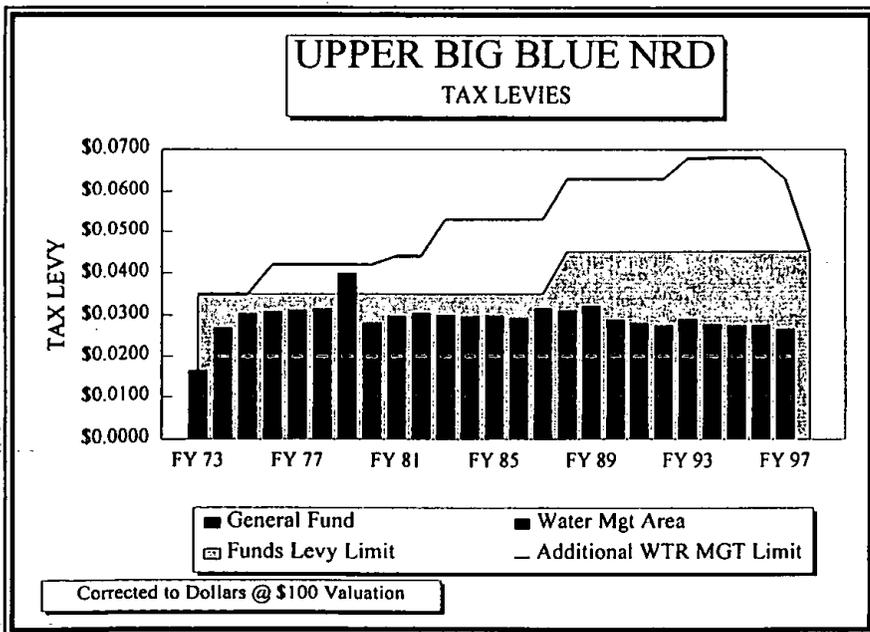
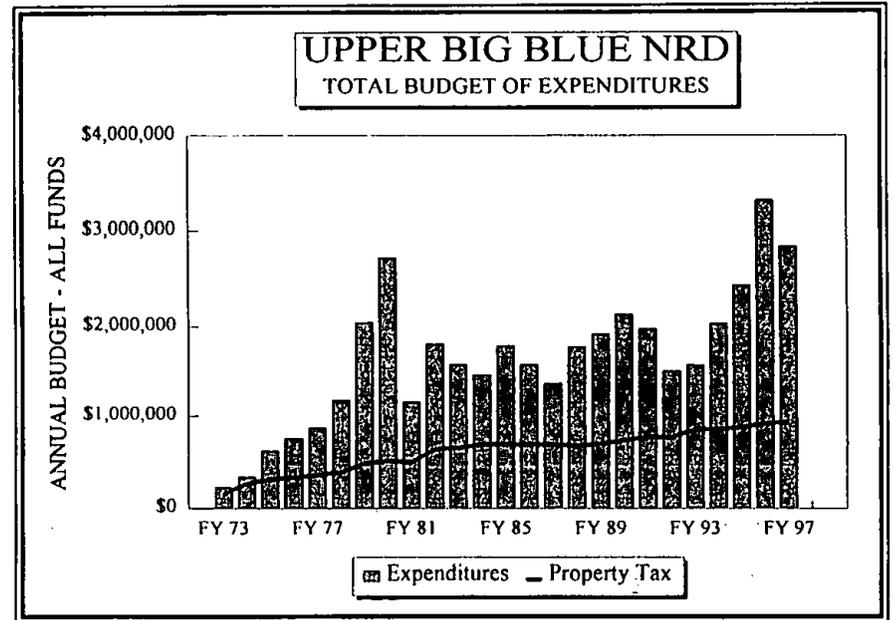
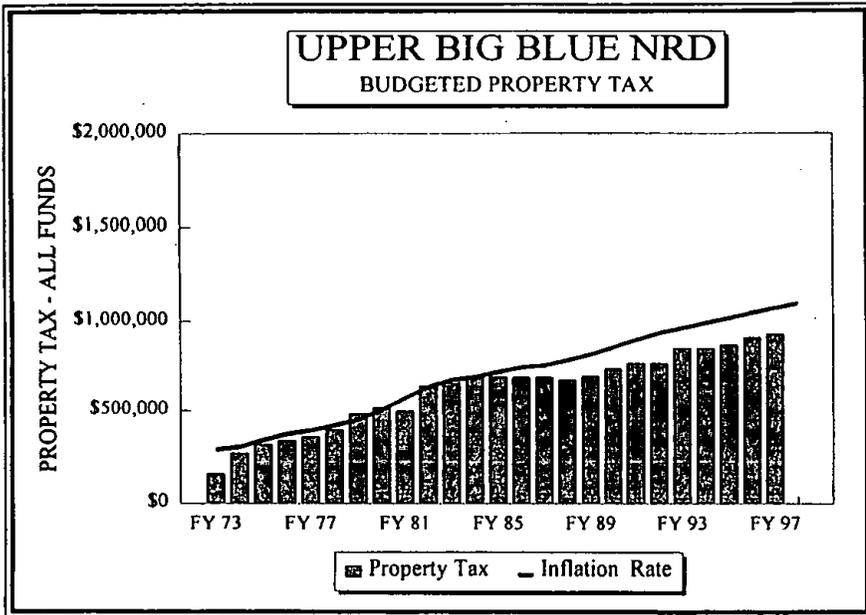
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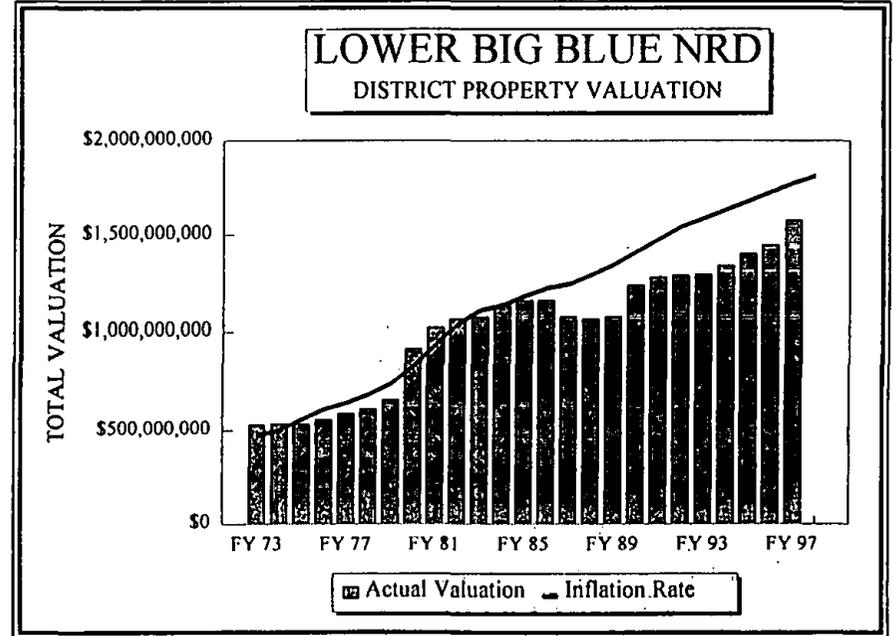
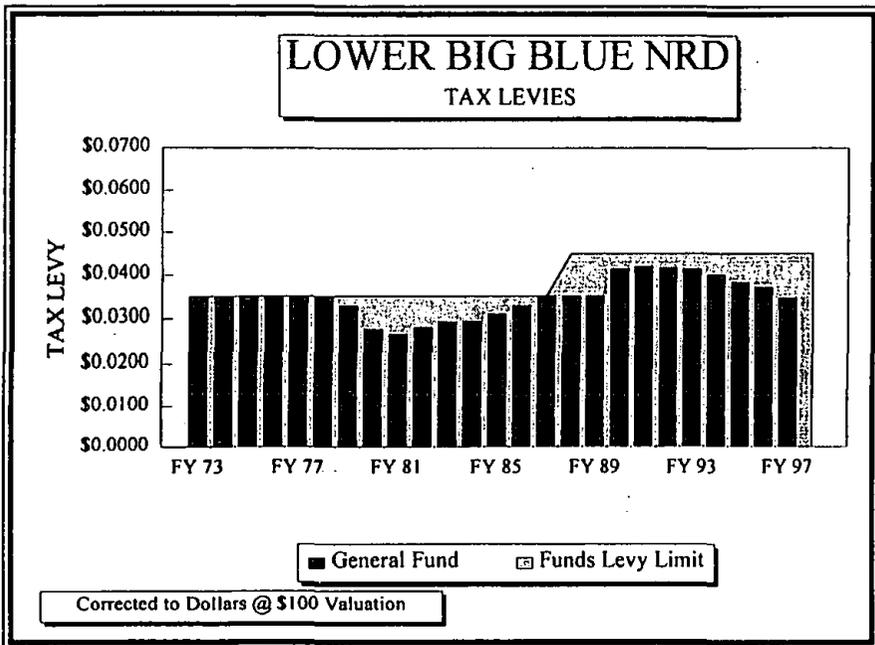
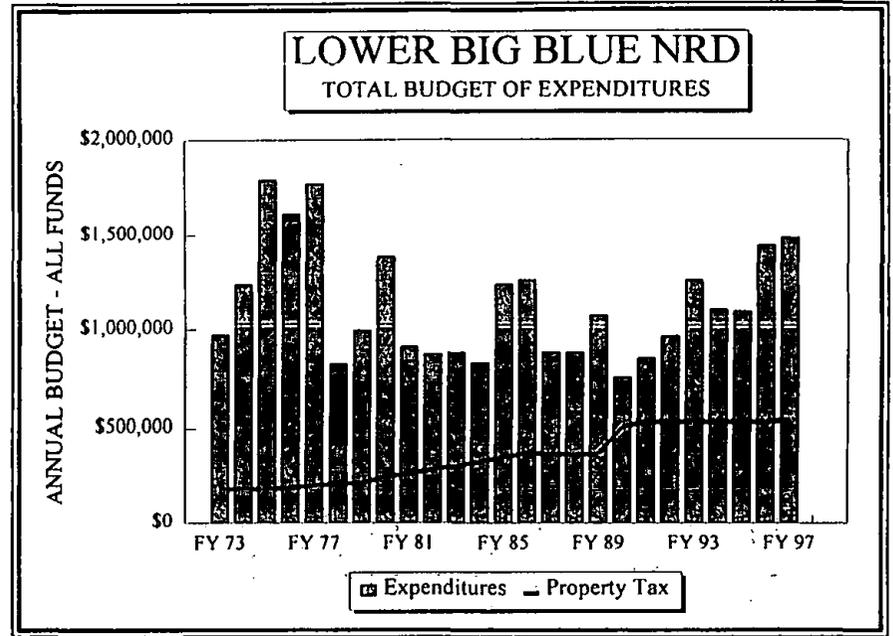
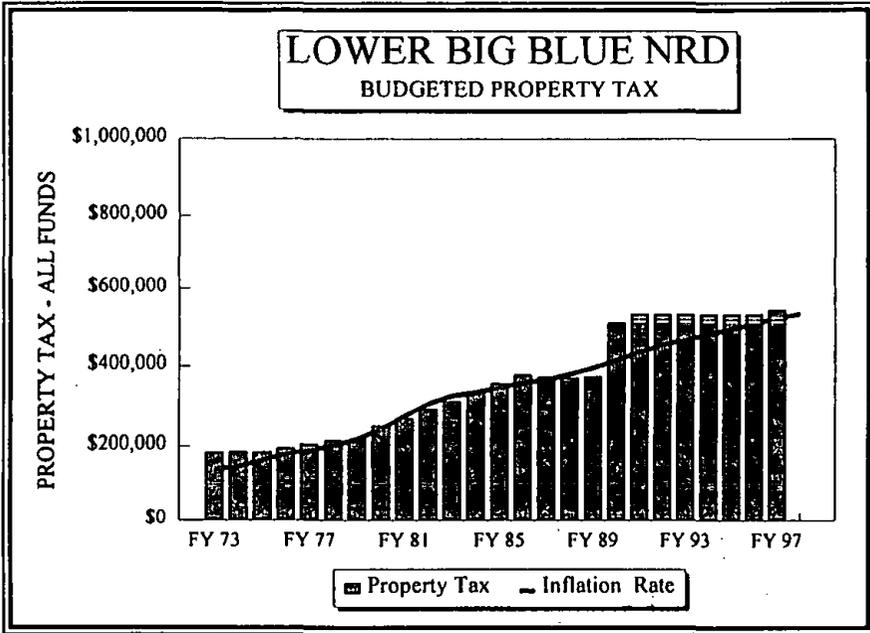
Appendix E

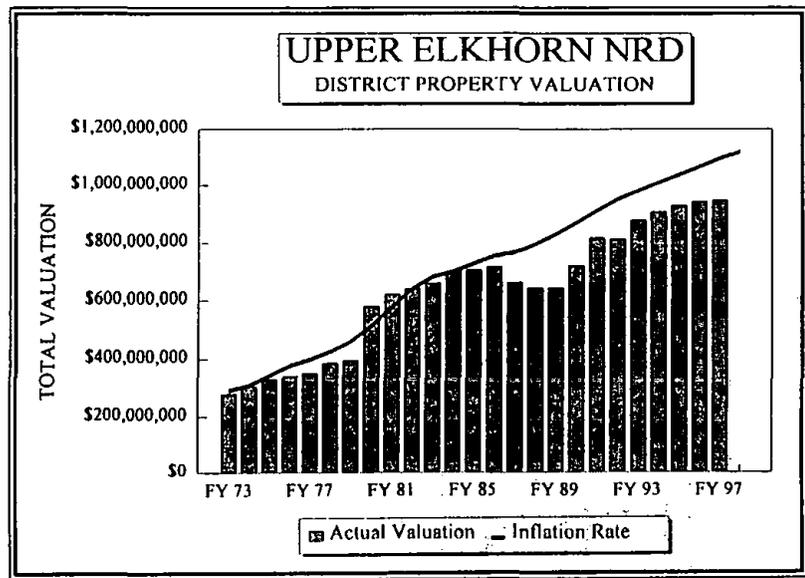
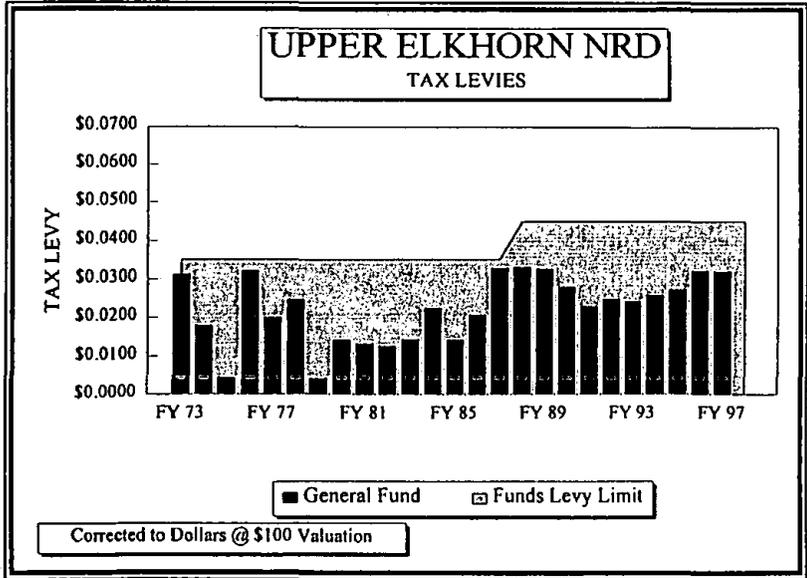
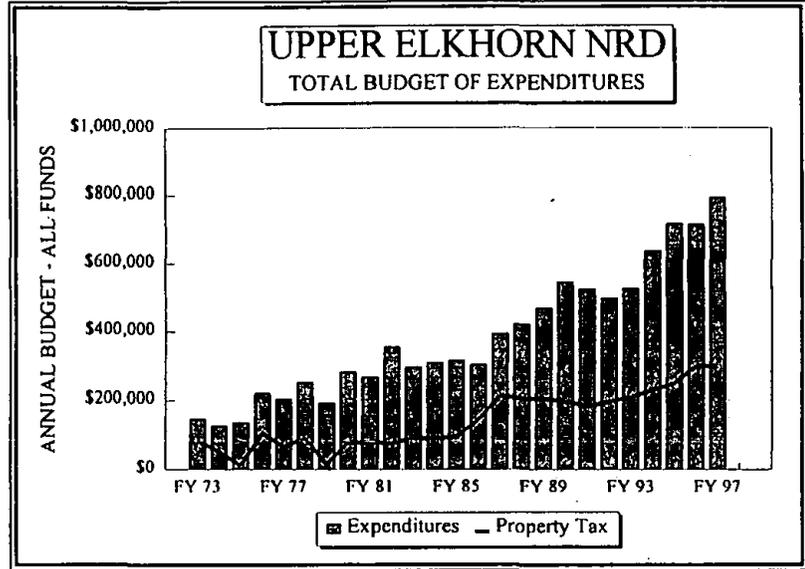
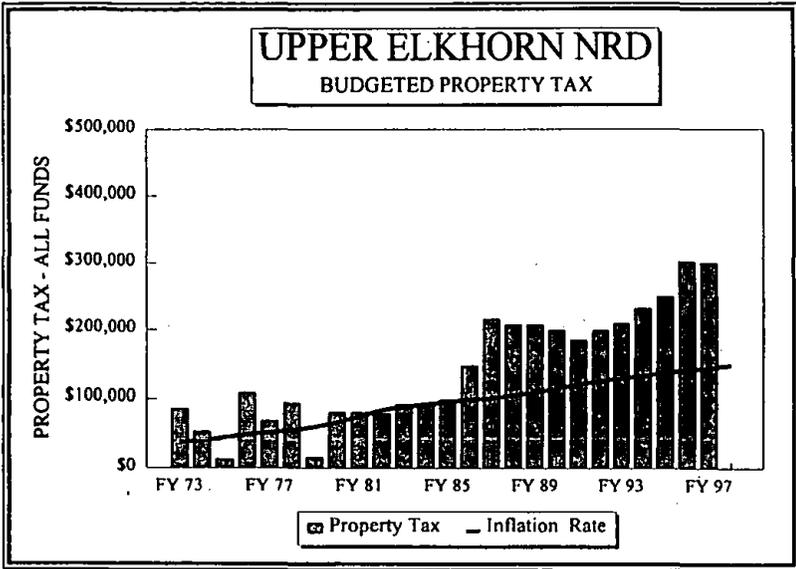


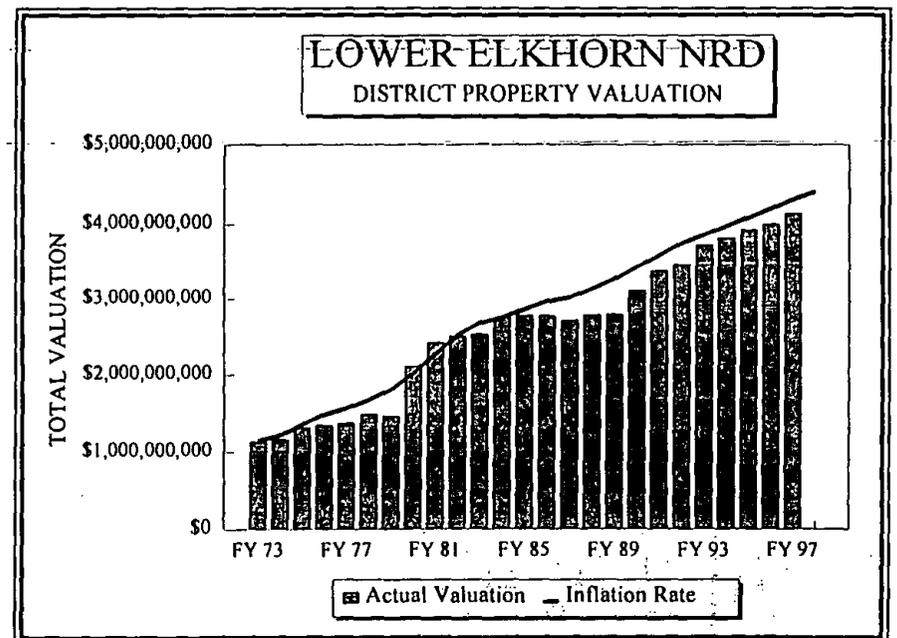
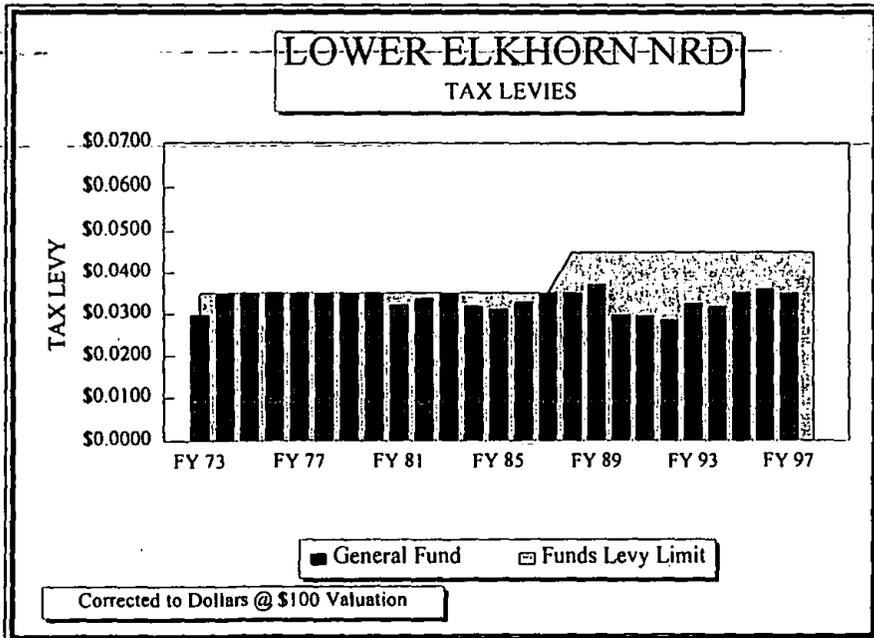
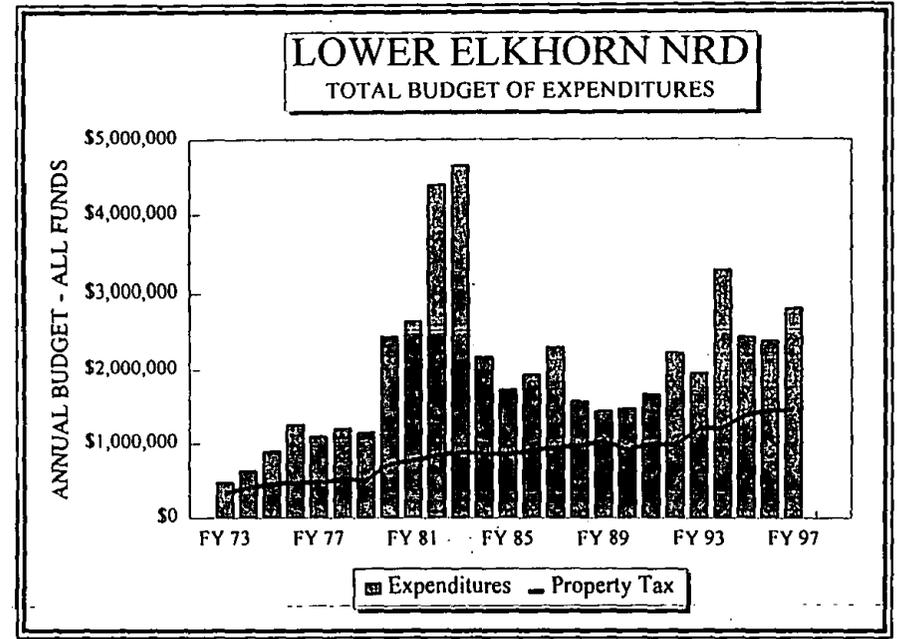
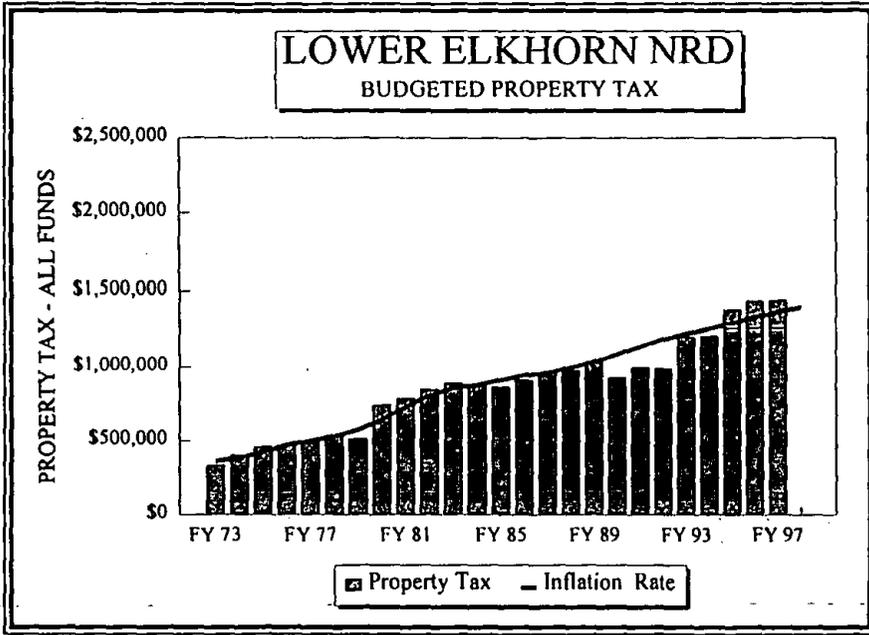
Graphs of Natural Resources District Fiscal Information

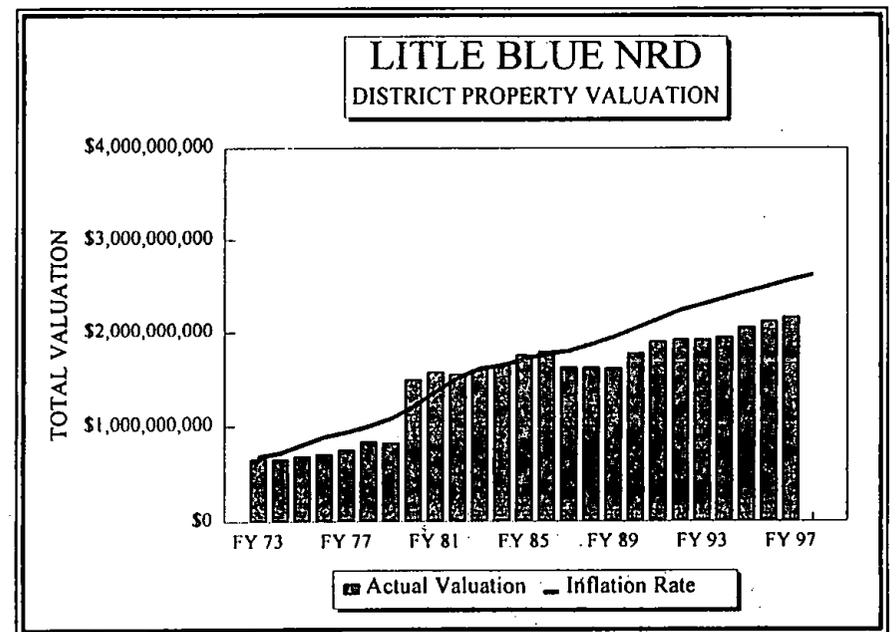
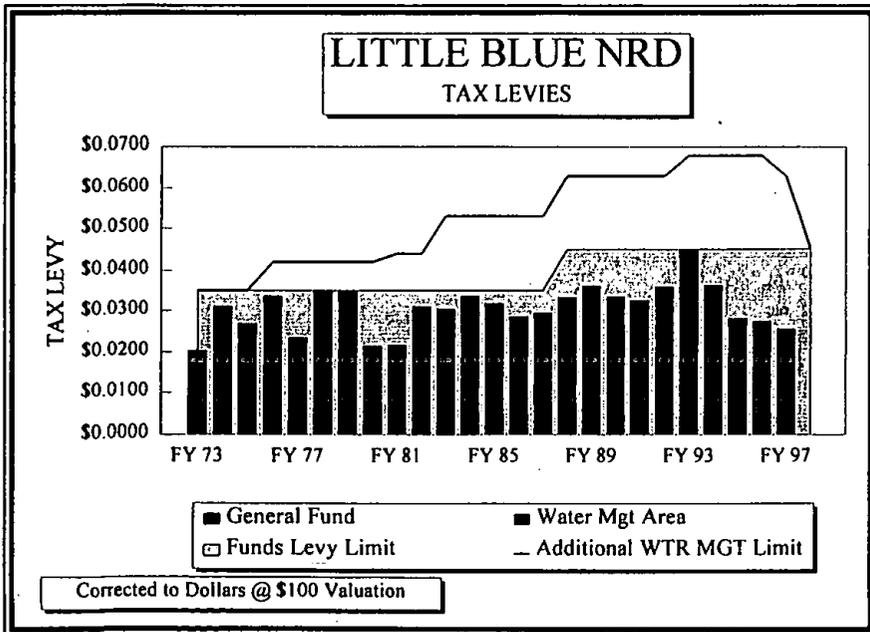
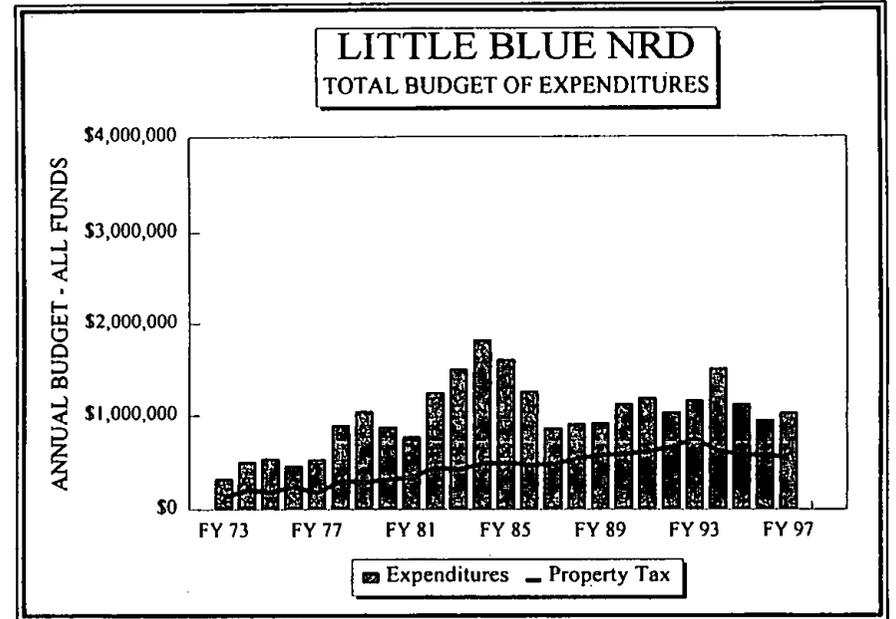
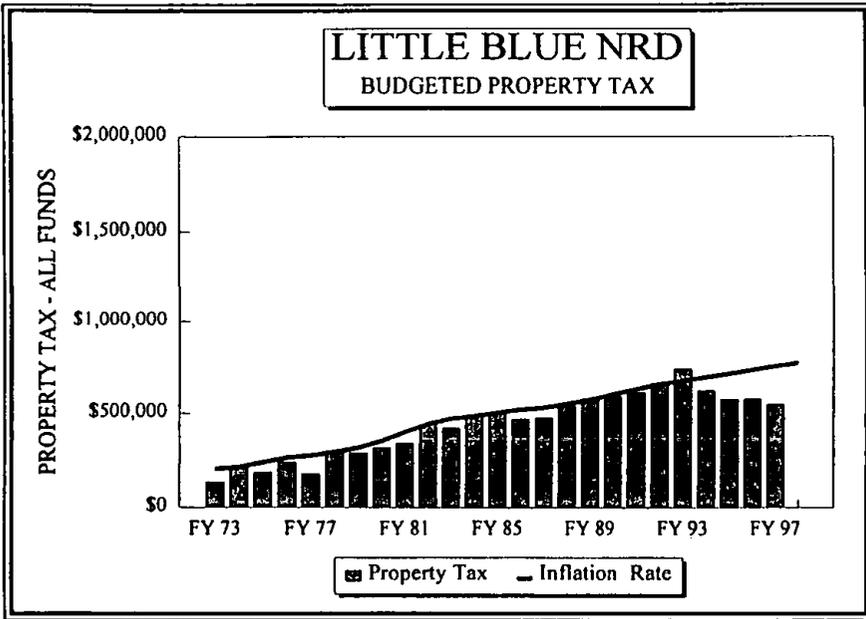
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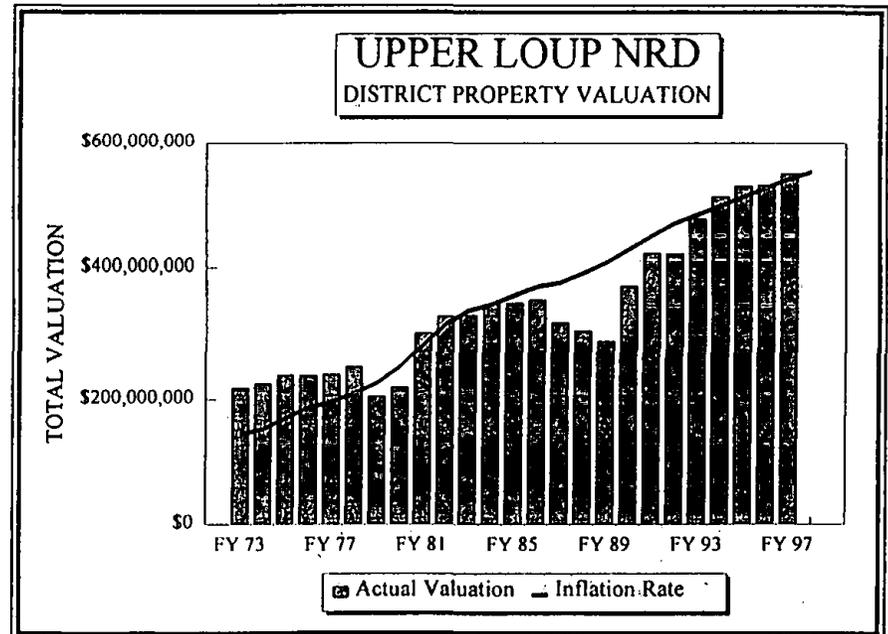
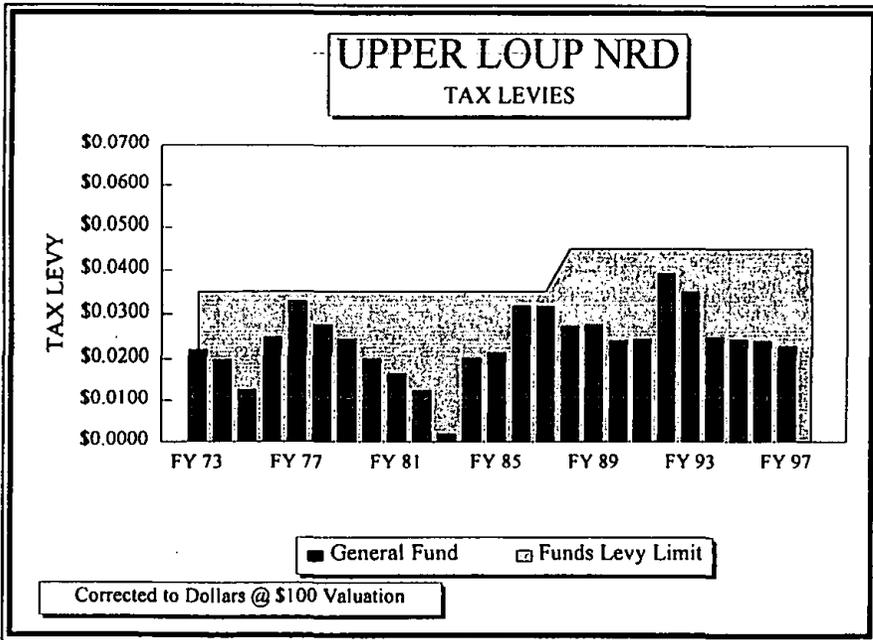
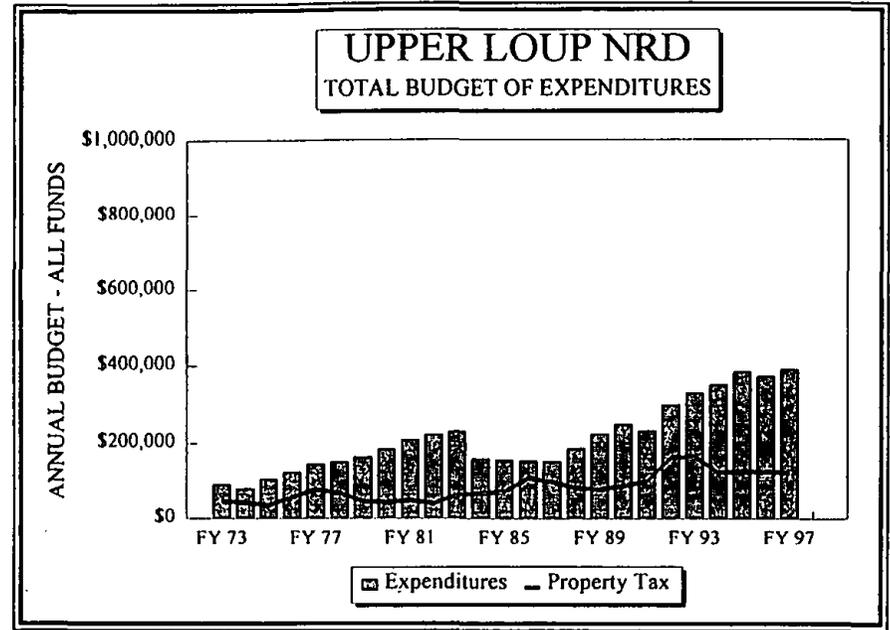
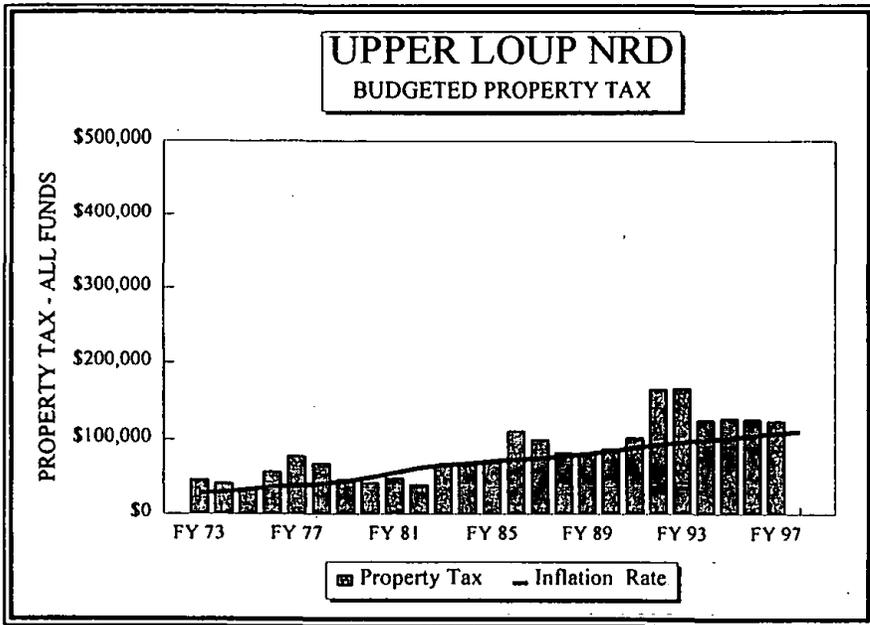


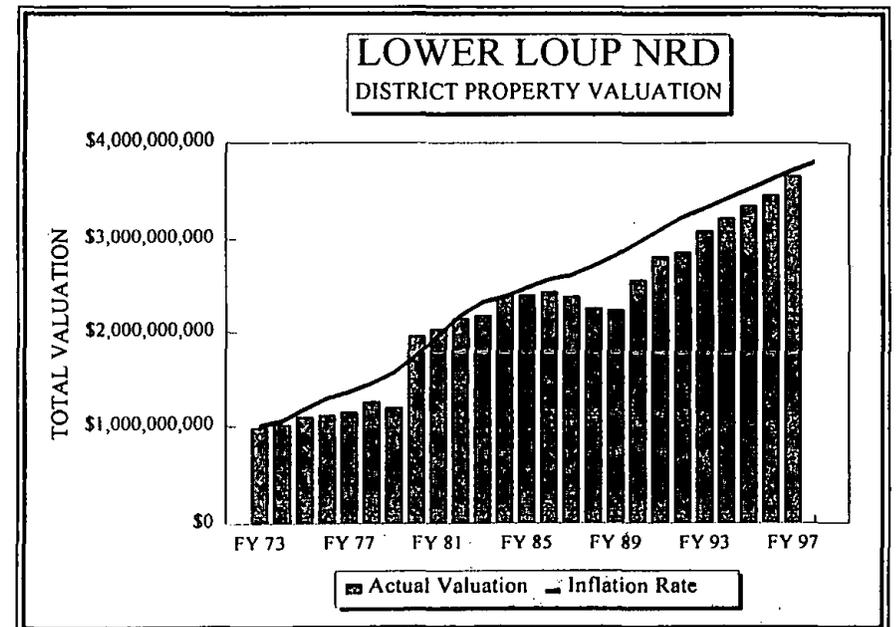
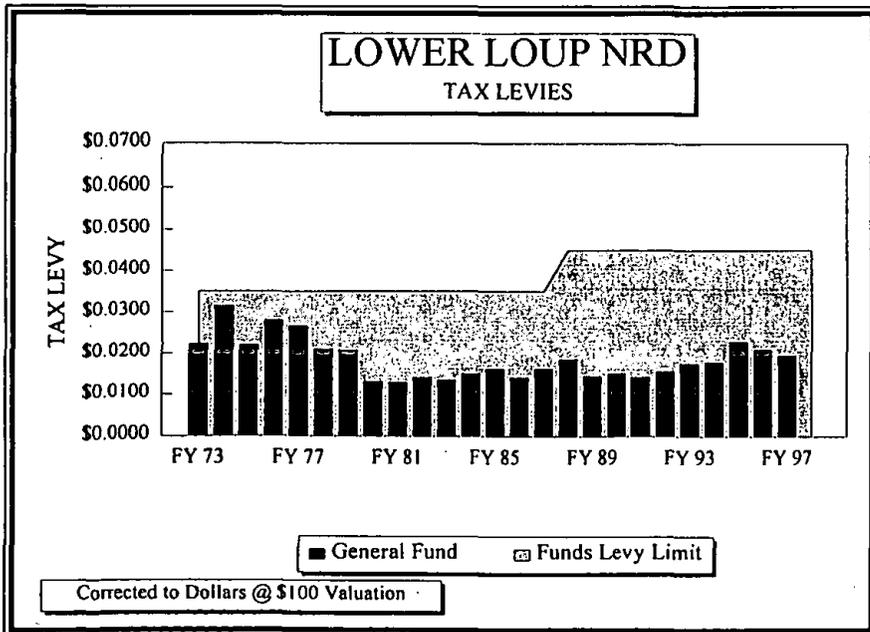
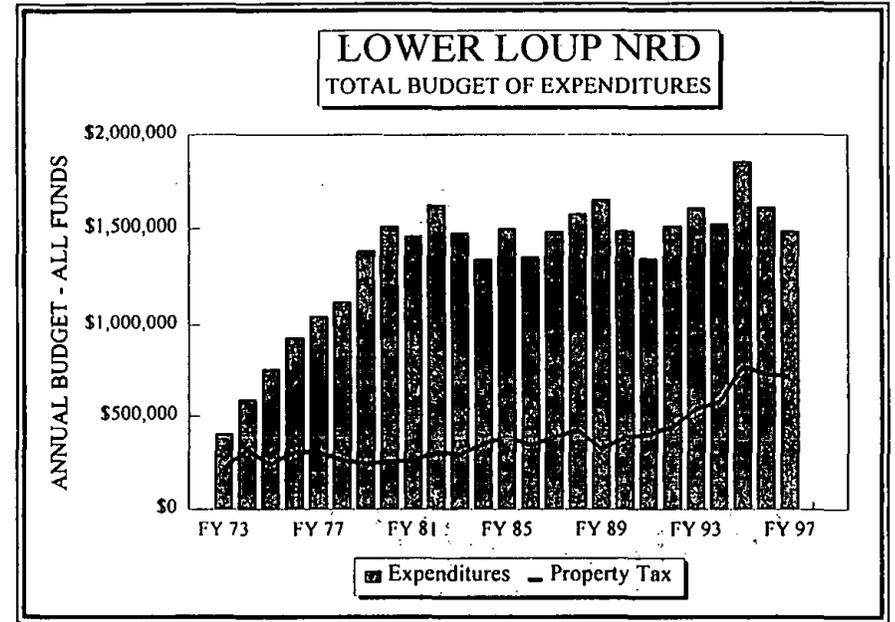
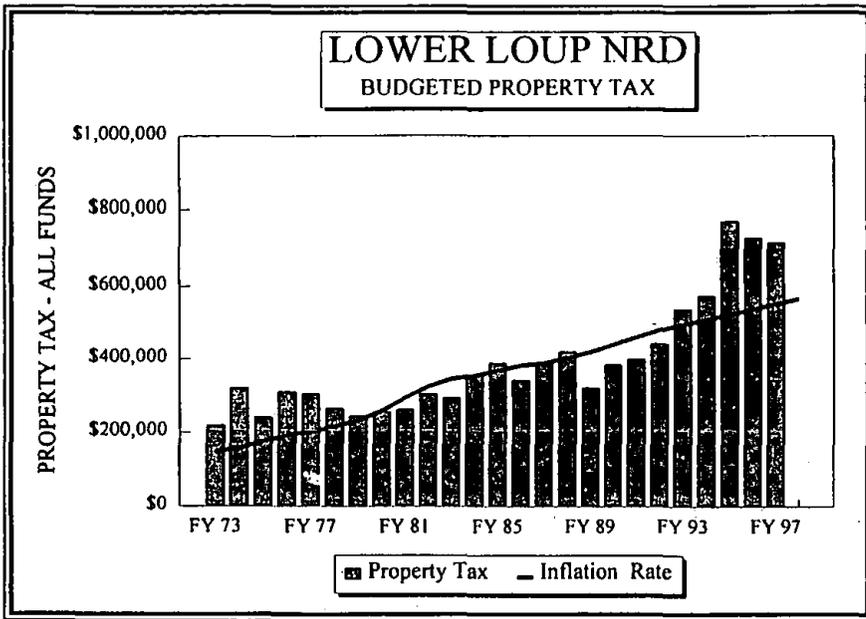


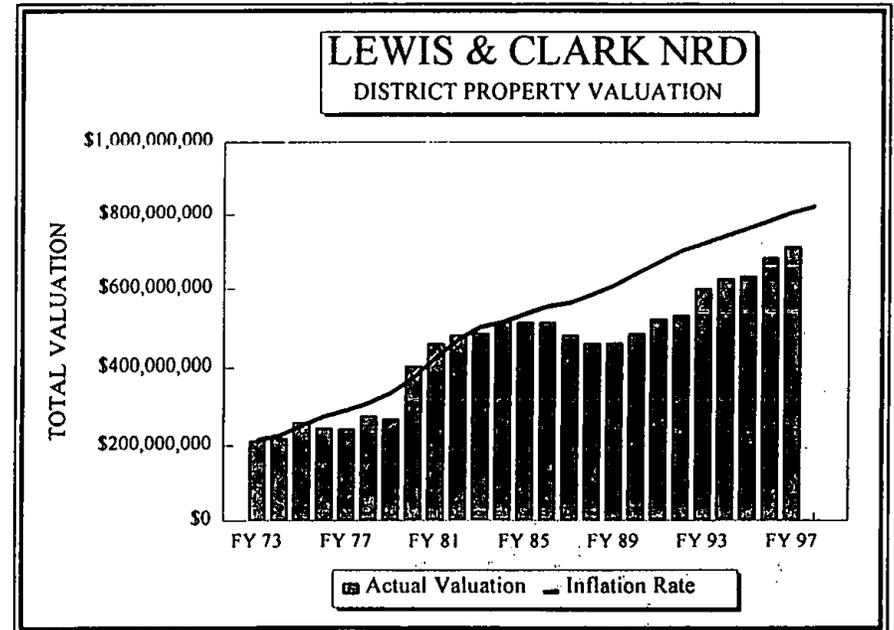
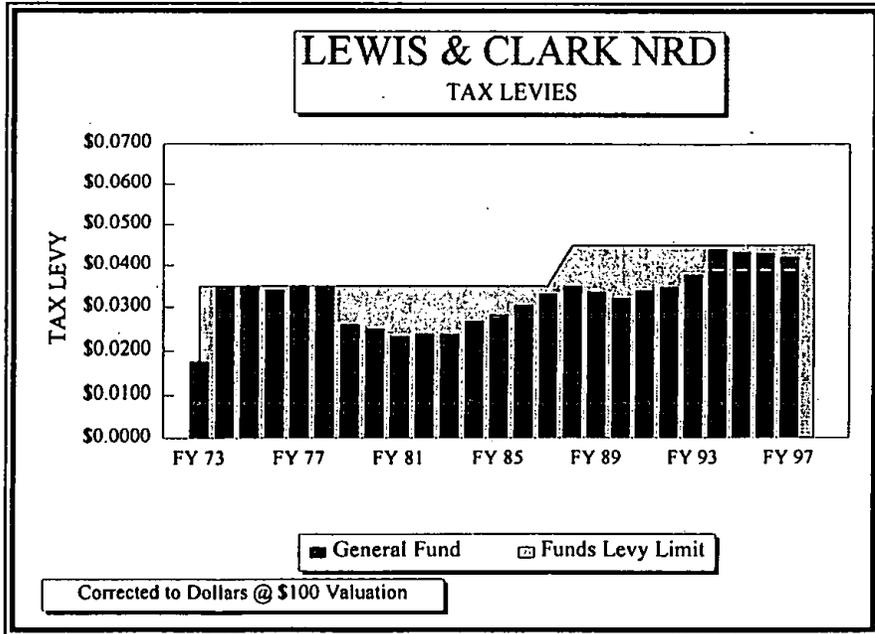
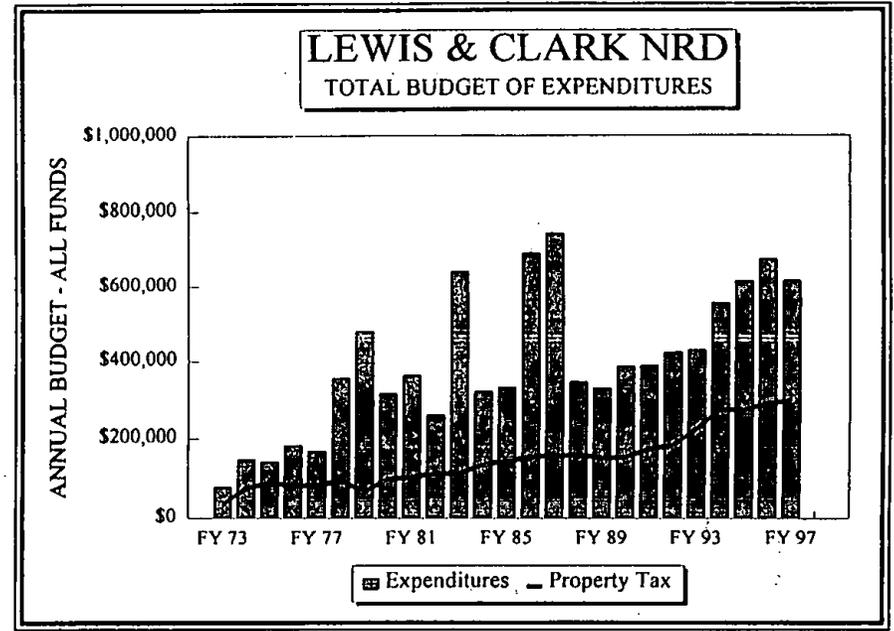
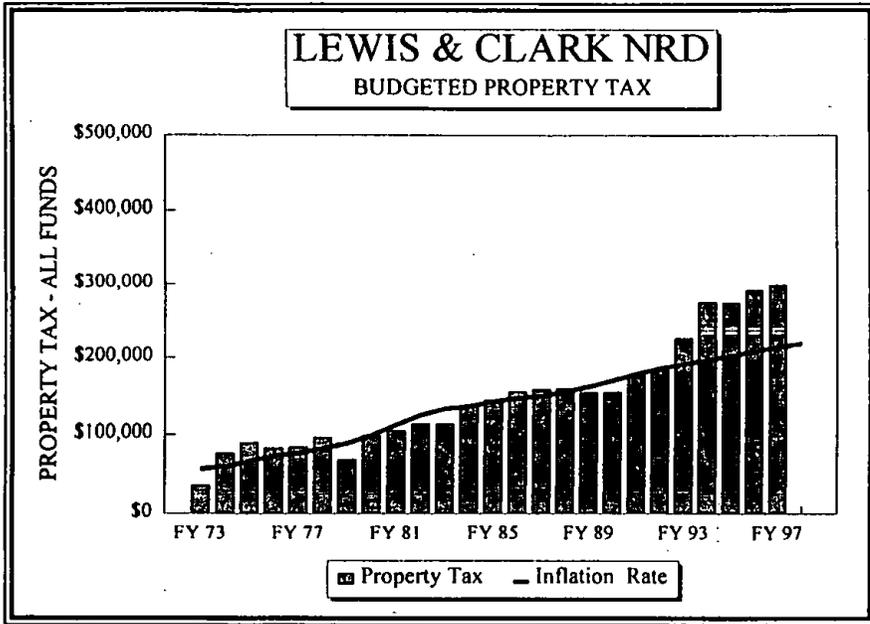


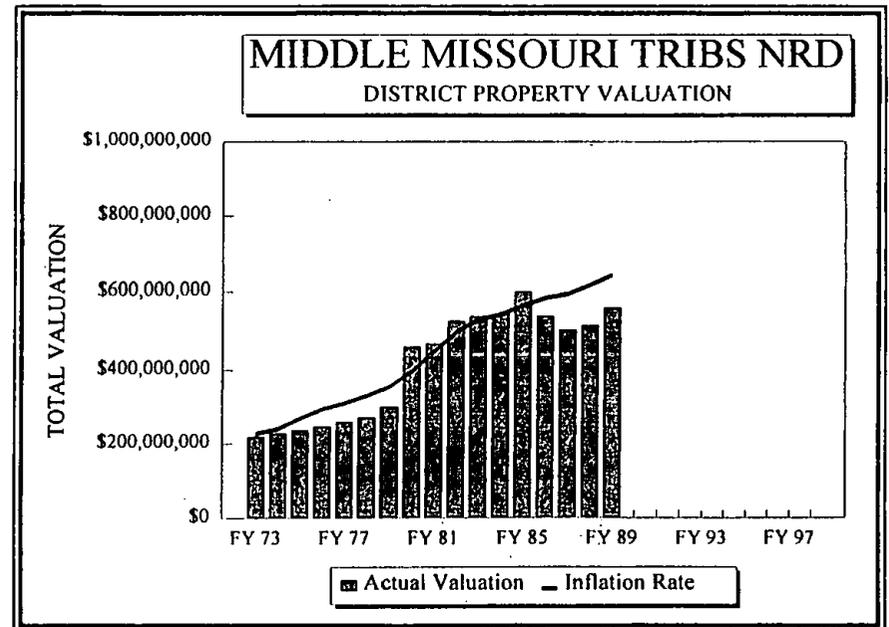
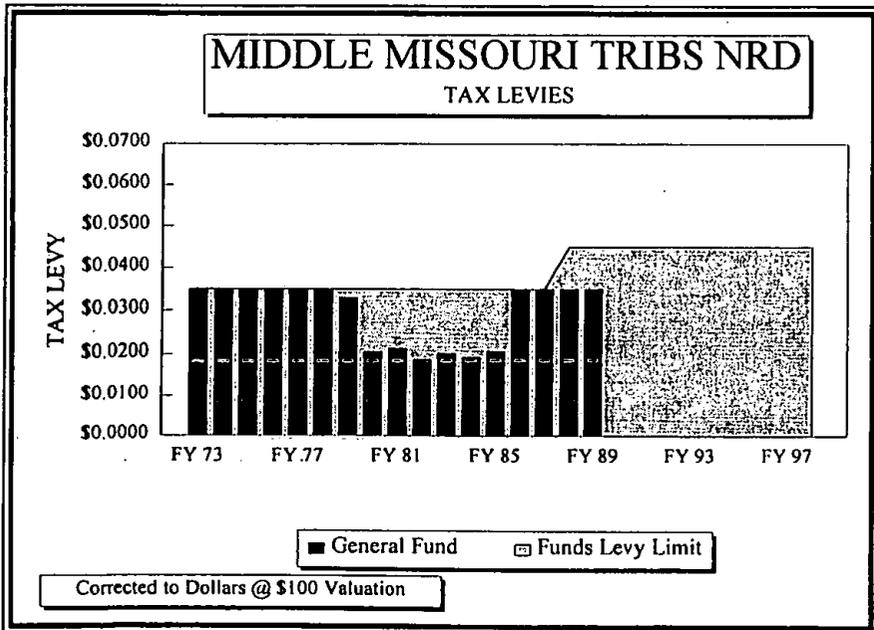
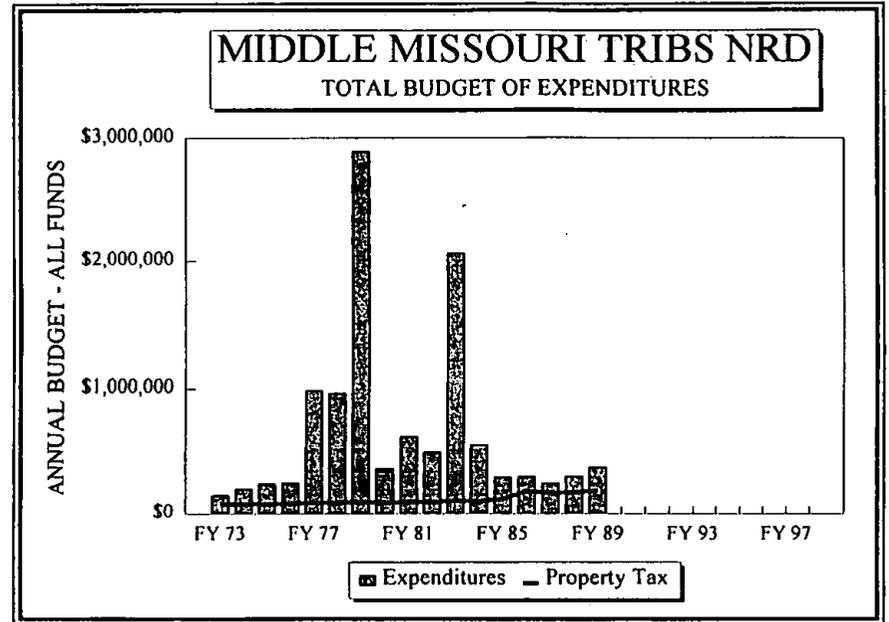
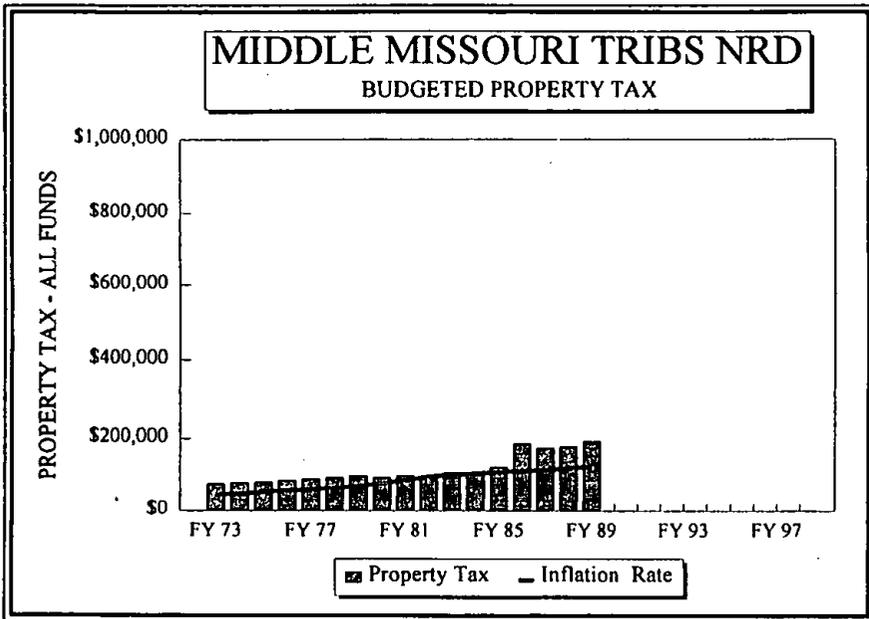


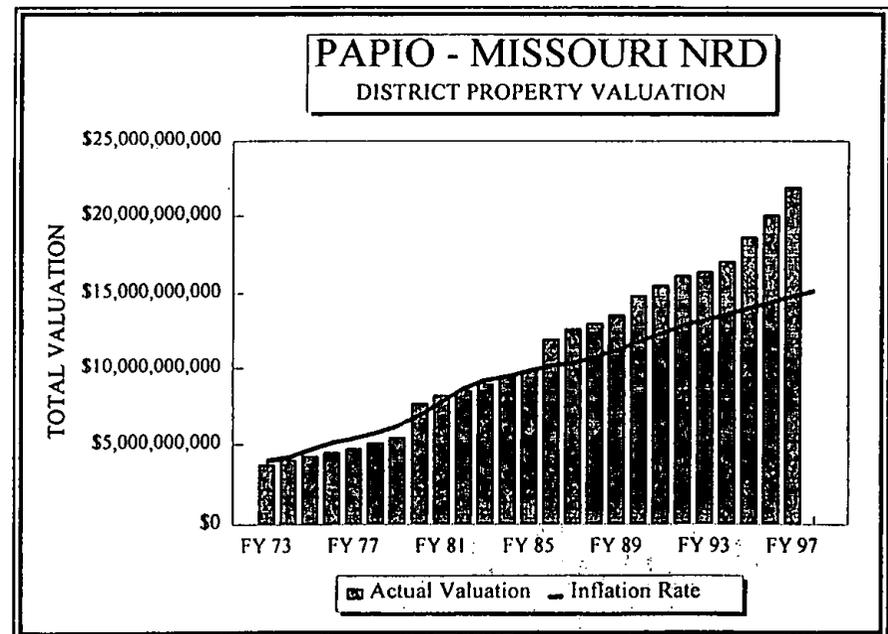
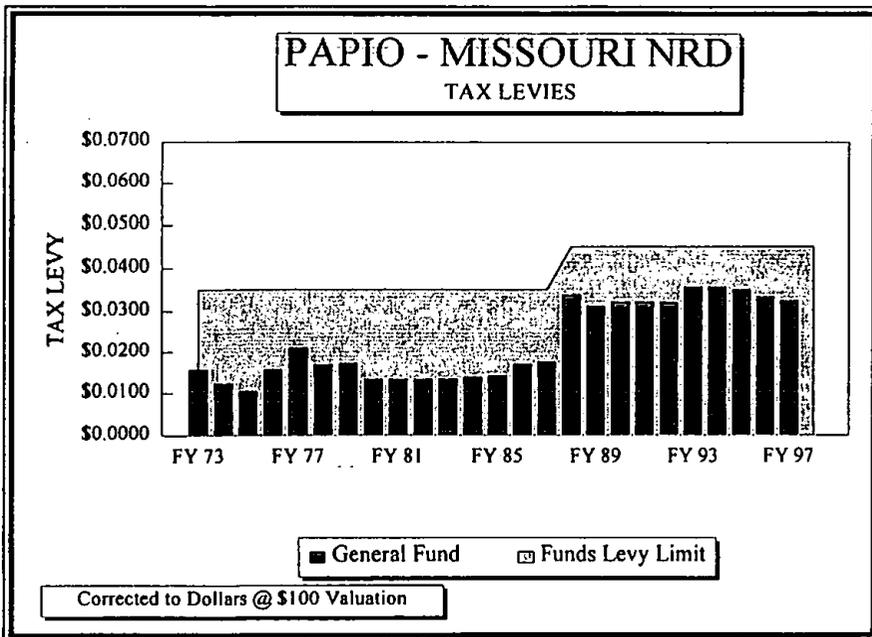
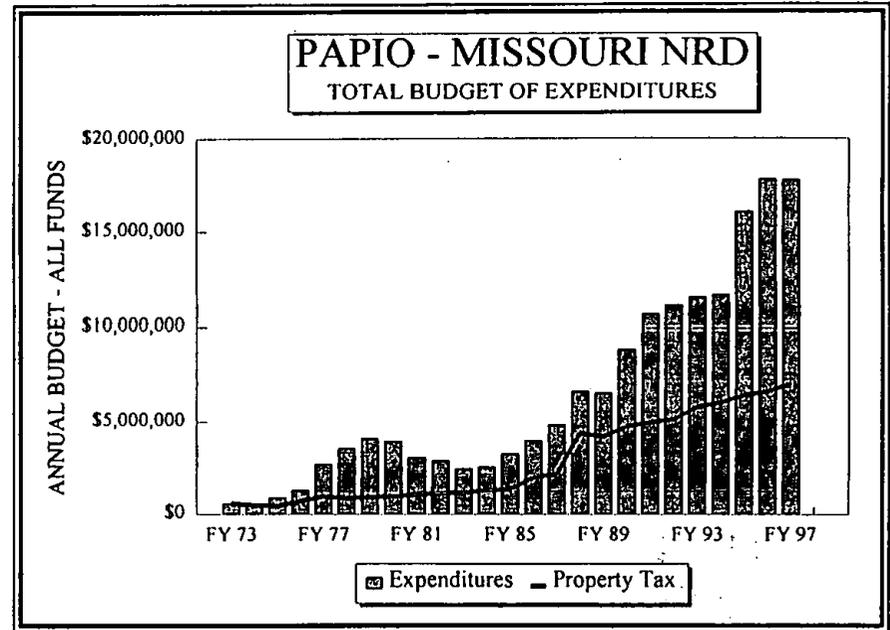
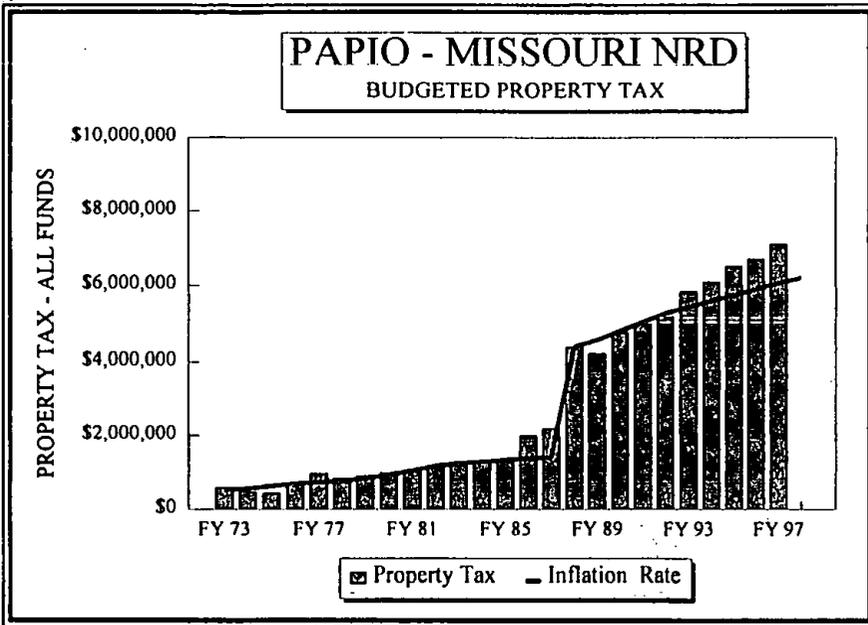


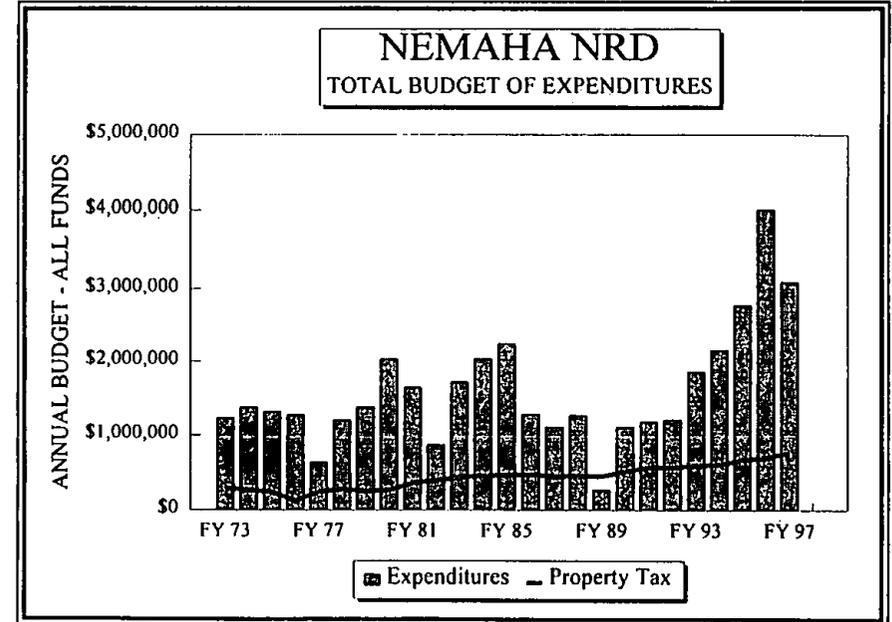
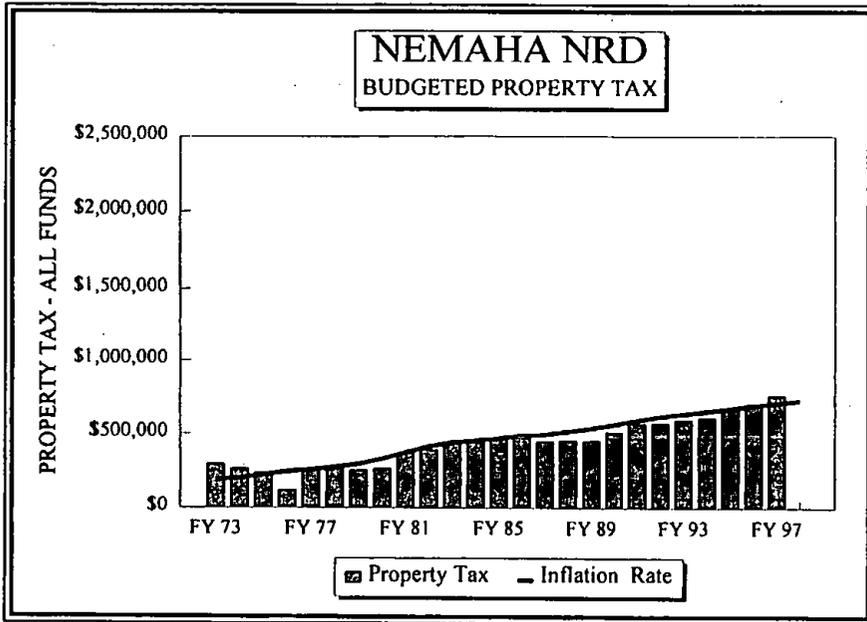




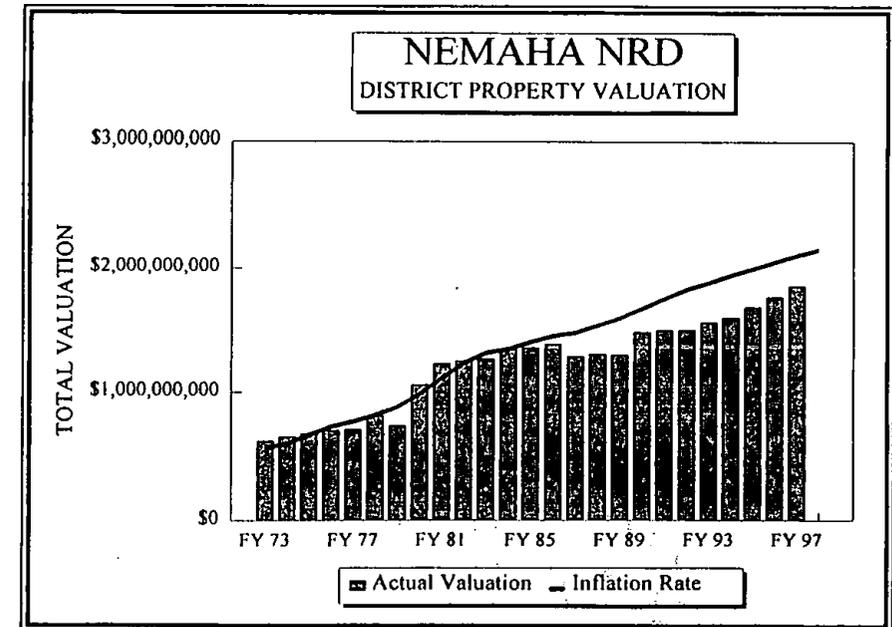
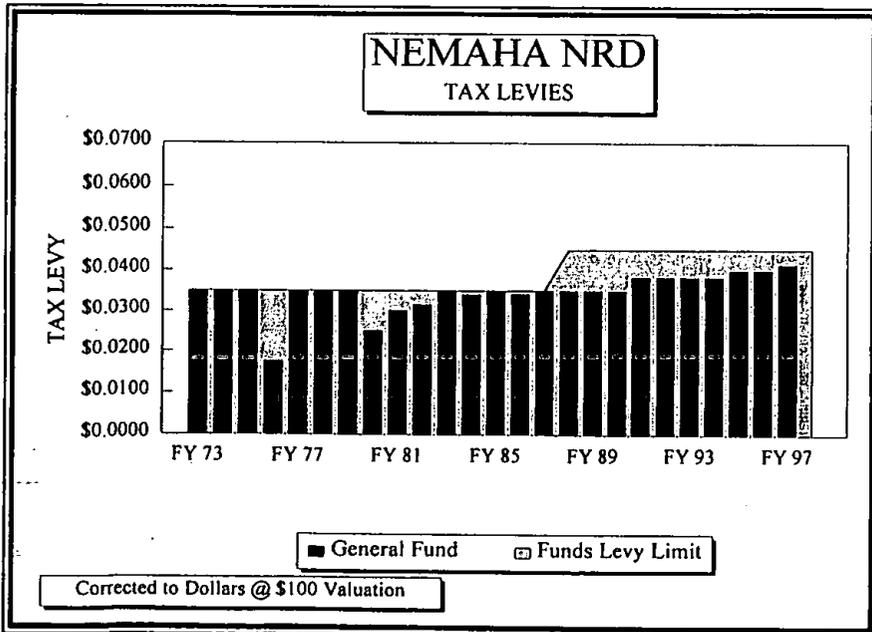


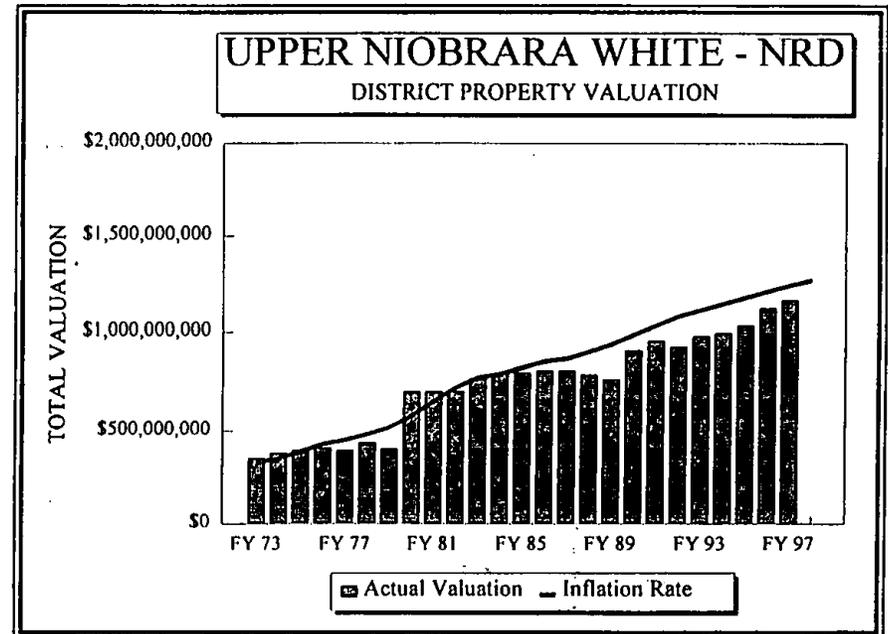
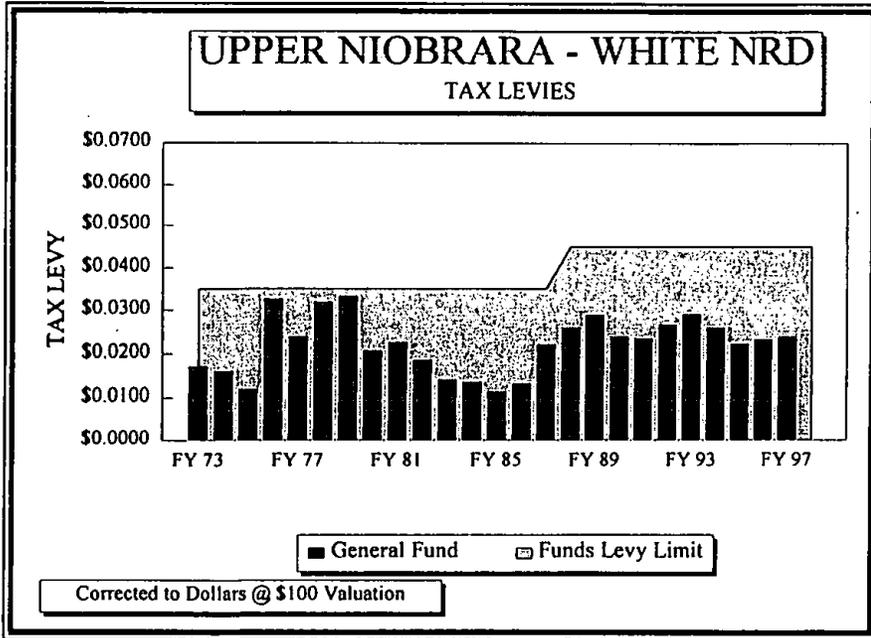
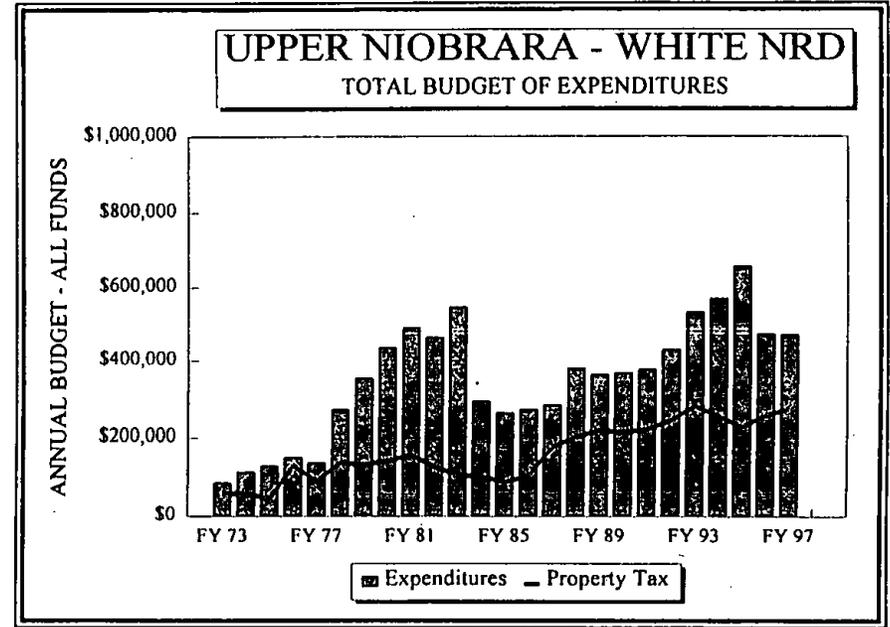
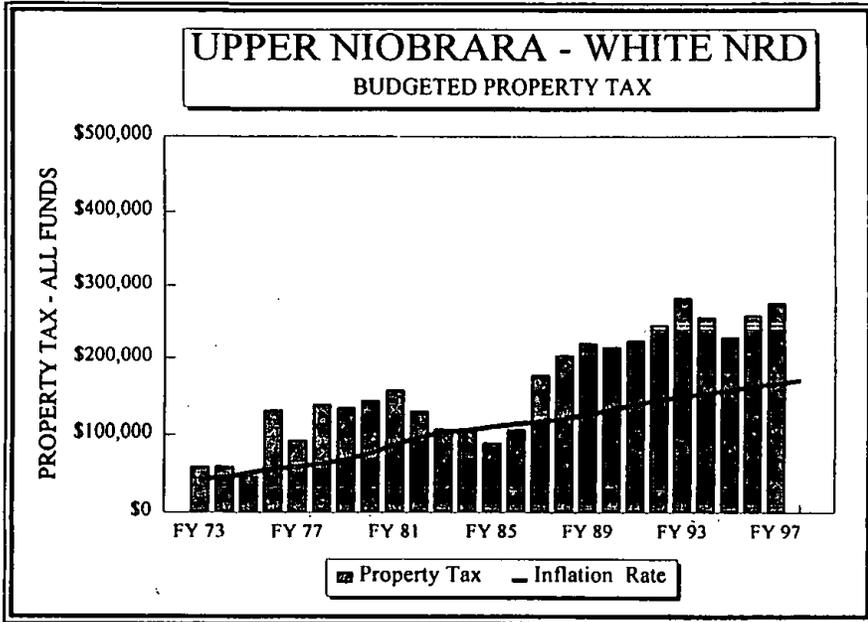


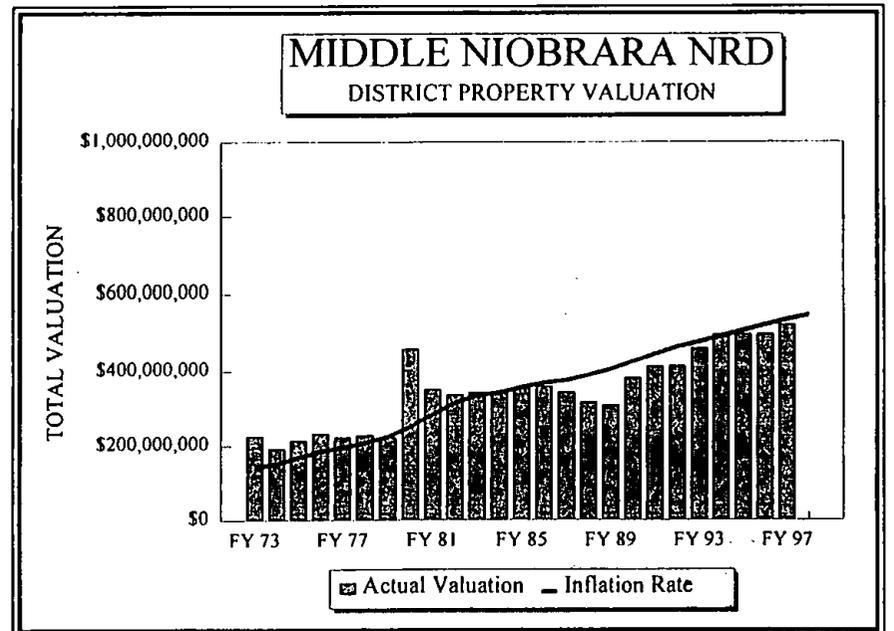
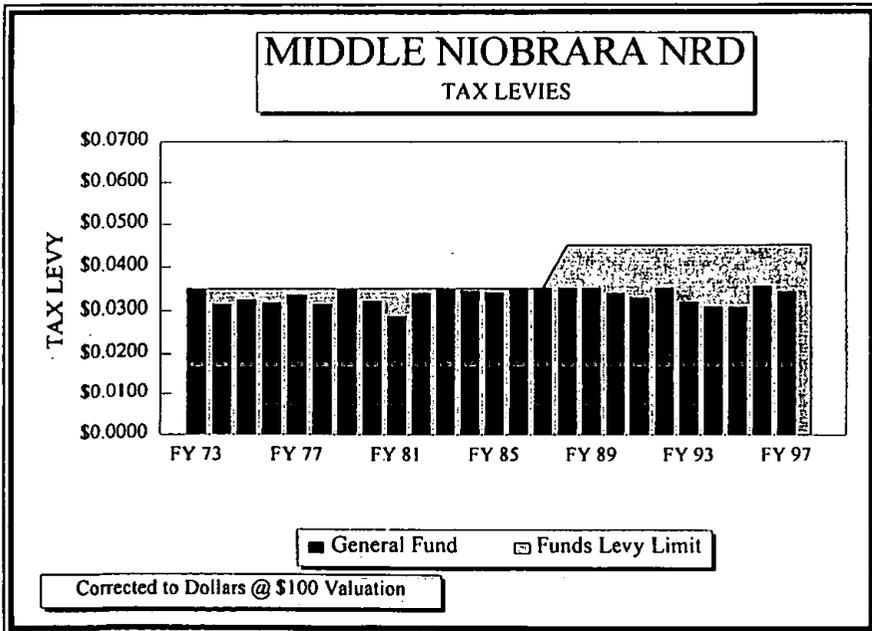
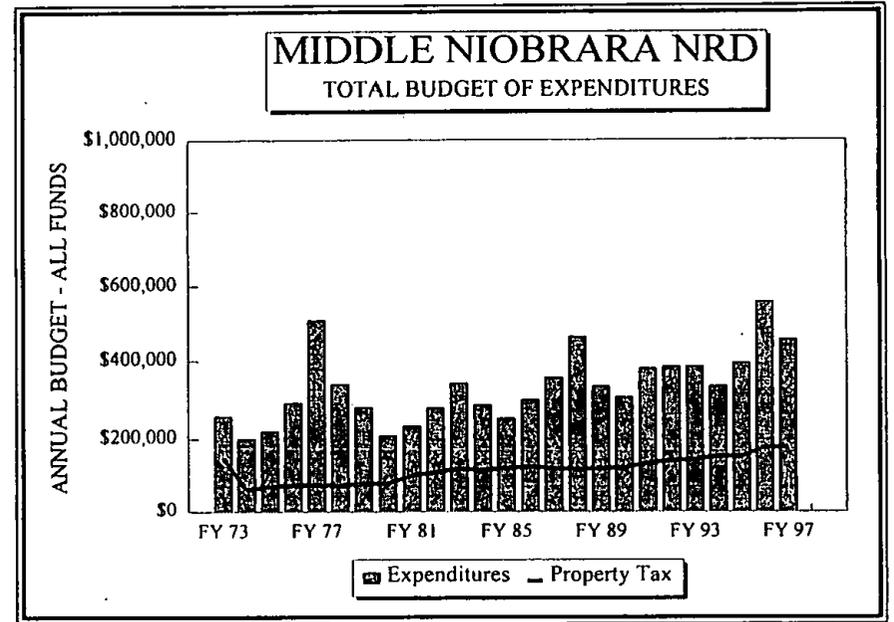
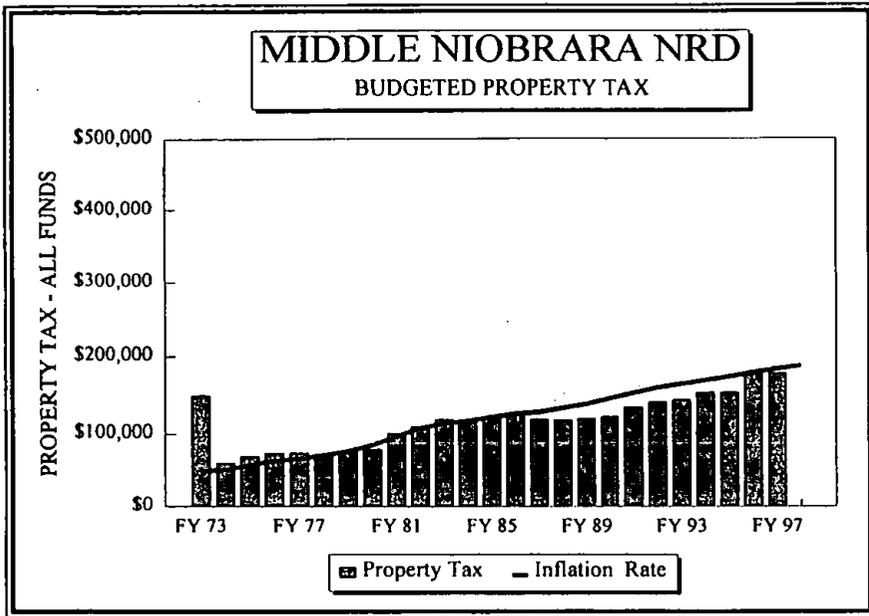


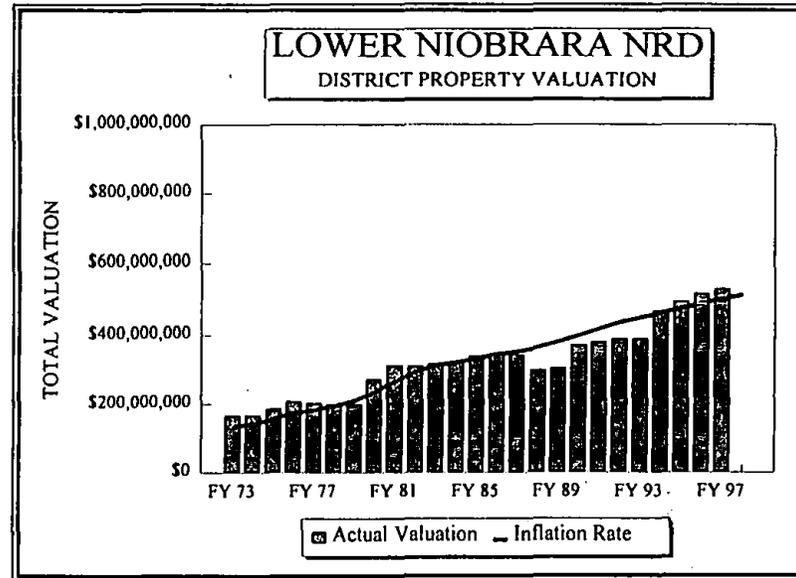
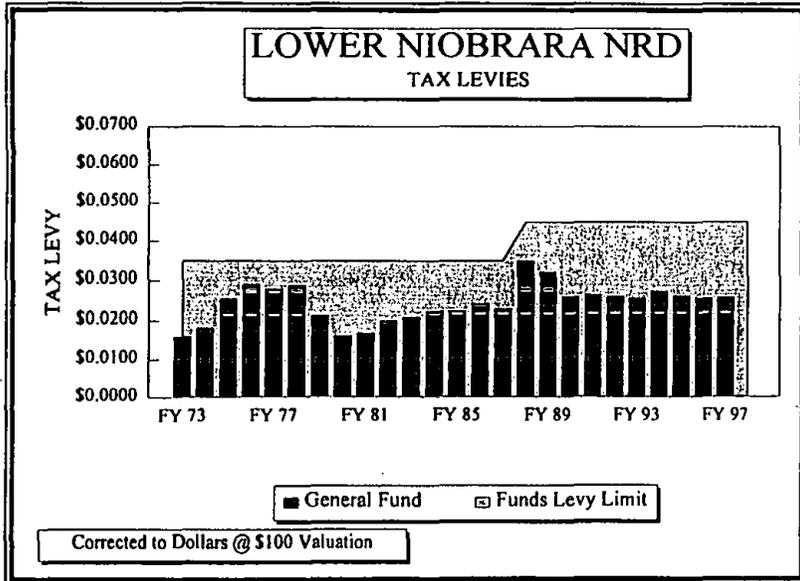
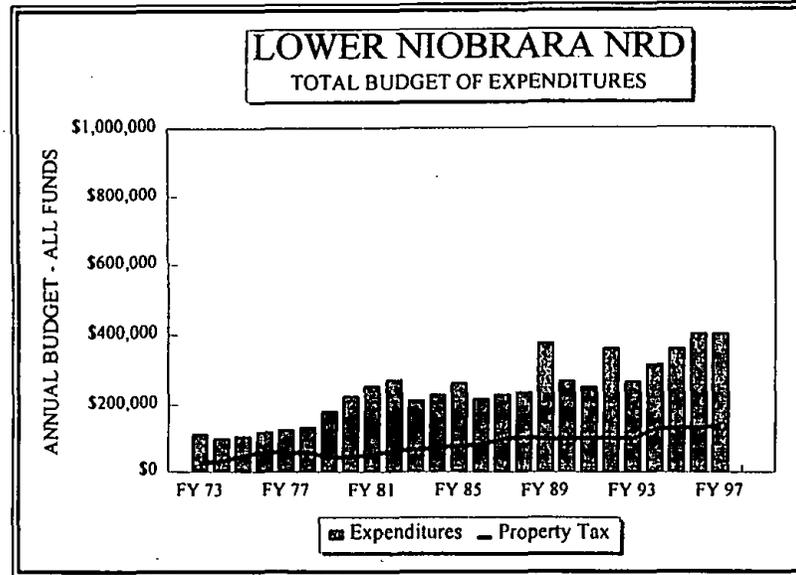
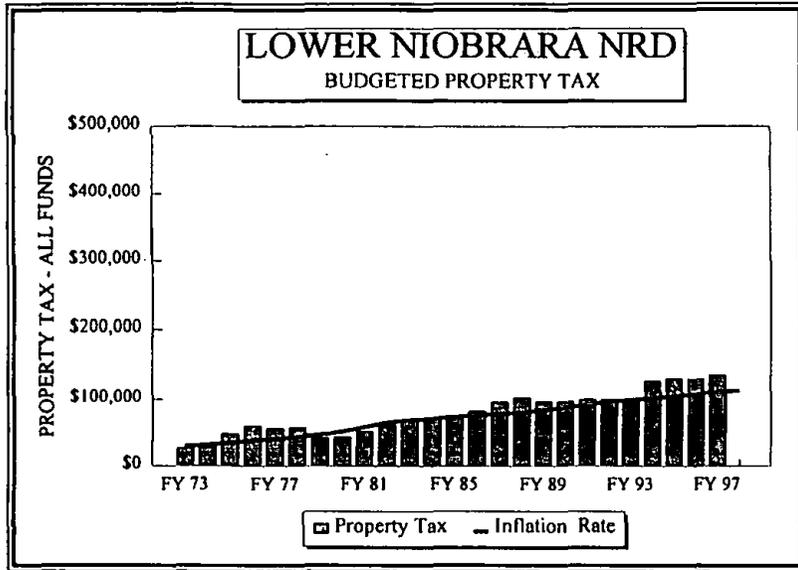


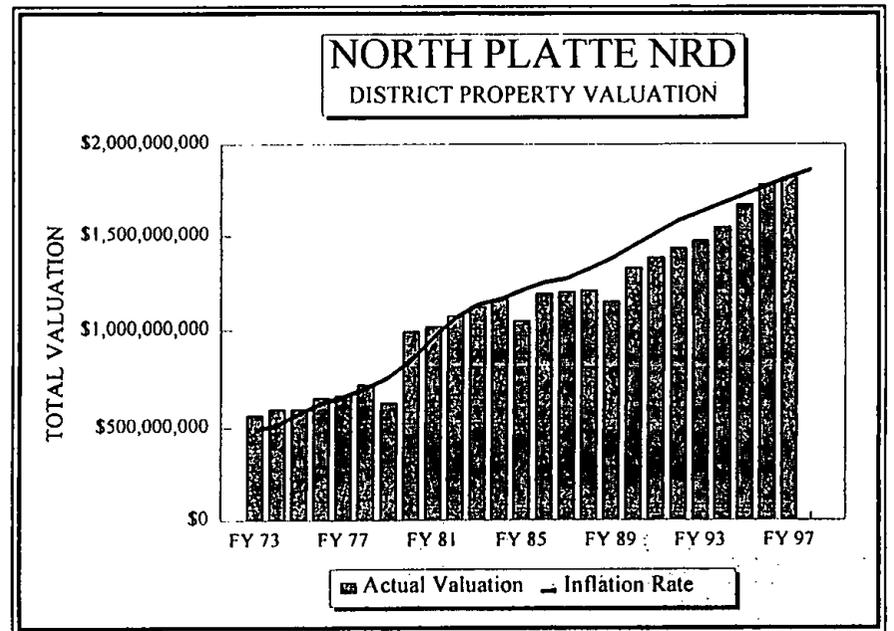
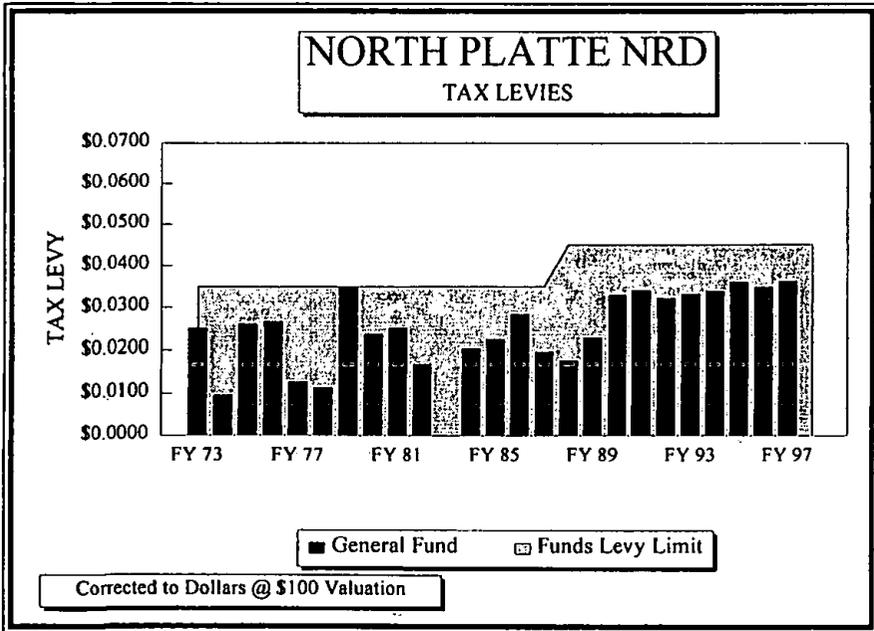
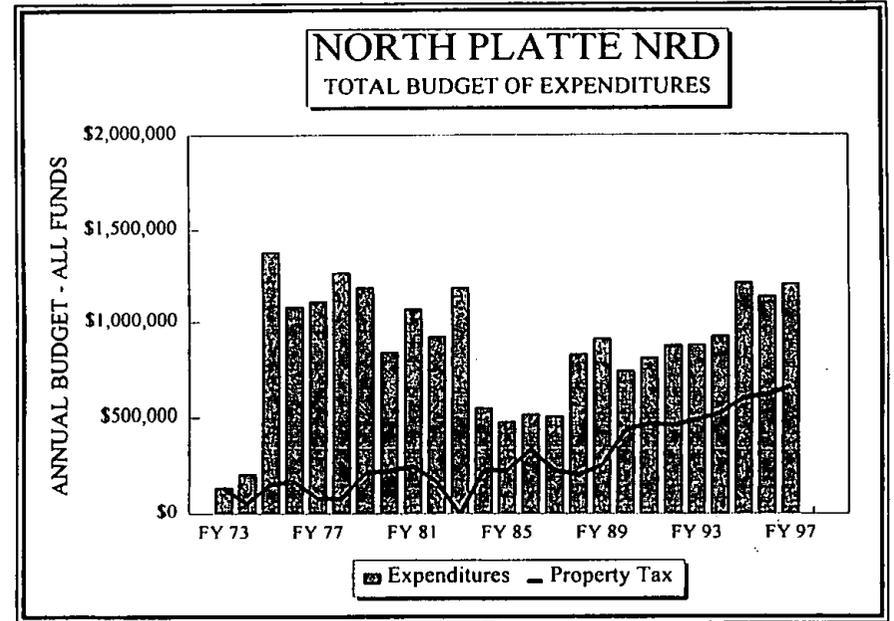
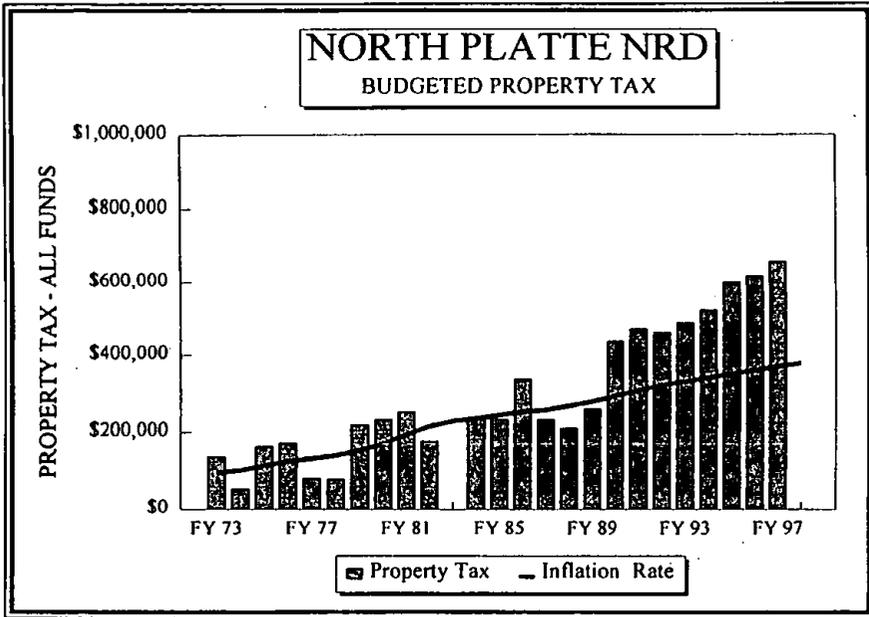
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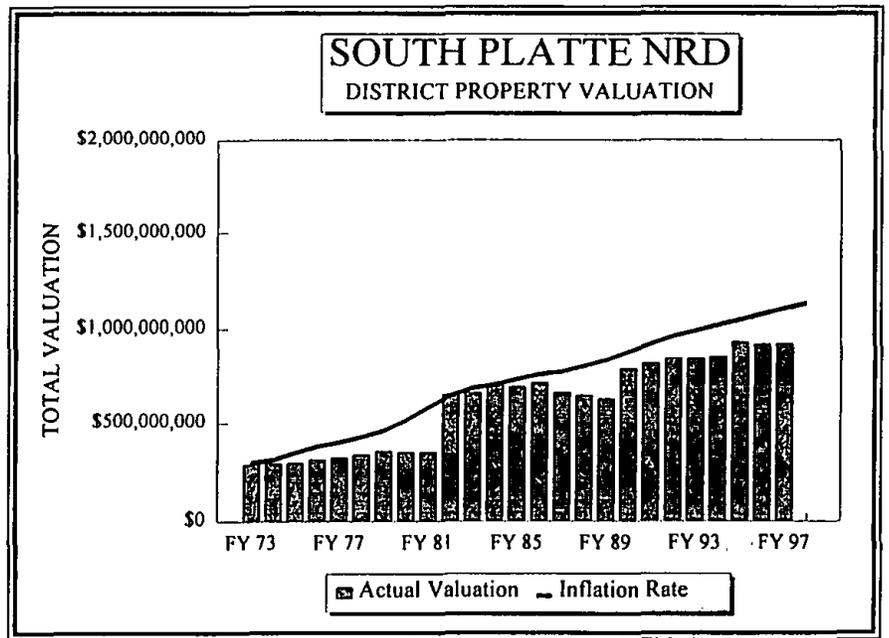
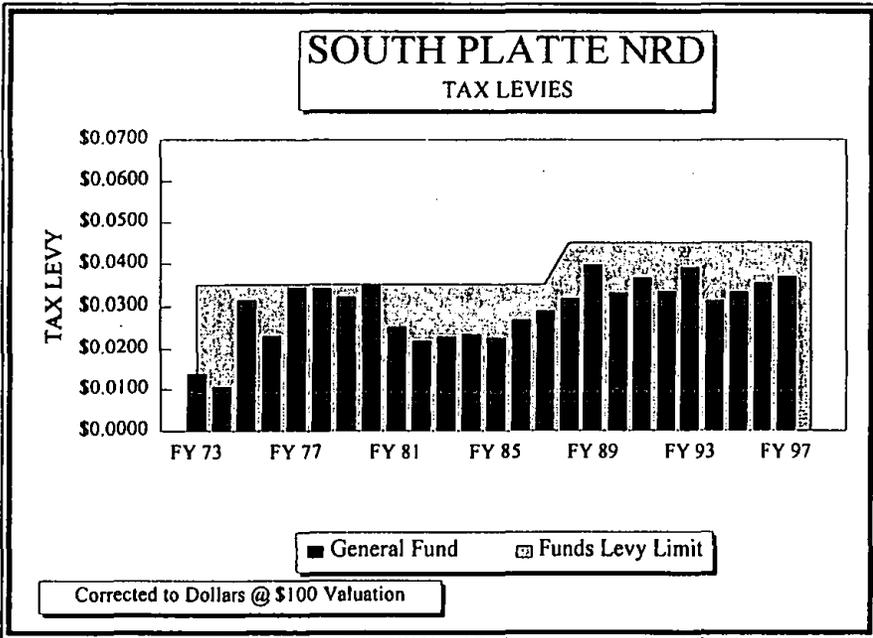
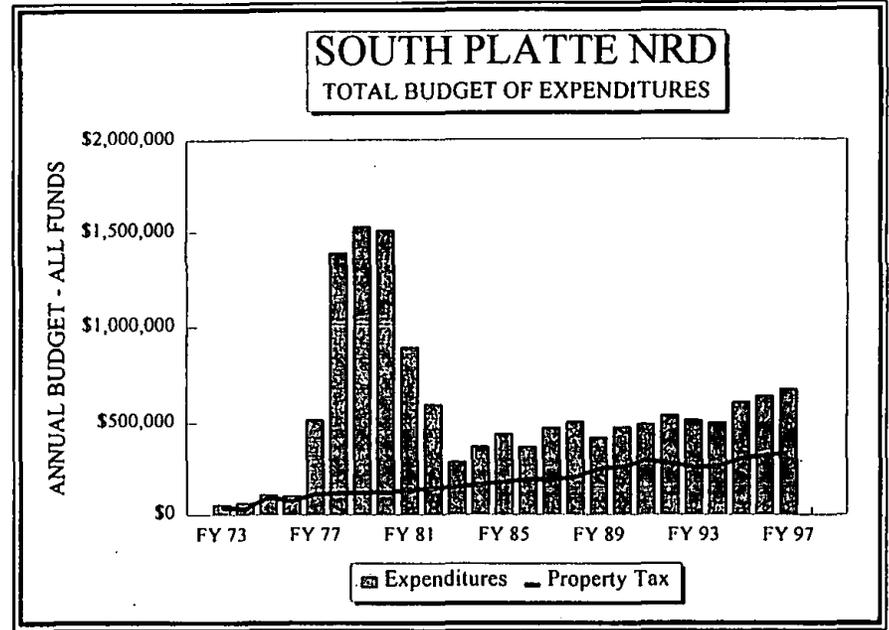
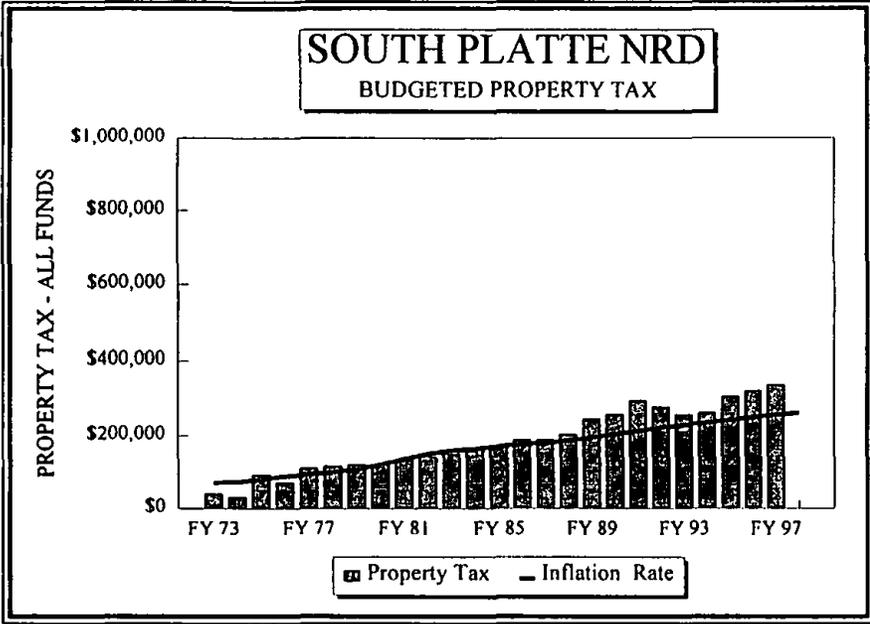


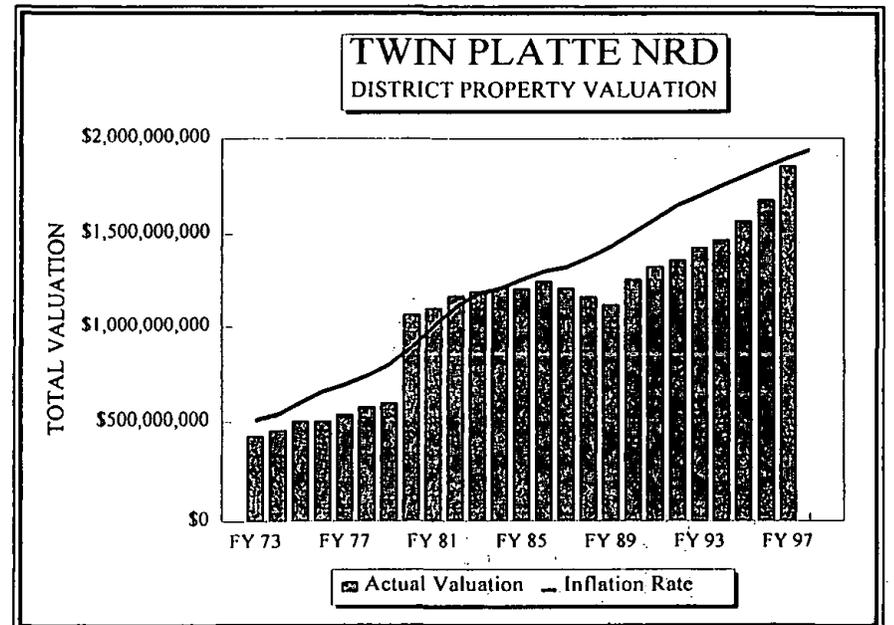
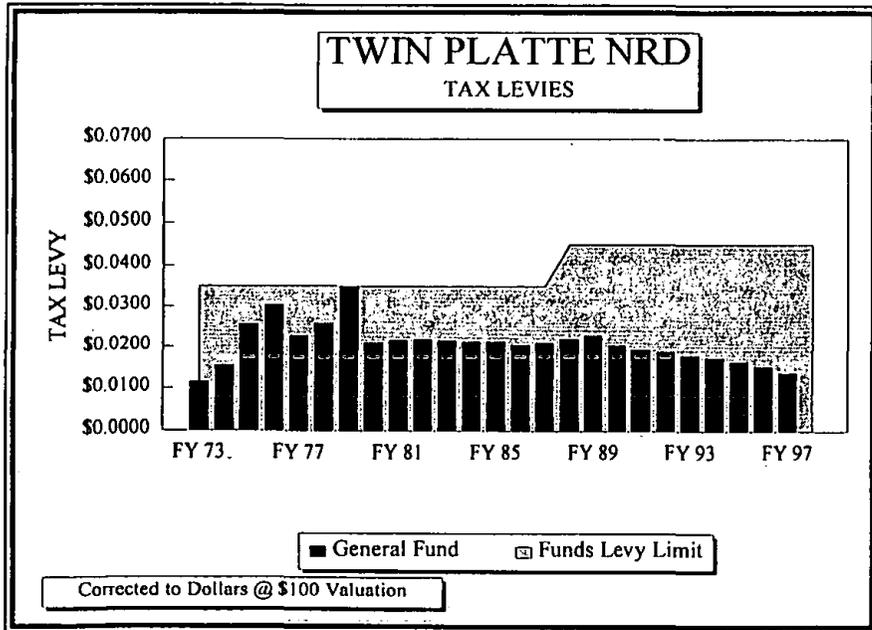
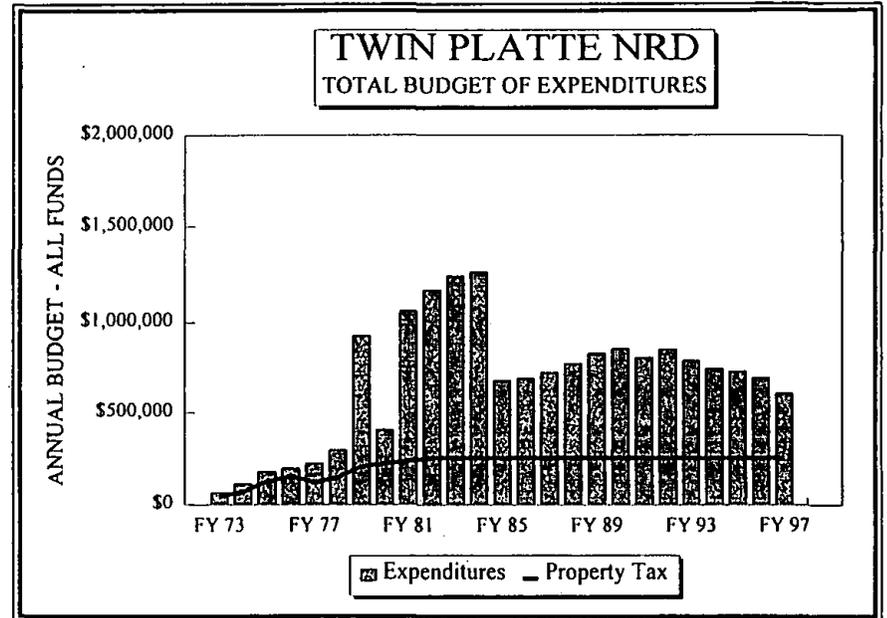
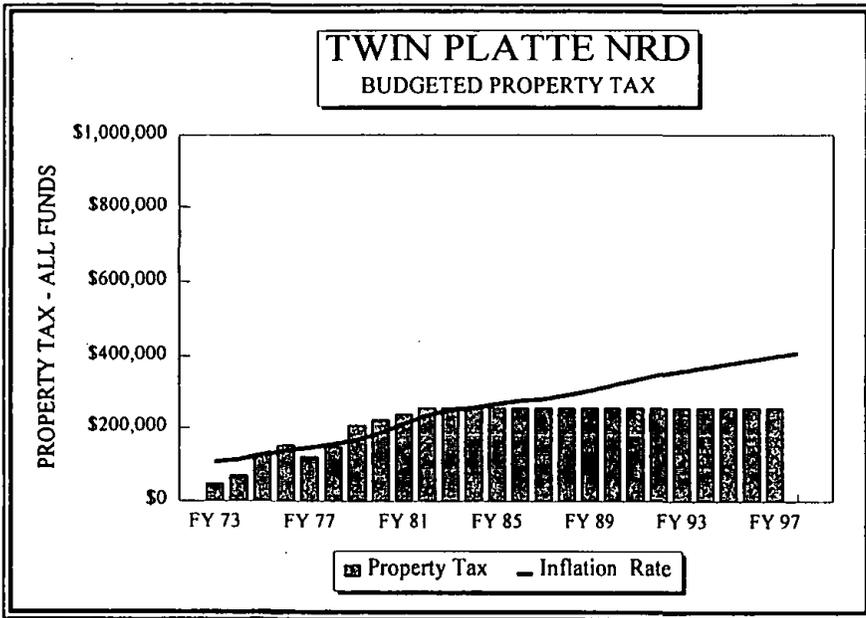


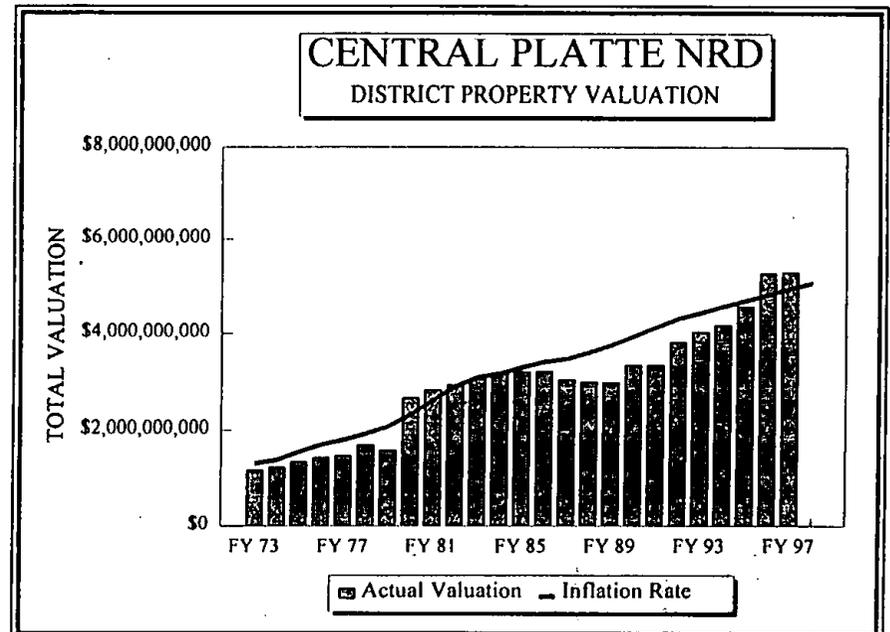
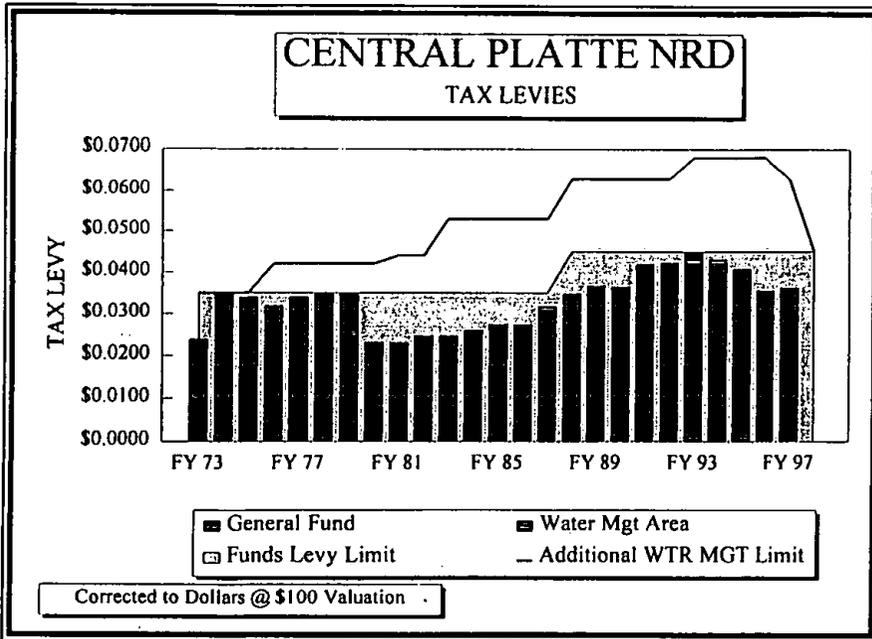
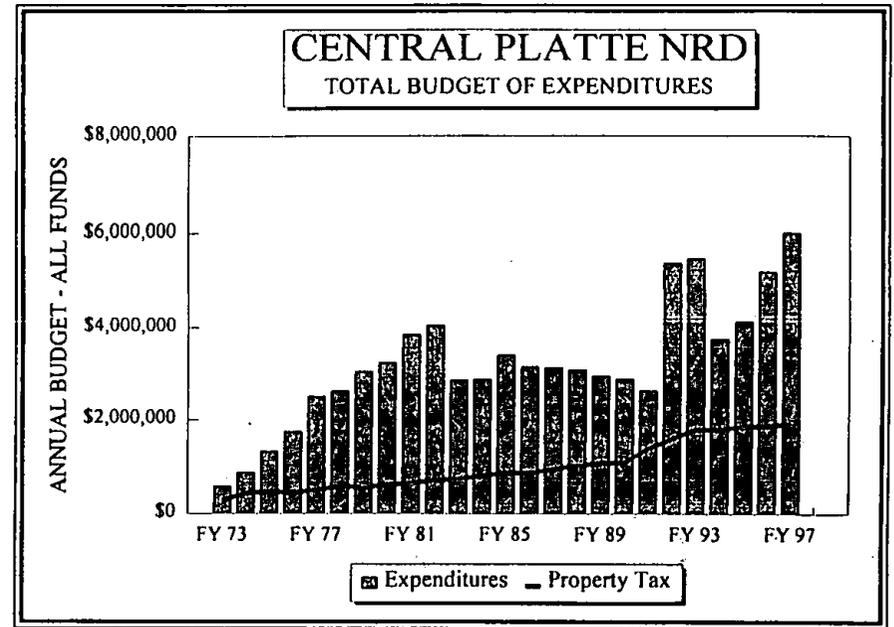
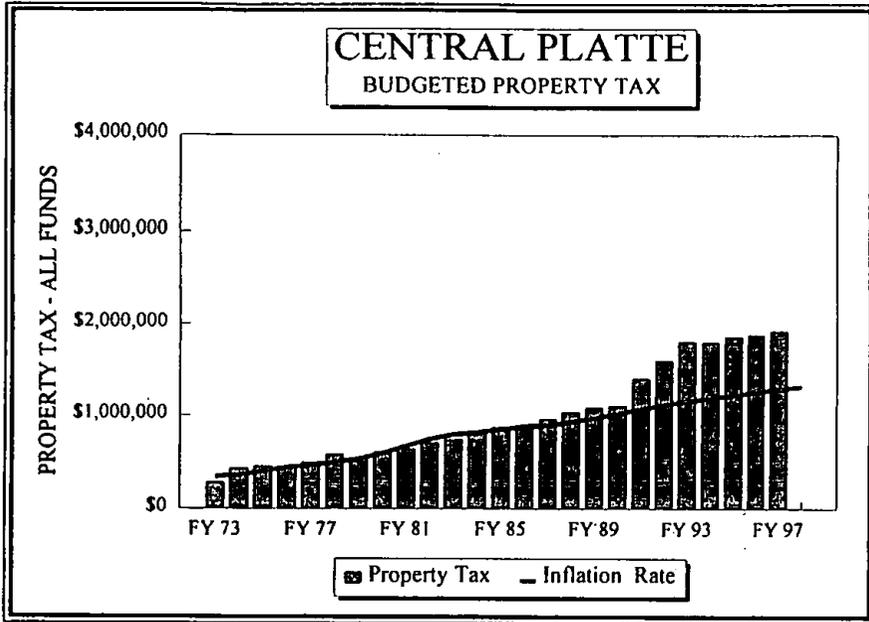




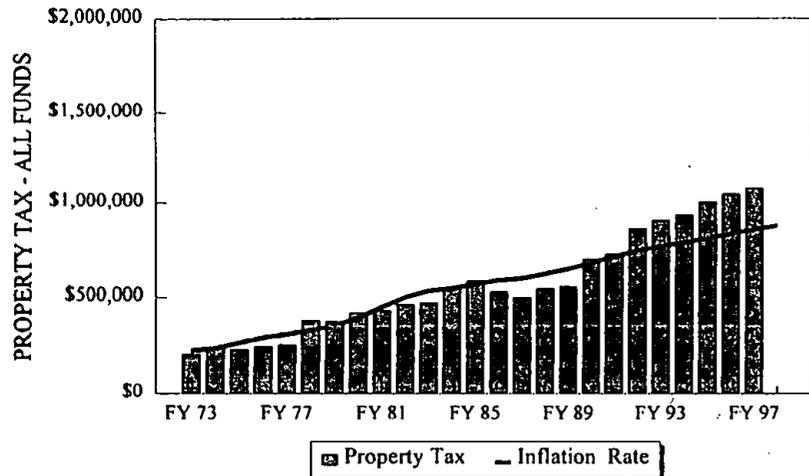




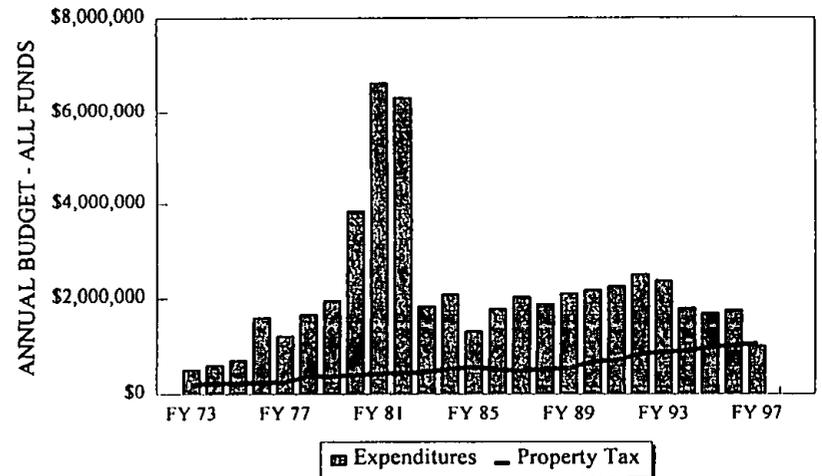




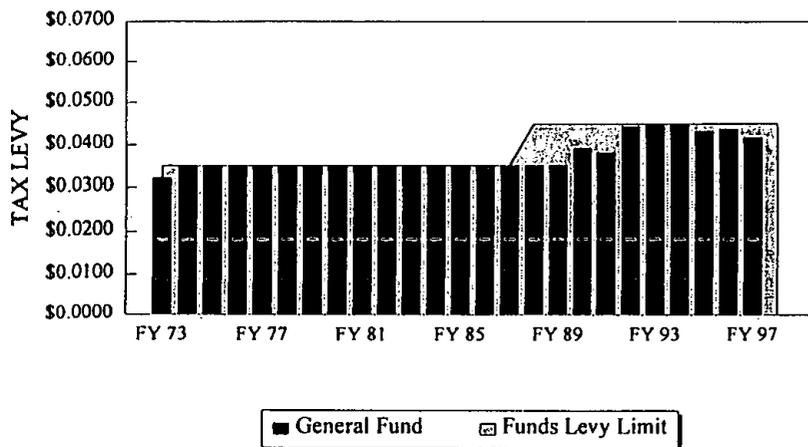
LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
BUDGETED PROPERTY TAX



LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
TOTAL BUDGET OF EXPENDITURES

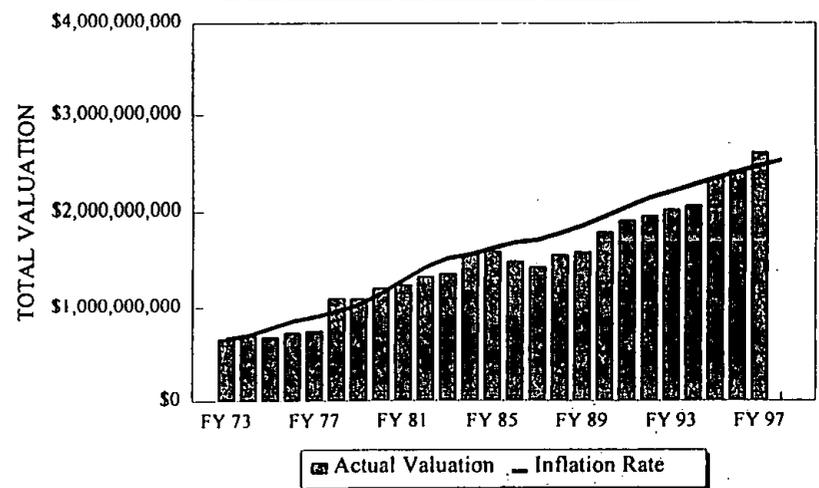


LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
TAX LEVIES

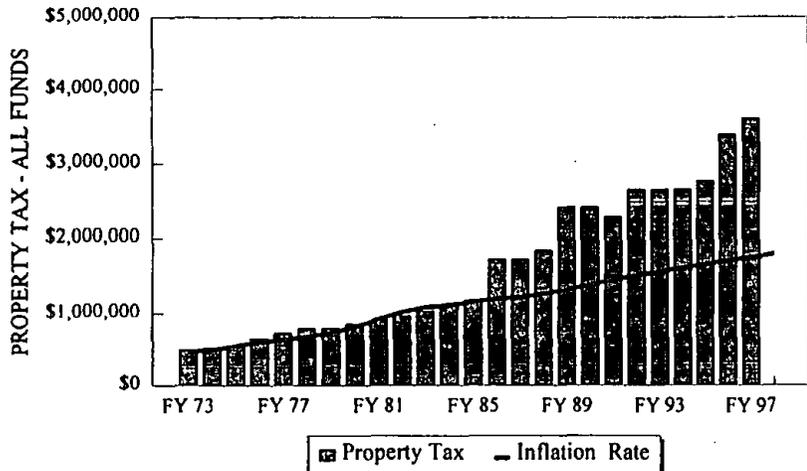


Corrected to Dollars @ \$100 Valuation

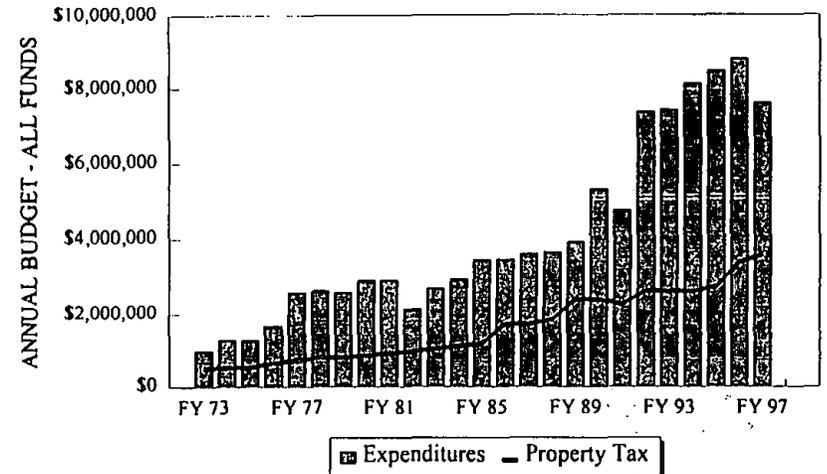
LOWER PLATTE NORTH NRD
DISTRICT PROPERTY VALUATION



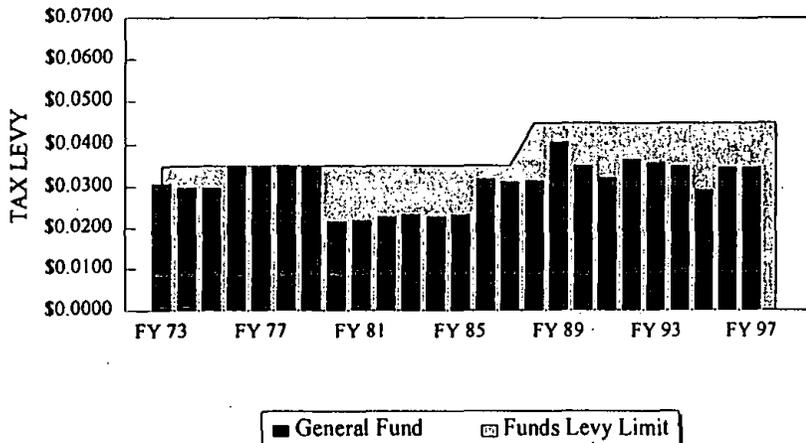
LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD BUDGETED PROPERTY TAX



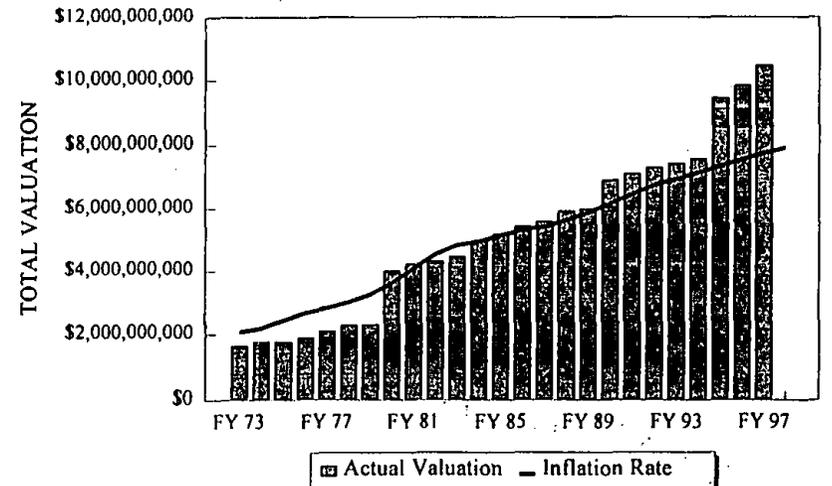
LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD TOTAL BUDGET OF EXPENDITURES



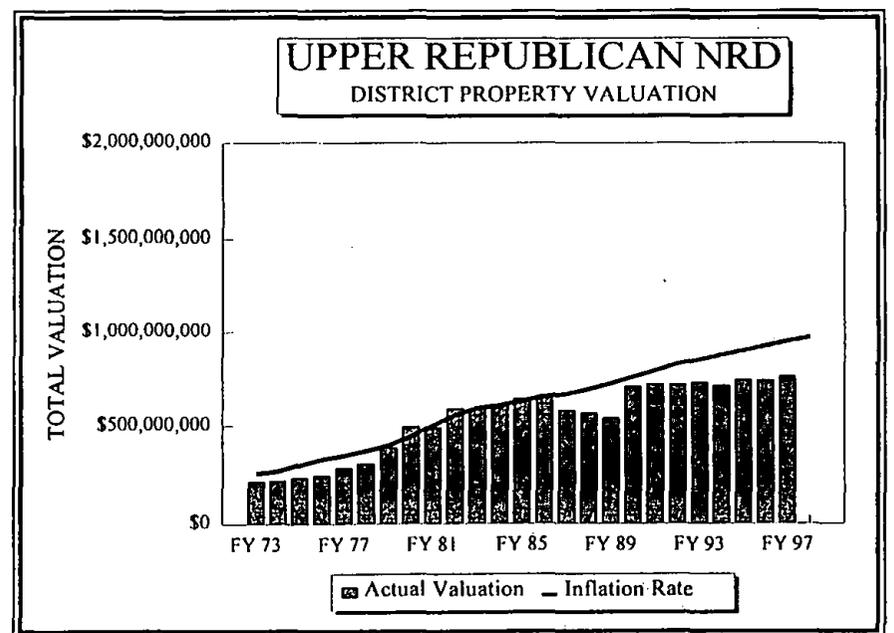
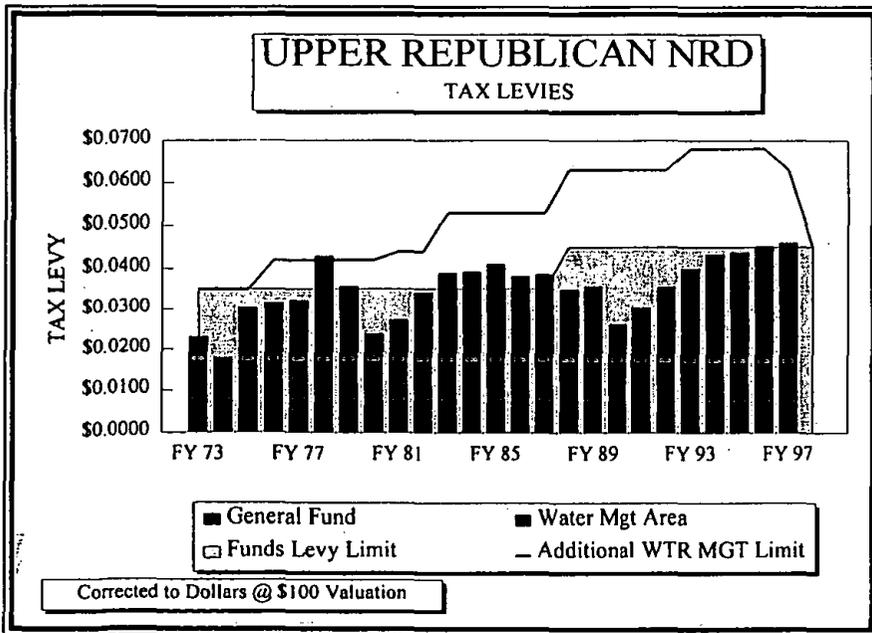
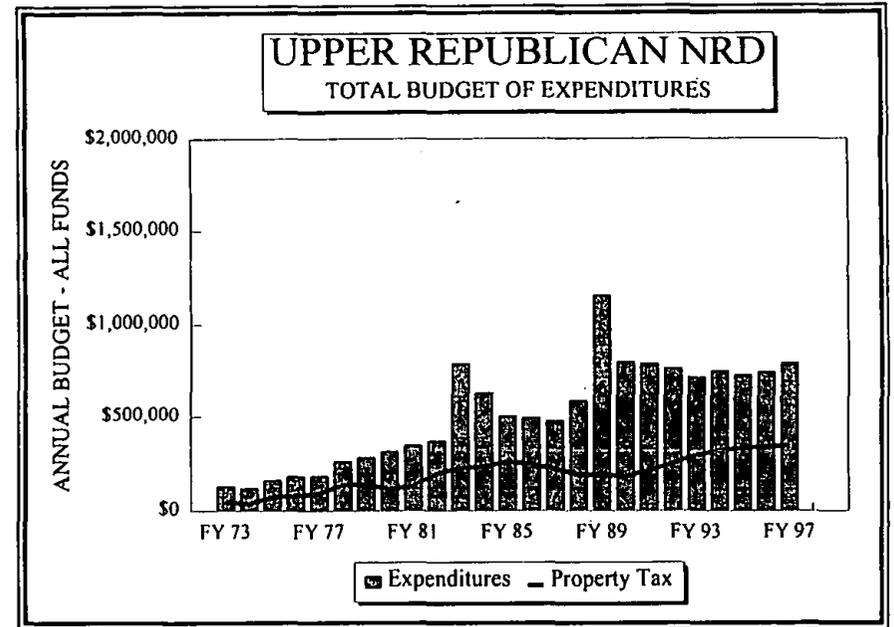
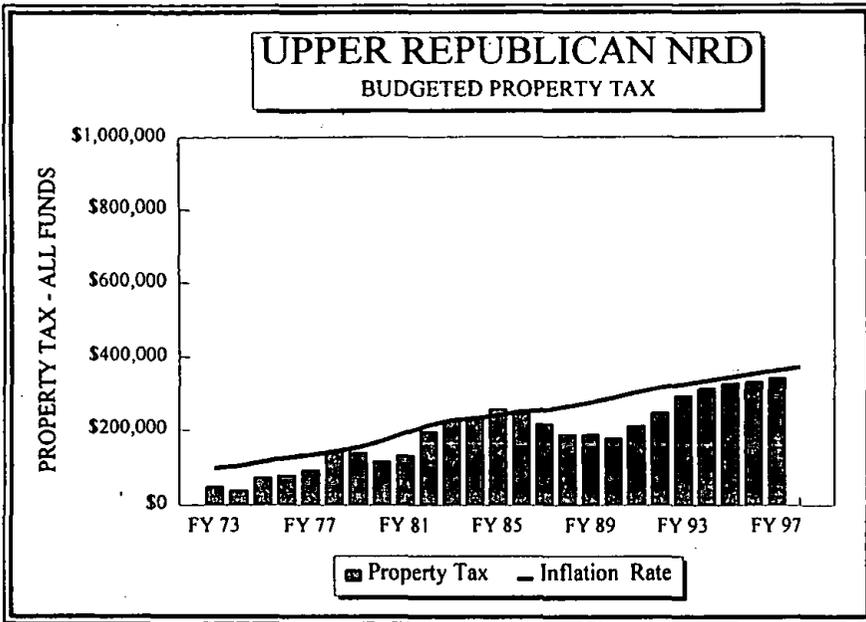
LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD TAX LEVIES



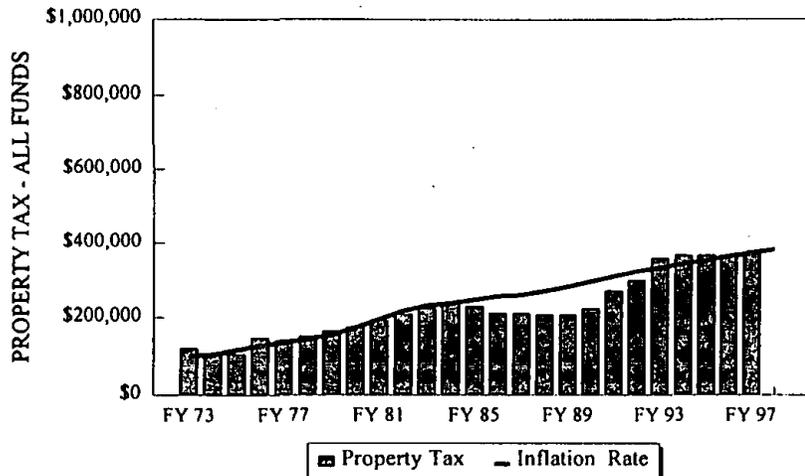
LOWER PLATTE SOUTH NRD DISTRICT PROPERTY VALUATION



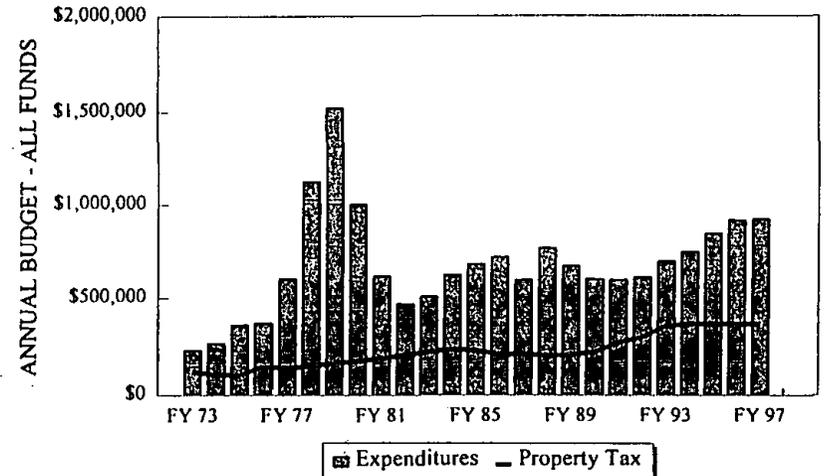
Corrected to Dollars @ \$100 Valuation



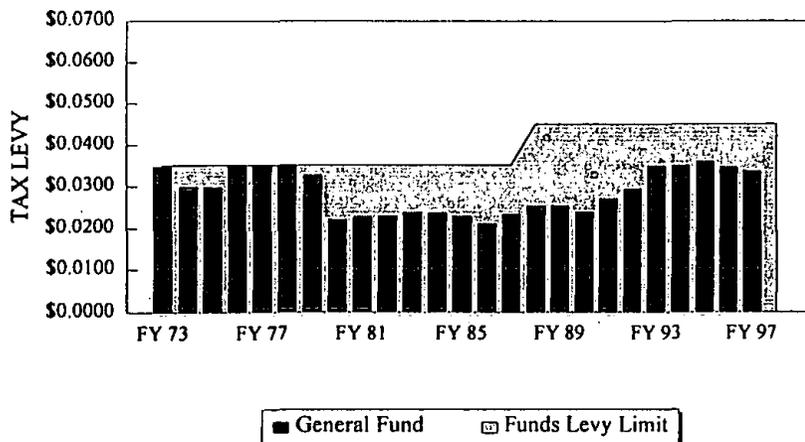
MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NRD BUDGETED PROPERTY TAX



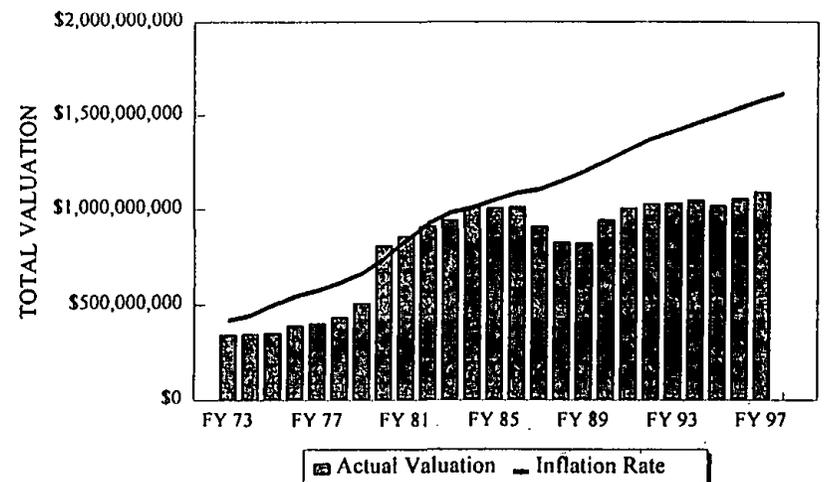
MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NRD TOTAL BUDGET OF EXPENDITURES



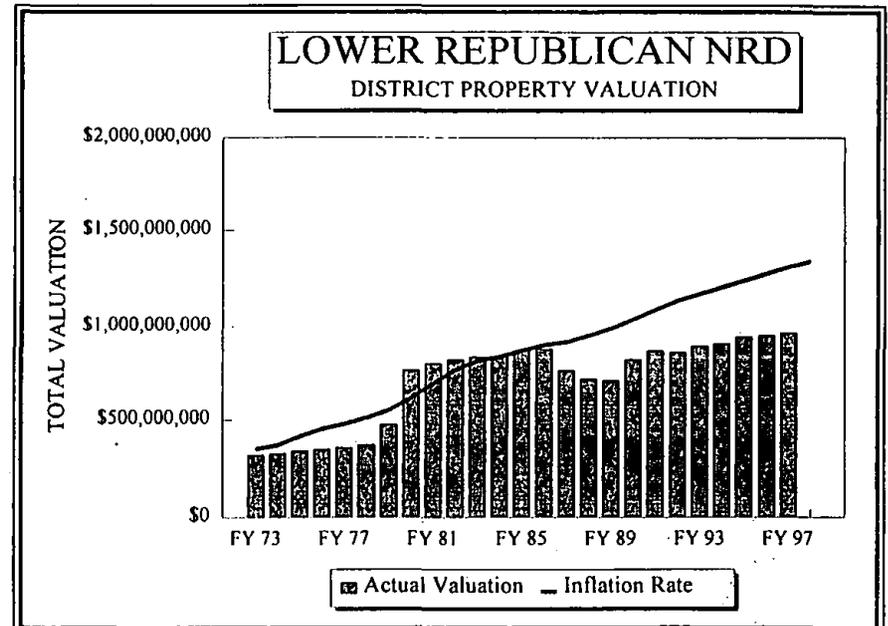
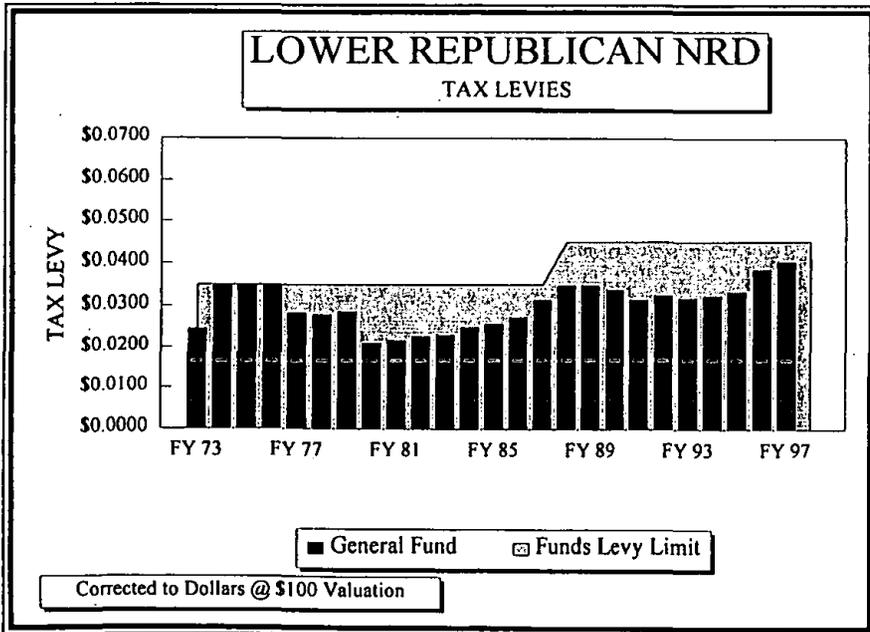
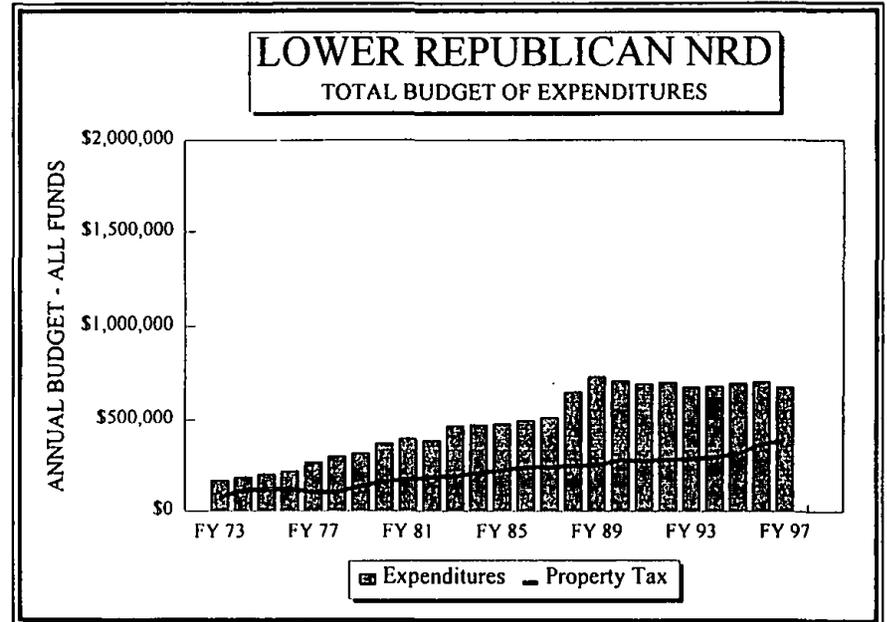
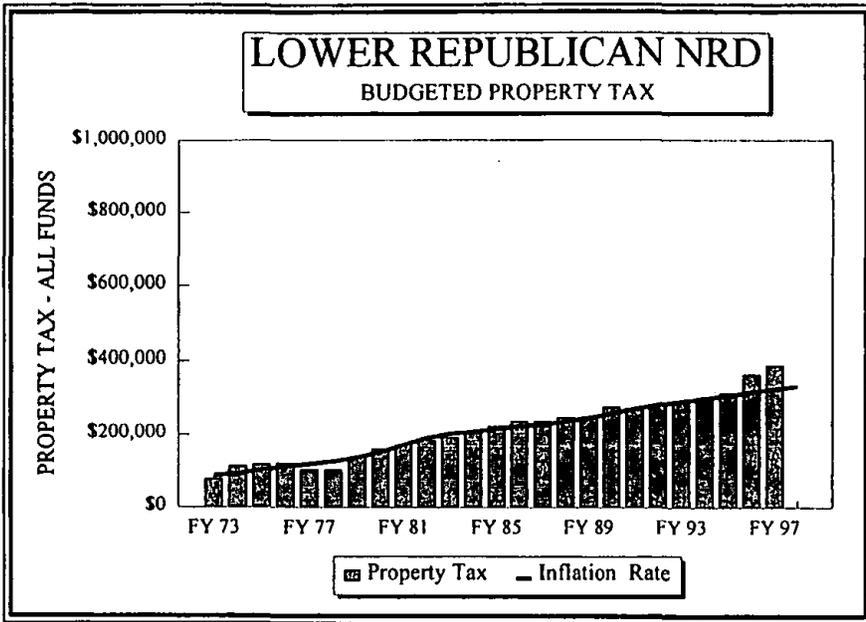
MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NRD TAX LEVIES

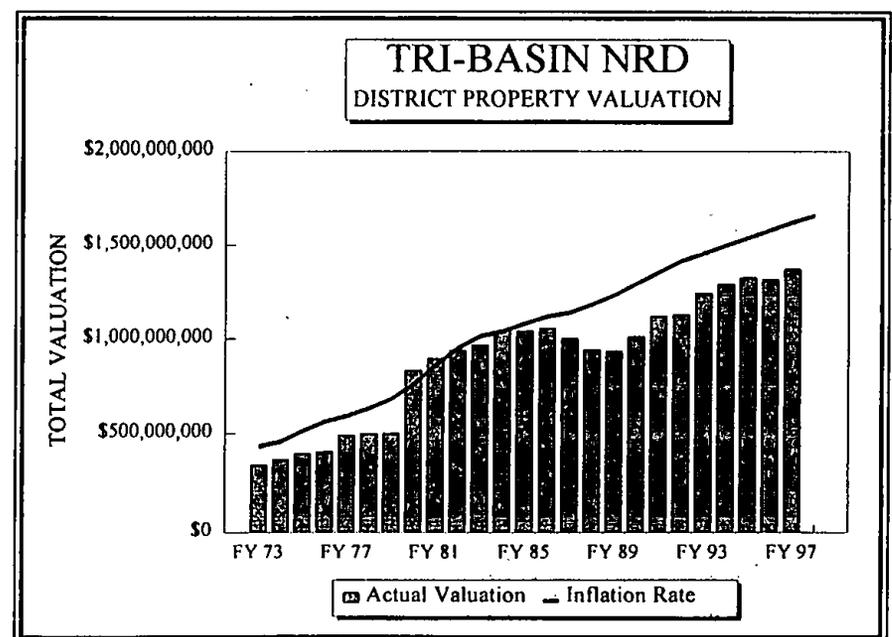
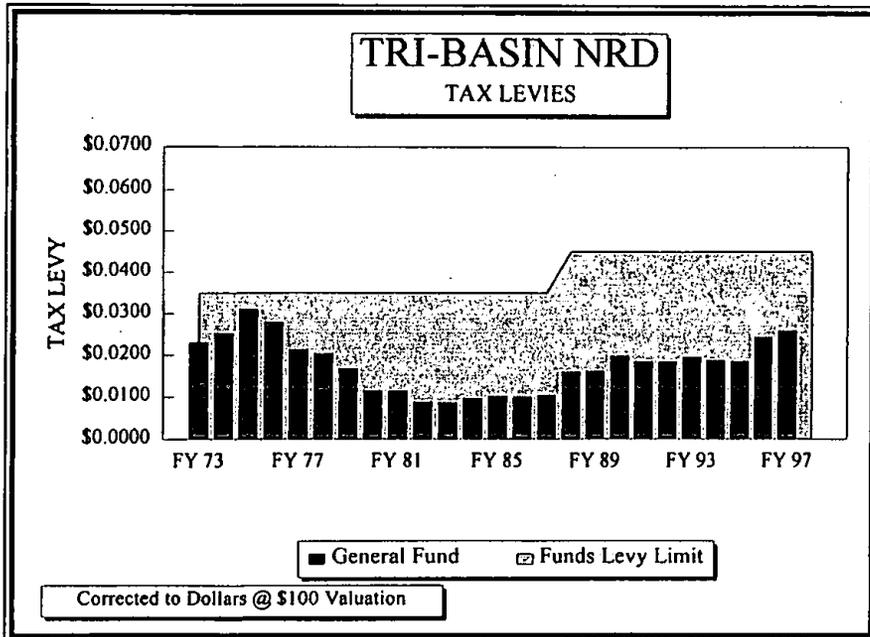
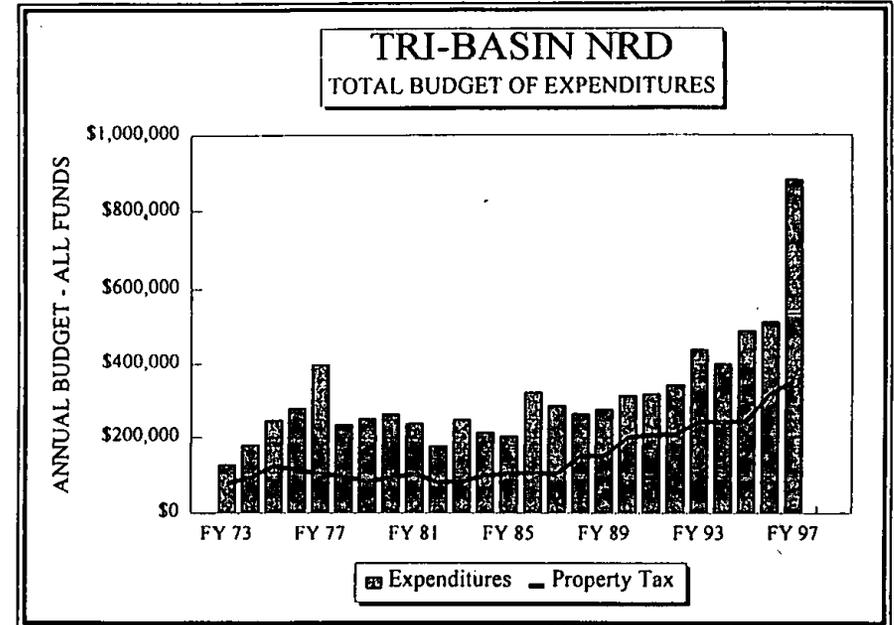
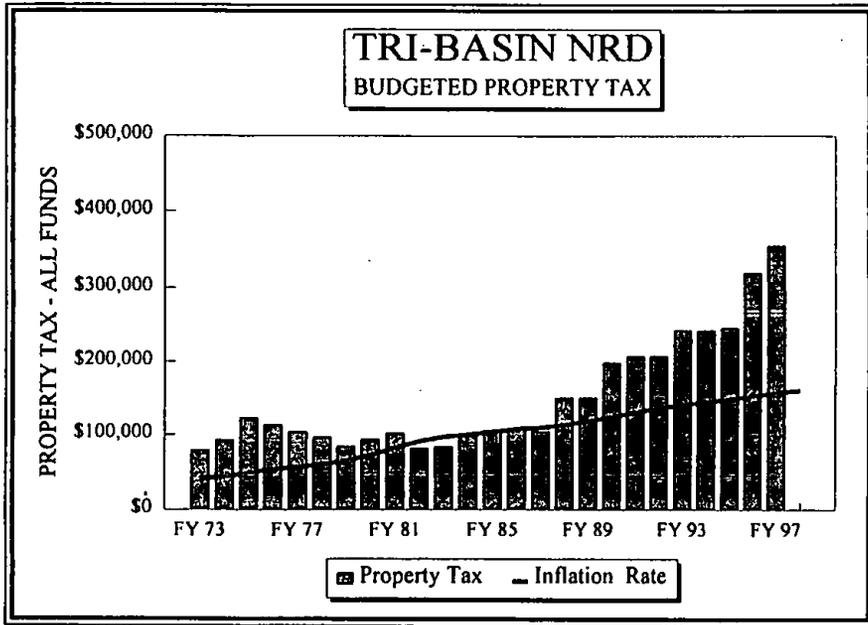


MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NRD DISTRICT PROPERTY VALUATION



Corrected to Dollars @ \$100 Valuation





FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
156,689,853	152,584,535	154,933,300	162,374,423	176,918,895	183,324,179	193,159,277	201,879,272	218,962,439
132%	126%	129%	140%	162%	171%	186%	199%	224%
5%	-3%	2%	5%	9%	4%	5%	5%	8%
136,371,552	143,742,404	145,214,398	148,990,983	159,159,830	160,049,218	164,070,911	166,154,038	171,372,563
116%	127%	130%	136%	152%	153%	160%	163%	171%
-2%	5%	1%	3%	7%	1%	3%	1%	3%
8,278,854	7,873,142	7,690,335	7,718,588	7,860,447	7,969,656	8,080,419	8,260,817	8,553,226
159%	147%	141%	142%	146%	150%	153%	159%	168%
3%	-5%	-2%	0%	2%	1%	1%	2%	4%
662,503,133	697,383,486	731,285,985	777,782,709	874,714,424	792,951,893	813,288,636	855,628,353	929,381,710
148%	161%	174%	191%	228%	197%	205%	221%	248%
9%	5%	5%	6%	12%	-9%	3%	5%	9%
9,546,056	10,940,722	11,261,896	13,827,575	14,417,805	15,413,457	16,237,962	17,369,308	19,033,881
140%	175%	183%	248%	263%	288%	309%	337%	379%
5%	15%	3%	23%	4%	7%	5%	7%	10%
41,882,591	46,654,976	50,589,181	52,991,474	57,917,272	58,000,244	62,210,236	64,994,991	66,561,734
286%	329%	366%	388%	433%	434%	473%	498%	513%
20%	11%	8%	5%	9%	0%	7%	4%	2%
1,015,272,045	1,059,179,271	1,100,975,101	1,163,685,758	1,290,988,680	1,217,708,654	1,257,047,448	1,314,286,787	1,413,865,561
144%	155%	165%	180%	211%	193%	202%	216%	240%
7%	4%	4%	6%	11%	-6%	3%	5%	8%
104.0	107.7	109.5	113.8	118.5	124.4	130.4	136.2	140.2
155,289,877	160,814,613	163,502,322	169,922,961	176,940,869	185,750,583	194,709,615	203,370,012	209,342,699
144,704,028	149,852,152	152,356,645	158,339,600	164,879,109	173,088,280	181,436,589	189,506,621	195,072,161
8,383,014	8,681,256	8,826,347	9,172,952	9,551,800	10,027,375	10,511,010	10,978,524	11,300,948
634,406,708	656,976,947	667,957,063	694,187,341	722,857,644	758,848,024	795,448,411	830,828,786	855,229,044
9,495,752	9,833,581	9,997,931	10,390,544	10,819,679	11,358,380	11,906,212	12,435,783	12,801,004
36,299,639	37,591,069	38,219,332	39,720,182	41,360,646	43,419,953	45,514,163	47,538,566	48,934,706
988,579,024	1,023,749,624	1,040,859,645	1,081,733,586	1,126,409,753	1,182,492,602	1,239,526,007	1,294,658,299	1,332,680,569

fy 84

fy 74

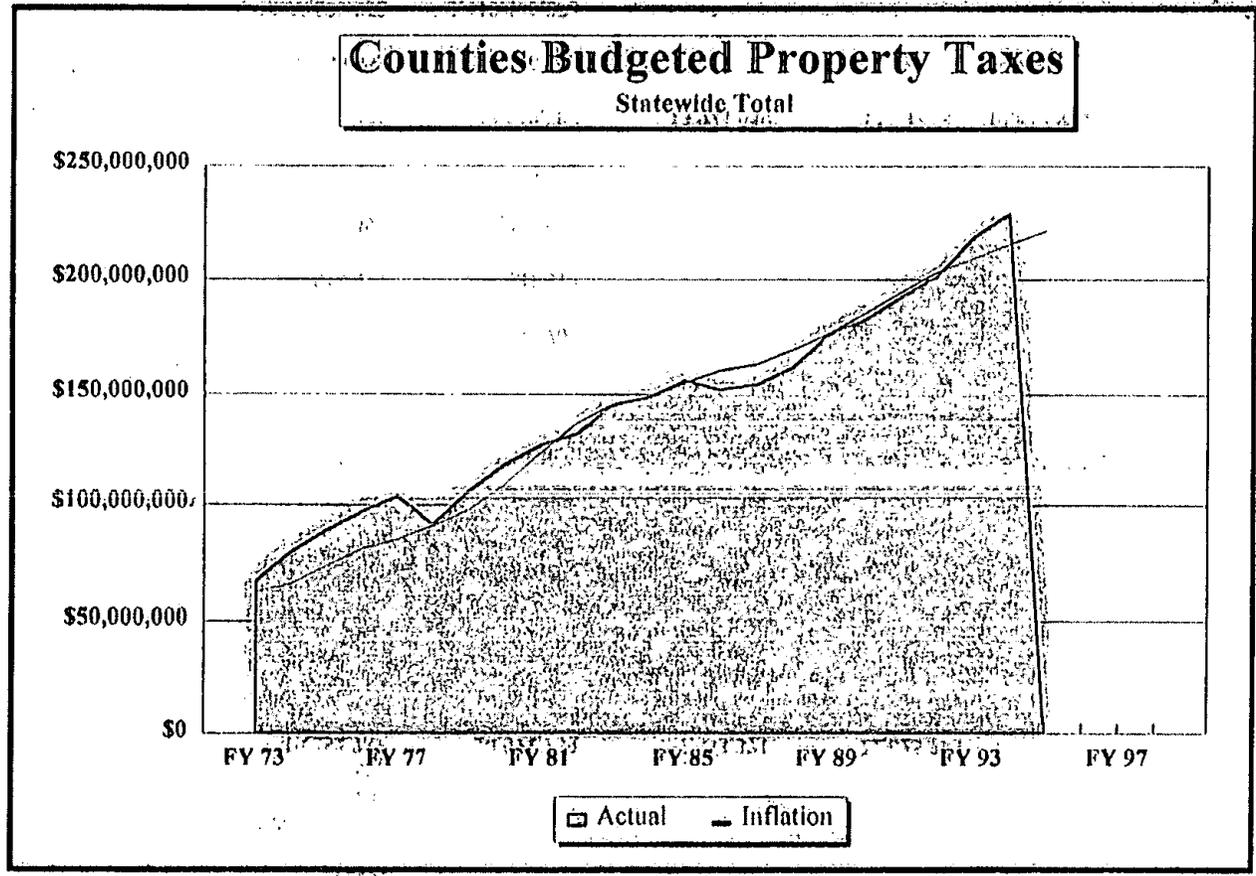
149,167,872	79,948,378	Counties
138,999,350	69,070,859	Cities & Villages
8,052,530	3,383,437	Townships
609,396,444	283,085,525	Schools
9,121,400	4,276,326	NRDs
34,868,596	12,564,329	Other Local Govt.

FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97
229,536,803			
240%			
5%			
177,038,220			
180%			
3%			
8,700,649			
173%			
2%			
1,008,550,114			
278%			
9%			
19,352,787	20,571,369	21,833,371	22,625,775
387%			
2%			
73,364,897			
575%			
10%			
1,516,543,479			
265%			
7%			
144.4	148.4	152.5	156.7
			160.1

215,614,021	221,586,709		
200,915,977	206,481,517		
11,639,493	11,961,916		
880,849,314	905,249,572		
13,184,486	13,549,707	13,924,059	14,307,541
			14,617,979
50,400,653	51,796,793		
1,372,603,952	1,410,626,223		

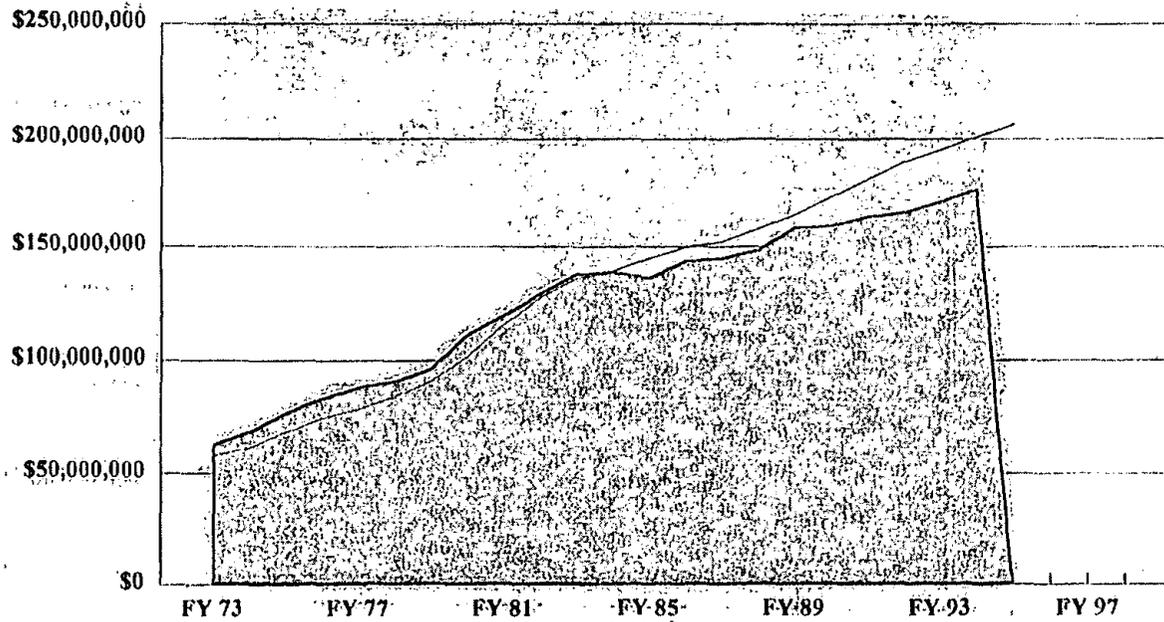
fy 94

229,536,803
177,038,220
8,700,649
1,008,550,114
19,352,787
73,364,897

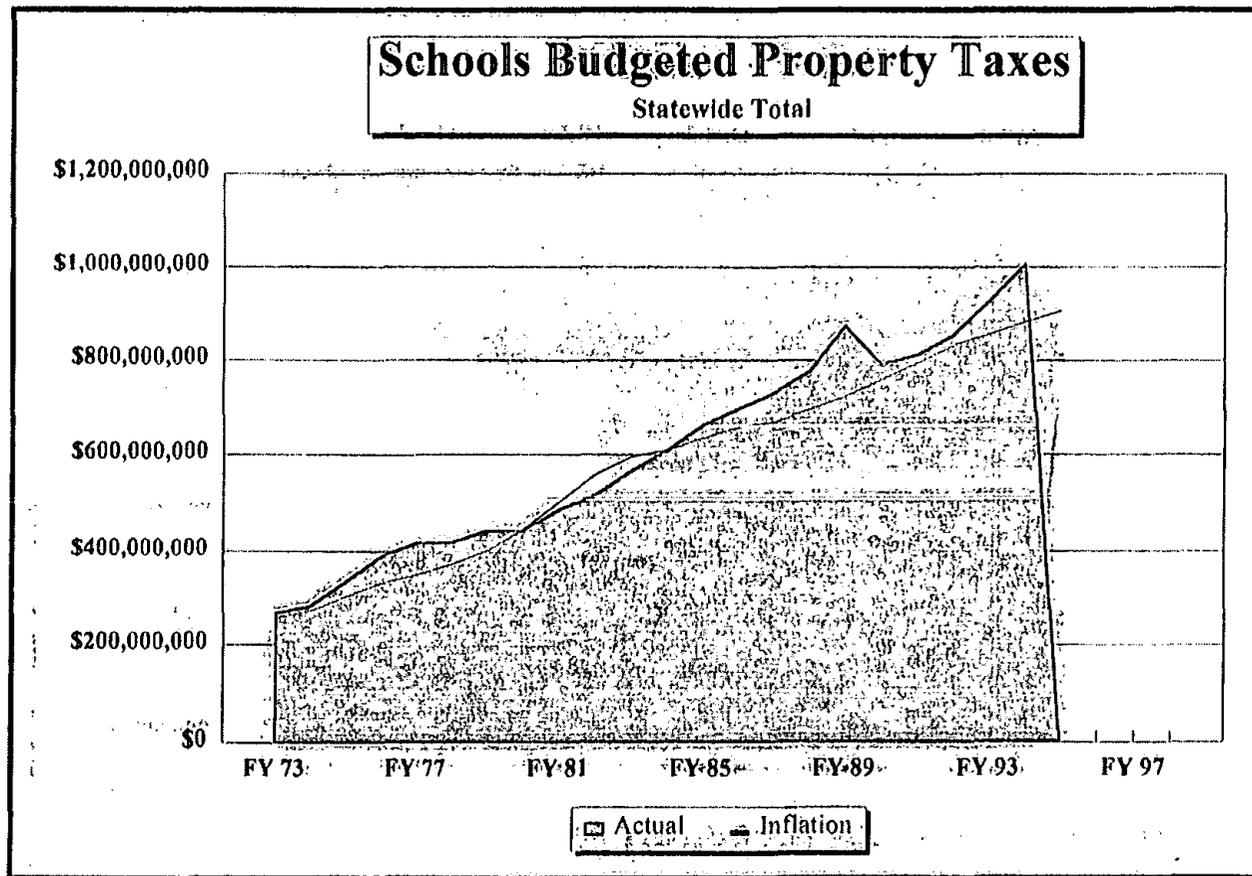


Municipalities Budgeted Property Taxes

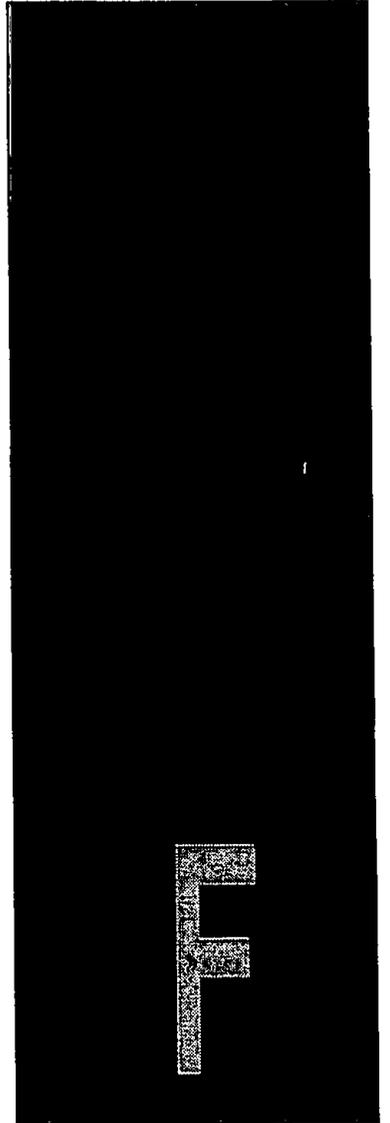
Statewide Total



Actual — Inflation



Appendix F



**Text of
Section 8 of LB 1085**

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Sec. 8. The Legislature directs the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission to undertake a study of the state's natural resources districts and to make two reports to the Legislature which include, if appropriate, specific legislative recommendations for changes. The commission shall make its first report to the Legislature by September 1, 1997, which shall include the commission's analysis of natural resources district revenue base, board of director size, boundary changes, and consolidation of districts. The commission shall make its second report to the Legislature by September 1, 1998, which shall include its analysis of natural resources district cost effectiveness, program effectiveness, duplication of responsibilities and authorities, and other services or areas that could facilitate property tax relief. With respect to each report and regardless of whether the commission endorses the changes, the commission shall outline the five possible changes which, in its best judgment, represent the opportunities most likely to stabilize and enhance the natural resources district system through restructuring and cost efficiencies.