

INTERVIEW WITH RON CACEK  
BY DAYLE WILLIAMSON and JOHN TURNBULL

December 10, 2014

1                   MR. WILLIAMSON: This is Dayle Williamson and I'm  
2                   joined today by John Turnbull of the Upper Big Blue Natural  
3                   Resources District, and we have the pleasure of interviewing  
4                   Ron Cacek. Ron's a former manager of the North Platte  
5                   Natural Resource District with headquarters in Gering,  
6                   Nebraska. We're conducting this interview on December the  
7                   10<sup>th</sup>, 2014, and we're in the Upper Big Blue Natural  
8                   Resources District office in York, Nebraska. Mr. Cacek is  
9                   on his way to Omaha today and we made arrangements to  
10                  conduct the interview at a very convenient place for all  
11                  parties. I appreciate John with me on this interview as  
12                  we've conducted several others. And we'll start the  
13                  interview, Ron, by asking you to tell us something about  
14                  yourself, where you grew up, where you attended college.  
15                  I'd like to ask you a little about your military experience,  
16                  because that's very important, and how you became involved  
17                  with the Nebraska Natural Resources Districts. So, Ron,  
18                  it's all yours.

19                  MR. CACEK: I was born and raised at Odell,  
20                  Nebraska. And I graduated from high school there. Went on  
21                  to the University of Nebraska and hold a bachelor's degree  
22                  in agriculture and a master's degree in intercultural  
23                  economics from the University. Between the two degrees, I  
24                  served in the military, was in the Army Signal Corps, and  
25                  went to school at Fort Gordon, Georgia. And then was

1 assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, assigned to the 36<sup>th</sup>  
2 Signal Battalion, and hadn't been there two months and we  
3 shipped out for Vietnam. Went over by ship, took 20 days to  
4 get there, and spent a year there, and then came back and  
5 finished out my two-year tour of duty at Fort Riley, Kansas.

6 And then, due to Dayle Williamson, I got into the  
7 National Guard, and spent quite a few years with the  
8 National Guard or the Army Reserve, ended up in the Army  
9 Reserve.

10 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, for the record, I  
11 want -- the historical record, I'm sitting with two Vietnam  
12 veterans here today. And it's a great pride. I've known  
13 both of these gentlemen and I guess I was sort of the  
14 recruiter for both of you. Wow!

15 MR. TURNBULL: That's right.

16 MR. CACEK: Yes, you were.

17 (Laughter.)

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: So, that's good. Well, we've had  
19 a great long relationship. Well, thanks for covering that.  
20 And, Ron, even before you start on the NRDs, can -- your dad  
21 was very active in the Big Indian Watershed down in the  
22 Odell area. It was in Gage and Jefferson County, and that  
23 was a forerunner of the NRDs. So, can you say something  
24 about things back then. I know you were busy going to high  
25 school and college and all that then.

1                   MR. CACEK: Well, I remember that the Big Indian  
2 Creek would flood --

3                   MR. WILLIAMSON: Yeah.

4                   MR. CACEK: -- quite frequently all the time I was  
5 growing up. It seemed like with any rain of any size at  
6 all, it got out of its banks.

7                   MR. WILLIAMSON: Right.

8                   MR. CACEK: And my grandfather was also  
9 instrumental in that. Dell Colgrove.

10                  MR. WILLIAMSON: Why sure. I knew him.

11                  MR. CACEK: That was my grandfather. And my  
12 father then, were some of the original organizers of that --

13                  MR. WILLIAMSON: Right.

14                  MR. CACEK: -- and kind of got that going and got  
15 some dams built. And I think, today, from what I know, it's  
16 a pretty well controlled situation now.

17                  MR. WILLIAMSON: It's a great watershed. It was  
18 large enough that they had some money. But there were so  
19 many watersheds around there wasn't any money to do  
20 anything. And you couldn't -- you know, you didn't have  
21 enough money to hire anyone, so that's one of the reasons  
22 the NRDs came along. We were always proud of Big Indian  
23 Creek, because it was large enough there was some tax money  
24 coming in.

25                  MR. CACEK: Right.

1           MR. WILLIAMSON: And it had great board members,  
2 including your dad. And, gee, I hadn't realized that that  
3 was your grandfather.

4           MR. CACEK: Yes, it is.

5           MR. WILLIAMSON: That's good. That's why we do  
6 this historical thing.

7           MR. TURNBULL: Family traditions.

8           MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, tell us about your work  
9 with the NRDs. And John's furnished a very good thing,  
10 here. And you were the very first manager in 1973 of the  
11 North Platte NRD. And that NRD has only had two managers.  
12 After you retired in 2013, Mr. John Berge took over.

13           MR. CACEK: That's correct. After I got my  
14 master's degree, I went to work for the Nebraska Soil and  
15 Water Conservation Commission. And, Dayle, you were my  
16 boss.

17           (Laughter.)

18           And that was a good period of time. The  
19 Commission moved me, first, to Alliance as the western  
20 representative for the Commission. And then, after a short  
21 time, was moved to Scottsbluff. And then, in 1972, the NRDs  
22 were organized, and I went to work for the North Platte NRD,  
23 yes, in May of 1973. And it has seen a lot of changes in  
24 those first few years. And over the entire time. I  
25 remember discussions with the board of directors about how

1 involved they were going to get in the tree program. There  
2 was concern about spending all those resources for about a  
3 30-day to 60-day period of time, and took manpower and  
4 equipment to do that sort of thing. So, there was a big  
5 discussion about that. Finally agreed to do that.

6 The other big thing I recall is I wanted to  
7 institute a program of water level measurements of the  
8 groundwater, although, I don't think we want to get involved  
9 in that.

10 (Laughter.)

11 That was the initial reaction, was the initial  
12 reaction. And I tried and tried and could not get them  
13 convinced to get involved in this sort of thing, because at  
14 that time, it looked like NRDs were going to start to assume  
15 some responsibilities there. And it didn't happen until  
16 Gerald Svoboda, who worked for the University of Nebraska,  
17 was out to one of the board meetings one time. And he said,  
18 "You guys really ought to look at this and really ought to  
19 do this." It picked up from there and we went on and  
20 developed a really huge program today.

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: Oh, yeah.

22 MR. CACEK: And have something like 600 dedicated  
23 monitoring wells now in the NRD to monitor groundwater  
24 levels. So, it grew into really a big effort.

25 MR. WILLIAMSON: Ron, we'll ask you a question

1 here. As manager, did you every have to measure any of  
2 those wells?

3 MR. CACEK: You know, only a couple of times.

4 (Laughter.)

5 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, good. Well, I'm asking you  
6 that, because when we interviewed Bill Umberger, you know,  
7 that board would -- and John knows all about that board, but  
8 they just didn't hire many people. And so, Bill measured  
9 all the wells as manager in the three-county area.

10 MR. CACEK: Is that right?

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: That was one of his jobs.

12 MR. CACEK: We decided -- once they made the  
13 decision to do it, they said, "Well, if we're going to do  
14 it, let's do it right." And we hired a person to help me,  
15 as manager, and part of his responsibilities was to measure  
16 the wells. And part of his responsibility was the tree  
17 program at that time. And so, you get off to a slow start,  
18 but it builds from there.

19 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, you have a tremendous  
20 program going out there now.

21 MR. CACEK: Yeah, it is a good program. We have a  
22 pretty good idea what's going on with the aquifer in that  
23 area.

24 MR. TURNBULL: Around in the North Platte NRD,  
25 when the irrigation is there, there's a lot of it that's

1 from canals and surface water, in addition to groundwater,  
2 is that right?

3 MR. CACEK: Yeah. In fact, there's quite a few  
4 more acres irrigated by surface water through a canal system  
5 than by -- than there is by groundwater. But the North  
6 Platte Valley is really unique within the state of Nebraska,  
7 because the groundwater, for the most part, is nonexistent  
8 except for the surface water projects that came in, oh,  
9 roughly about the turn of the century. And so, the water  
10 comes in and the water supply is snow melt from the  
11 mountains. The water melts and comes down through a series  
12 of dams in Wyoming. I think there's seven of them. And  
13 it's stored there until it can be used through irrigation.  
14 It's released to the river and then diverted into canals.  
15 And some of the diversions for Nebraska are actually in  
16 Wyoming. The first one is Whelan Dam, which is about 60  
17 miles above the state line. It'd be west of Torrington.  
18 Yes, pretty close to Guernsey, just below Guernsey, Wyoming.  
19 And water's -- that particular diversion is diverted on both  
20 sides of the river for canals that eventually end up in  
21 Nebraska. And this water that comes in through this surface  
22 canal system, waters the crop, but also infiltrates the  
23 ground and forms the groundwater, most of the groundwater  
24 that's in our area. And then, of course, the return flows  
25 from the irrigation itself makes up the basic water supply



1 for the North Platte Valley.

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: And so, you didn't want to line  
3 any of those ditches too much, then.

4 MR. CACEK: Absolutely not. If you line those  
5 ditches, it will have a significant impact on the system as  
6 it exists today. And eventually groundwater will be hurt by  
7 that.

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: And I know in the early  
9 irrigation projects, they had to make some drains. They  
10 made a Gering drain out there and then it became rather  
11 huge. Can you comment on anything like that? And that  
12 was -- I know the NRD has worked on that with the watershed  
13 there and so on.

14 MR. CACEK: Right, the Gering Valley is about --  
15 approximately 55,000 acres. And there was no natural  
16 drainage in the Gering Valley area until irrigation came in  
17 and you got runoff from the irrigation.

18 MR. WILLIAMSON: (Indiscernible) basin.

19 MR. CACEK: Right. And so, then, a drain started  
20 to develop. And, of course, initially, it was totally  
21 uncontrolled. It just kind of wandered around wherever it  
22 wanted to, to the point where it got fairly large. And  
23 then, if there were rains, and sometimes we've had pretty  
24 sudden cloudbursts there, which they've created pretty  
25 severe flooding within Gering Valley. So, prior to the

1 NRDs, the Gering Valley Watershed Conservancy District was  
2 organized. And the Army Corps of Engineers built part of  
3 the project, and the, what was then called the Soil  
4 Conservation Service, did the rest of the project. So,  
5 there was a series of ten dams that were built, and the Army  
6 Corps of Engineers went in and reconstructed the channels  
7 and stabilized it of the drain itself. Then the NRD took it  
8 over and finished the project. And there was a few things  
9 in the plan that were never completed. It just was decided  
10 not to complete that. The vast majority of the original  
11 plan is done and is ready to be closed out.

12 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yeah, well good. That was a  
13 major project. Can you tell us about some of the crops in  
14 your NRD and how -- and the importance of that area?

15 MR. CACEK: Well, the crops are -- some of the  
16 crops are different than the rest of the state. Corn, of  
17 course, is a major crop, but historically, sugar beets and  
18 dry edible beans have been a big crop as well. And the  
19 sugar industry grew to the point where there was several  
20 sugar factories in the North Platte NRD. Currently, there's  
21 only one that's left, but there were a number of sugar  
22 factories to produce Great Western Sugar from the sugar beet  
23 industry. And today, sugar beets are trucked into the  
24 factory in Scottsbluff from, I think, in some cases, almost  
25 100 miles to process the beets and make it into sugar.

1                   MR. TURNBULL: Where would those other plants have  
2 been, like Bridgeport?

3                   MR. CACEK: Bayard and Mitchell, and Gering had  
4 one.

5                   MR. TURNBULL: So, there were a lot of sugar beet  
6 factories out there at one time.

7                   MR. CACEK: Yeah. A lot of beets are raised at  
8 Alliance yet, and trucked down. Alfalfa is probably the  
9 other big crop. Now you see some sunflowers being grown and  
10 some small grains, wheat, millet, and --

11                   MR. WILLIAMSON: It's quite a diversified area.  
12 It's much different than other NRDs in Nebraska because of  
13 the crop diversification and the different --

14                   MR. CACEK: We often talk about what the valley  
15 would look like without irrigation, and probably the  
16 principal crop would be small grains, wheat and other small  
17 grains, and just grassland. Without supplemental irrigation  
18 water coming in, there just is not enough water.

19                   MR. WILLIAMSON: So, the NRD program would have  
20 been much different if, you know, the valley had ever been  
21 irrigated.

22                   MR. CACEK: Oh, absolutely.

23                   MR. WILLIAMSON: Just be planting more trees and  
24 more grass.

25                   MR. TURNBULL: Probably not too many trees.

1 MR. CACEK: Yeah, that intensive crop production  
2 probably would not be happening without that irrigation.  
3 Dryland cropping of, like, sugar beets and corn and dry  
4 edible beans is pretty much nonexistent. There is some  
5 dryland corn grown at times, but in a really good year, they  
6 do pretty well, but it has to be a good wet year during the  
7 growing season.

8 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, you might mention your  
9 average rainfall area there.

10 MR. CACEK: At Scottsbluff, it's between 14 and 15  
11 inches, the average annual.

12 MR. WILLIAMSON: So, Nebraska varies a great deal  
13 from Scottsbluff to Falls City, which is 35 inches.

14 MR. CACEK: Yes.

15 MR. WILLIAMSON: And even northeast Nebraska now  
16 is really getting --

17 MR. TURNBULL: Well, the thing I like to point out  
18 to folks about that variation of 14 or 15 inches at  
19 Scottsbluff and, as you say 35 inches around Falls City, is  
20 that's more change in annual rainfall in that distance than  
21 it is from Omaha to Washington, D.C., which is around 40  
22 inches. It always gets people's attention when they finally  
23 realize it's (indiscernible) number.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: So, we have to have a lot of  
25 different management techniques in our own state here.

1           MR. CACEK: Absolutely. And why the university  
2 has to have a number of research centers across the state.  
3 And the one at Scottsbluff, you know, works in areas that  
4 the other research centers in the state do not.

5           MR. WILLIAMSON: It's very unique.

6           MR. CACEK: So, it's critical to economic  
7 development of the area. The other thing is, differences  
8 are, like, the growing period, the degreeed growing days.  
9 You know, our growing season is much shorter than it is in  
10 eastern Nebraska.

11          MR. WILLIAMSON: You're at a higher altitude.

12          MR. CACEK: And a higher elevation, that's  
13 correct.

14          MR. WILLIAMSON: Ron, you mentioned that the  
15 board, you had to talk a lot to start measuring wells. You  
16 might tell how far you've advanced now in your NRD, all the  
17 other things you do with that water and modeling and so on.

18          MR. CACEK: Yes, we got to the point where we have  
19 a pretty sophisticated groundwater model that started out  
20 with the COHYST effort clear along the Upper Platte and then  
21 was further developed specifically in our area. And that  
22 model has developed to the point where it's really becoming  
23 a valuable tool in making water management decisions. We  
24 have in the area now, we started allocating of groundwater  
25 probably about six years ago, seven years ago now, and

1 they're continuing with that at the present time. And rules  
2 and regulations had to be developed. And it really  
3 surprised me how well the people accepted moving to  
4 allocation of groundwater. Regulation is not the type of  
5 thing that most people like very well.

6 (Laughter.)

7 But, you know, I think they understood that if  
8 something wasn't done, that there could be serious problems  
9 down the road, and so, we needed to look at what could be  
10 done to continue to have water available for the future.

11 MR. WILLIAMSON: Can you say anything about the  
12 early day of the NRD? You were there, the first manager,  
13 and -- were people in that NRD fairly well accepting the  
14 idea of the natural resource district, because you had  
15 some -- had a very active soil conservation district in  
16 Scotts Bluff County.

17 MR. CACEK: Yes, there was -- I would say, for the  
18 most part, it was fairly well accepted when the NRDs came  
19 into existence, because it was a brand new concept and kind  
20 of far-reaching concept. There was some opposition.

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure.

22 MR. CACEK: There was some opposition in the  
23 Gering Valley area in our NRD was the principal opposition.  
24 And in the Panhandle, there was some opposition in other  
25 places as well. But, you know, that all kind of worked

1       itself out over time. I remember, of course, initially  
2       taking a lot of telephone calls from people saying, "Well,  
3       just what are you all about?"

4                   (Laughter.)

5                   MR. TURNBULL: Aren't those great questions to  
6       deal with?

7                   MR. CACEK: It usually came when they got their  
8       tax statement. Which fortunately was pretty small, but it  
9       was pretty small in those days. In fact, if I remember  
10      correctly, the original budget, which I didn't have anything  
11      to do, that first year budget for the NRD was \$93,000. And  
12      today, I don't know what the budget was exactly they just  
13      adopted, but it was -- it's probably in the range of four or  
14      five million.

15                  MR. WILLIAMSON: Ninety-three thousand. And of  
16      course, boy the old Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
17      had to beg for money from the county boards, or they had to  
18      have drills and so on and so forth, and I know they did out  
19      in Scottsbluff, but it was difficult.

20                  MR. CACEK: Yeah, we tried to figure out ways we  
21      could earn money, make some money to keep things going, but  
22      I'll tell you, without the taxing authority, what all has  
23      been done would have been totally --

24                  MR. WILLIAMSON: Totally impossible.

25                  MR. TURNBULL: Talk a little bit about how the

1 staff has changed over the years, like, the size of staff  
2 when you first started and where it's at today.

3 MR. CACEK: Well, when I first started, there was  
4 four SCS clerks, and then I was brought on board in 1973.  
5 And so, that made five of us. And then we hired one  
6 additional person, probably within a year or so after that.  
7 And then responsibilities grow and grow in the groundwater  
8 management, takes a lot of people, and two people involved  
9 in tree planting full-time, and the GIS specialist today,  
10 and we've had groundwater modelers on staff and technicians  
11 on staff, and to the point where the staff today runs about  
12 16 or 17 people.

13 MR. TURNBULL: Quite a change, isn't it?

14 MR. CACEK: Yeah, a huge change over the years.

15 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, that's very significant,  
16 and how would this work -- how would work get done without  
17 the NRD in your area? Who'd be doing that this day after 50  
18 years there?

19 MR. CACEK: The old districts that were combined  
20 to form the natural resource districts just simply did not  
21 have the ability, either financially or from a management  
22 standpoint to develop the kinds of programs that NRDs have  
23 been able to over the years.

24 MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, Ron, we really commend you  
25 for all your leadership out there, and likewise, John, in



1 your district, and you've been in two districts. It's kind  
2 of a dual interview here. John's been interviewed before.

3 But anything else you can think of that you'd like  
4 to leave on the record? It's going to be a great record. I  
5 hope historians 50-60 years from now will be listening to  
6 this and it's just a pleasure to be with you two gentlemen  
7 today to talk about this.

8 MR. CACEK: Maybe one of the other things that we  
9 should mention is the Pumpkin Creek area --

10 MR. WILLIAMSON: Yes, that's very important.

11 MR. CACEK: -- which is the area that covers a  
12 good share of Banner County and into part of Morrill County.  
13 Pumpkin Creek is just a small creek that starts -- actually  
14 the drainage starts in Wyoming. The defined banks of the  
15 stream don't start until Nebraska, but it still drains a  
16 part of Wyoming and it empties into the North Platte River  
17 just below the city of Bridgeport. But it was a situation  
18 that even back in the '70s, some residents down there were  
19 expressing concerns about what was going on in Pumpkin  
20 Creek. And they approached the NRD about that. And the NRD  
21 looked into it, and there were some people suggesting that  
22 some kind of management type actions needed to be taken.  
23 And we started to look into that, and when this was  
24 happening, we were kind of in the middle of a drought, and  
25 so, that made the situation even worse. But then we moved

1 back into a wet period and the problem seemed to go away.

2 MR. TURNBULL: Are you talking about groundwater  
3 development in that Pumpkin Creek?

4 MR. CACEK: Yes, the groundwater development.  
5 There is no surface water irrigation in the Pumpkin Creek  
6 area. And the problem seemed to go away. So, everybody  
7 kind of forgot about it until about into the 1990s. And the  
8 water table started going down. And we were monitoring it,  
9 the NRD was monitoring it, pretty closely at that time, but  
10 our monitoring wells didn't seem to reflect what some people  
11 were telling us. So, it was -- the board was a little  
12 reluctant to take any kind of definite action because our  
13 monitoring wells didn't seem to show them that a problem  
14 existed. When, in fact, when you look back on it now, 20/20  
15 hindsight is wonderful, isn't it?

16 MR. TURNBULL: It's terrific.

17 (Laughter.)

18 MR. CACEK: We recognized that we weren't looking  
19 at the total picture at the time, and I think that we were  
20 only looking at the groundwater side, and we needed to be  
21 looking at the total picture as to what was going on.  
22 Groundwater development was progressing right along in  
23 Pumpkin Creek. And what was happening is the wells were  
24 being pumped, but the water from the stream was moving then  
25 out into the aquifers. And so, in our monitoring wells,

1 initially, we weren't picking it up that groundwater was  
2 declining. What was happening was streamflow was declining  
3 because the water was moving out of the stream instead of  
4 into the stream, out of the stream into the aquifers to the  
5 point where it virtually dried up. Why they've dried up,  
6 then the monitoring wells of the groundwater, then they'd  
7 started showing up there. And once we realized what was  
8 doing on and was able to explain that to the people, the  
9 majority of the people says, "Well, we've got to do  
10 something." And so, allocation was put on fairly quickly,  
11 the allocation of groundwater, irrigation pumping, was put  
12 on fairly quickly. And I think it won't be back to where it  
13 was unless you stop irrigation. But, I think we've kind of  
14 stabilized the situation there. So, it is not getting  
15 worse. Now, it fluctuates. It has its ups and downs, but  
16 overall, I think it's pretty well stabilized at this point.

17 MR. WILLIAMSON: Boy, another good area your NRD  
18 has worked on and a very important area, Pumpkin Creek.

19 MR. TURNBULL: Well, Ron, one thing we've not  
20 talked about as managers is working with boards of  
21 directors. Got some thoughts on that for new guys coming  
22 along?

23 MR. CACEK: You have to kind of get a feel for  
24 your board and what their interest are. And at the same  
25 time, have to keep them well informed about what's going on.

1       They need to be involved and well informed as to what the  
2       situations are. And if they are well informed and  
3       understand the situation, and sometimes that takes a real  
4       educational process to get the board up to speed, but if  
5       they're well informed and really understand the situation, I  
6       think they do a pretty good job of making appropriate  
7       decisions.

8               MR. TURNBULL: I would agree with that. I spend a  
9       great deal of my time just trying to figure out how to  
10      explain things to the board so they can understand it.

11             MR. CACEK: Right.

12             MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, both of you have done an  
13      excellent job with that.

14             (Laughter.)

15             MR. CACEK: Well, we tried.

16             MR. WILLIAMSON: And that is very important.

17             MR. TURNBULL: A few scars to show for it.

18             MR. CACEK: That's right.

19             MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, anything else, Ron? We  
20      don't want to take too long here, but we just -- it's just  
21      great to visit with you today.

22             MR. CACEK: Well, I think, you know, we could go  
23      on and on.

24             MR. WILLIAMSON: Oh, I know.

25             MR. CACEK: I think we've probably covered at

1       least the key areas.

2                   MR. WILLIAMSON:  Yeah, well, I think you've  
3 covered really well the importance of the NRD in your area,  
4 the one that you worked in almost your whole professional  
5 career here.

6                   MR. CACEK:  Almost.

7                   MR. WILLIAMSON:  Other than the military and a  
8 little time with our old Soil and Water Conservation  
9 Commission.  And we appreciate that.

10                   As kind of a laugh line, Ron was a single guy in  
11 Alliance and when we moved him to Scottsbluff, why the  
12 Alliance Chamber of Commerce was really upset, because, man,  
13 we were taking an employee out of town.  He must have spent  
14 a lot of money in Alliance.

15                   (Laughter.)

16                   And he traveled all the time, so I don't know.  Do  
17 you remember that, Ron?

18                   MR. CACEK:  Well, not too much, because you didn't  
19 pay me that well.

20                   (Laughter.)

21                   MR. WILLIAMSON:  I'm sure you made a good -- a lot  
22 more money working for the NRD starting out.  It was pretty  
23 slim.

24                   MR. TURNBULL:  You've been waiting 40 years to say  
25 that one.

1 (Laughter.)

2 MR. WILLIAMSON: I gotcha. That's good, Ron.

3 That's good. We need to add a little humor in all these  
4 things, but that was the truth.

5 Well, anything else that you'd like to say before  
6 we conclude the interview?

7 MR. CACEK: Just that, you know, I've appreciated  
8 all the people I have been associated with, all the NRD  
9 managers, the Natural Resources Commission and the  
10 predecessors' organizations, and the leadership that we had  
11 there with you, Dayle, and Warren Fairchild originally. And  
12 I think we all together made a tremendous team that did some  
13 good things for Nebraska.

14 MR. WILLIAMSON: And I'm really pleased we're  
15 doing these oral interviews, because it's very important to  
16 be able to talk to people that helped get all this started  
17 and record some of these things.

18 MR. TURNBULL: One thing I have often felt about  
19 the managers of the districts is it's a pretty close-knit  
20 fraternity.

21 MR. WILLIAMSON: Right.

22 MR. CACEK: Yes.

23 MR. TURNBULL: If I had a question, I never  
24 hesitated to call Ron and ask his advice. Or people would  
25 call me. I've had lots of exchanges over the years. We

1       made it a habit of getting together through our association  
2       five times a year for all these years. That's always paid  
3       off. As I tell my directors here, that's the one place  
4       where we can lean over a pickup hood and talk business and  
5       talk shop.

6               MR. CACEK: Sure.

7               MR. TURNBULL: There's nobody else in the country  
8       doing it.

9               MR. CACEK: You can learn a lot by just visiting  
10       with the other NRD managers, knowing and understanding what  
11       issues they are facing and how they are dealing with them.

12              MR. WILLIAMSON: Sure.

13              MR. CACEK: That helps back home, too.

14              MR. TURNBULL: Yep, it does.

15              MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, thanks to both of you. And  
16       it's just great to have you stop by here in York today, Ron,  
17       and we wish you the best in retirement. And we want John to  
18       work ten more years, for sure.

19              MR. CACEK: Sounds good to me.

20              MR. TURNBULL: That ain't gonna happen.

21              MR. WILLIAMSON: Well, it's been a great day and  
22       it's a personal pleasure for me to visit with both of you  
23       and so we'll cut off the interview here and hope everything  
24       turns out well. Thank you so much, Ron.

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