

INTERVIEW OF  
DICK MERCER and CARL GANGWISH

June 13, 2013

1                   MR. BARR: This is Jim Barr. It's June 13<sup>th</sup>,  
2                   2013. We're in Kearney, Nebraska, talking to Carl Gangwish  
3                   and Dick Mercer, and we've already talked without having the  
4                   recorder turned on so now if we could start with the -- each  
5                   of you introducing yourself briefly and how you got involved  
6                   with the NRDs and we'll get back to where we are right now.  
7                   I apologize.

8                   MR. GANGWISH: I'm Carl Gangwish from Kearney,  
9                   Nebraska. I'm a retired farmer based out of Shelton,  
10                  Nebraska, over the years with family and extended family.  
11                  But my first involvement with -- and prior to the formation  
12                  of the NRDs was with Leonard Silver, who was a local  
13                  conservationist at the time -- called and asked if I would  
14                  consider being on the Buffalo-Ravena Soil and Water  
15                  Conservation District, which I accepted and got involved.  
16                  It was a real education for me to see what was being done  
17                  and what could be done in the matter of conservation and  
18                  especially with water resources.

19                  MR. MERCER: I'm Dick Mercer, also from Kearney,  
20                  Nebraska, a retired farmer, cattle feeder. Kind of  
21                  repeating what Carl said, Leonard Silver was pretty busy  
22                  then and our farm was fortunate to receive the 1967  
23                  Conservation Award and about the time they gave us a picture  
24                  and told us how good we were, he also asked if I would like  
25                  to serve on the Buffalo-Ravena Soil and Water Conservation,

1 and that's how I got started. Incidentally, I'm also still  
2 an active member of the Central Platte NRD Board today.

3 MR. BARR: How did the NRD get formed as -- after  
4 the legislation passed and that sort of thing?

5 MR. GANGWISH: Senator Kremer was the one that  
6 really stands out. I'm sure there must have been others  
7 that were involved in it, but he was the mover and shaker at  
8 that time and did a very good job. As for me -- and I think  
9 all of us in this area, Central Platte, it was an  
10 educational process and I'm very thankful that the ground  
11 work was laid and put out to help all of us educate  
12 ourselves, if you will, to the needs and what could be  
13 accomplished through the formation of the NRDs in Nebraska.

14 MR. BARR: What was the basic purpose of forming  
15 the NRDs?

16 MR. GANGWISH: I've got an example that -- we  
17 farmed on the county line, the whole Buffalo County line.  
18 Up above us was the Boxelder (phonetic) watershed. In fact,  
19 it was one of the groups that was brought in as one of the  
20 groups to -- in the formation. And we found it was very  
21 difficult, if you had a drainage problem or a water  
22 situation, to go to one county board and say, "We've got a  
23 problem here," or to the other county board, "We've got a  
24 problem," so if you're going to try to come up with a cost  
25 share, how do you work with this situation? So it was -- I

1 saw it as a need and a win-win, I guess, you would say.

2 MR. BARR: Did those boards have any revenue  
3 source or how were they financed?

4 MR. GANGWISH: I think we had to go to the county  
5 board -- and I don't know if the local township had any  
6 money, but it was --

7 MR. MERCER: Well, another way they were financed,  
8 if you -- if a local drainage district developed a project  
9 and they got approval in the so-called neighborhood, those  
10 people that were involved were assessed the costs of it.  
11 And the theory behind the NRDs, to put it as simple as I  
12 can, was to come up with a mechanism, which they have and in  
13 my opinion as worked, was to combine all these conservation,  
14 flood control, irrigation districts, whatever you want to  
15 call them, into one unit which would be called an NRD  
16 district. There was turf control battles, of course, to  
17 start with, but there was a lot more support for it than  
18 opposition. And as we mentioned, the first Central Platte  
19 NRD board meetings were either just under or a little over a  
20 hundred people when you've got representatives from the  
21 cities and the counties and all the other conservation  
22 entities within the 10 counties that Central Platte is all  
23 or part of. And out of that, an executive committee was  
24 formed of 21 people to set the mechanism, to go about hiring  
25 a manager, and then the staff and all that. And we are

1           today, 40 years later, a board of 21 people.

2                   MR. BARR: In that first 100-and-some board  
3 members, how did you -- how did that function? How  
4 did -- where did you meet, for instance? You mentioned that  
5 before we turned the recorder on.

6                   MR. MERCER: All I remember is, we met in a small  
7 theater building that they offered to let us use.

8                   MR. BARR: Sure.

9                   MR. GANGWISH: I think the first meeting, two or  
10 three or maybe more than that, was an informational,  
11 educational process to get us -- all of us, all the  
12 entities, apprised of what we had and what our needs were,  
13 and then from there I think developed the process to be able  
14 to take action.

15                   MR. BARR: Did that full board meet very often or  
16 did the executive primarily handle business early -- in the  
17 early years?

18                   MR. MERCER: That, my memory doesn't quite --

19                   MR. BARR: That's fine. It's not crucial.

20                   MR. MERCER: Well, you know --

21                   MR. BARR: When were you first involved with the  
22 board, each of you?

23                   MR. GANGWISH: Once the NRDs were formed, we were  
24 brought in --

25                   MR. MERCER: Yeah, the very first --

1 MR. GANGWISH: -- automatically the first meeting.

2 MR. MERCER: Both Carl and I would have been at  
3 the first meeting.

4 MR. GANGWISH: And we had been on the  
5 Buffalo-Ravena Soil and Water Conservation District.

6 MR. MERCER: And it's like any other group,  
7 there's certain individuals that came to the front as  
8 interested or leaders and some of them just kind of  
9 automatically got on the executive committee.

10 MR. BARR: Now, as I recall, they formed in '72  
11 and the first elected board became active in '74 was it?

12 MR. MERCER: Right. Yes. There was an election  
13 and all of those people that were on this large board,  
14 anybody could run, and it was set up that who got the most  
15 votes served for four years and the second one served for  
16 two.

17 MR. BARR: Were each of you on that first board?

18 MR. GANGWISH: Yes.

19 MR. MERCER: Yeah. I received the most votes and,  
20 at that time, Central Platte had 10 subdistricts, we still  
21 do, as far as that goes, and you have two from each  
22 subdistrict and one at-large. And I ran from subdistrict  
23 No. 5 and got the most votes and a gentleman from the city  
24 of Kearney by the name of Alvey Payne (phonetic) got the  
25 second most votes, and that's the way it went across the 10

1       subdistricts in the area. For a little bit more  
2       information, that way of electing directors was not very  
3       good because everybody voted -- across Central Platte  
4       everybody voted for those people in those 10 subdistricts  
5       and I would challenge anybody that knew any more than one or  
6       two of the 20 people running. Since then we've changed it  
7       and you only vote in your subdistrict.

8               MR. BARR: Did that change right away or was that  
9       a few years down the line?

10              MR. MERCER: No, that was a few years down the  
11       line.

12              MR. GANGWISH: It took a while --

13              MR. MERCER: It took a while.

14              MR. GANGWISH: -- and you're right, Dick, that was  
15       a monstrosity, realistically, to vote -- to be voting for  
16       someone in an area of 50 miles or more from where you lived  
17       and have any idea of what you were doing.

18              MR. MERCER: Yeah, I received many phone calls  
19       from different people saying, "Well, who should I vote for?"  
20       Well, that's not a way to run an election.

21              MR. GANGWISH: But ultimately it's a good method  
22       the way it's set up now --

23              MR. MERCER: Very good.

24              MR. GANGWISH: -- so the only -- you represent  
25       your subdistrict and you're only eligible for voters within

1       that subdistrict.

2               MR. BARR:  What were some of the major issues you  
3       faced when you met as a first elected board and things that  
4       you needed to deal with?

5               MR. MERCER:  Well, of course, the first -- in my  
6       opinion, the first thing was to develop a budget because  
7       before most groups really didn't have a budget, so to say,  
8       and now you had a taxing authority and so it took some time  
9       to develop a method as to how to come up with a budget.  And  
10      it started out quite small compared to what it is today,  
11      there's no comparison between the budget back then and what  
12      it was now.

13              MR. GANGWISH:  And we found out early on that any  
14      project we took on had a cost effect and, again, as Dick  
15      said, the taxing authority and how to approach it  
16      was -- again, that was an educational process.  Back to your  
17      question about one of the first things, the one that I  
18      remember is that water quality was a concern and it's still  
19      a concern, but it came to the forefront and realistically I  
20      don't remember how that was set up in the budget.  I think  
21      it was a cost share some way with state or whatever and that  
22      was done almost immediately.  I can't think of the  
23      gentleman's name that kind of led that, but it was a good  
24      start for us to get involved in that way as far as the NRD.

25              MR. MERCER:  One of the things that made -- and

1 both of us being Central Platte, we kind of talk about  
2 Central Platte NRD, one of the most fortunate things was  
3 when we hired a new manager, we hired a gentleman by the  
4 name of Ron Bishop (phonetic). He's the manager yet today.  
5 In fact, he's 17 days from retiring. In other words, he's  
6 going to retire on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June and after 40 years -- 41  
7 years, I think I can -- oh, gosh, I don't know what the word  
8 is, but I'd equivocally say that Central Platte would not be  
9 the success it is today if it hadn't have been for the  
10 immediate leadership of Ron Bishop. And if he hadn't been  
11 the gentleman he is and had the talent he had, he wouldn't  
12 have been the manager for 40 years. But there's never been  
13 a doubt over any of that time that Ron was not the manager  
14 of Central Platte.

15 MR. GANGWISH: It's amazing, as Dick said, that  
16 the leadership that Ron had, the stability of his talent of  
17 presenting the situation, whatever it was, whatever the need  
18 in the district was or whatever the concern was, and there  
19 were -- many times we had situations where you had pros and  
20 cons very strong on both sides and -- but for Ron as a  
21 manager to present those issues and to bring out both sides  
22 and lead it onto -- through the discussion process to action  
23 to be taken and it was just unbelievable to me.

24 MR. MERCER: Well, for instance, groundwater  
25 quality and quantity. The quantity issue started even

1 before NRD started with the mid-Platte project that was to  
2 develop a large flood irrigation control near Miller,  
3 Nebraska. Well, that failed. And then, shortly after the  
4 Central -- NRDs were formed, Central Platte, well then we  
5 started working on a project called Prairie Bend and that  
6 was brought on because of the quantity or the underground  
7 loss of water in the northern part of Hall and Buffalo  
8 County. Before we got that project off the ground, early  
9 '80s come along and we got a tremendously wet season and the  
10 groundwater levels came back up and so it kind of went by  
11 the wayside. But those rules are still in effect today as  
12 to where the groundwater depth can fall to that these rules  
13 can go into effect. Also, at that time, we put in  
14 quality -- groundwater quality and we still operate today  
15 after -- well, that'd be 1980, say '85, '86 is when those  
16 went into effect. And the farmers in this area yet today,  
17 in Central Platte, still abide by those rules and  
18 regulations on the groundwater quality, water tests, soil  
19 tests, and fertilizer applications, and there's been  
20 tremendous cooperation with that set of rules that was put  
21 out.

22 MR. BARR: What -- was it primarily a surplus of  
23 water that doomed the Prairie Bend project and when did the,  
24 what was it, Kingsley Dam re-authorization and the  
25 environmental statement and all of that become involved and

1           how did that affect Central Platte and your activities, if  
2           any?

3                   MR. GANGWISH: Well, it was -- I can't quote the  
4           timeframe, but it certainly had a lot of attention in our  
5           board and how to work with it and how to, I guess, look at  
6           the broad picture, look at the whole piece of the pie as far  
7           as water not only in Central Platte but in the state of  
8           Nebraska as the needs, and energy and all of that, so  
9           there's always the entities that had a little more powerful  
10          input to their needs or thought their needs and concerns.  
11          So, again, as I mentioned before, I looked at the whole  
12          process over the time period as an educational process, not  
13          only for board members but all the people, and it's still  
14          that way, the need and the current situation in the state to  
15          educate all Nebraskans of what water is and without water  
16          Nebraska wouldn't be what it is today in any shape or form.

17                   MR. MERCER: You brought up Kingsley. Of course,  
18          that's Lake McConaughey. Right off, that project, of  
19          course, does not really pinpoint Central Platte, it's more  
20          south of the Platte River. But in the operation of Kingsley  
21          Dam, then that brings in the Endangered Species Act and I  
22          don't know how many hours we want to spend on that here  
23          today.

24                   MR. BARR: Well, yeah, just touch on it a little  
25          bit.

1 MR. MERCER: I'm going to touch on it just a  
2 little because --

3 MR. BARR: But we need to touch it a little bit  
4 but --

5 MR. MERCER: -- we need to because that affects  
6 the flows in the Platte River because of the environmental  
7 account that's in Lake McConaughey. And then, now, with the  
8 Platte River Preservation Act, which is a whole 'nother  
9 story, that also comes along, but that affects Central  
10 Platte because 60 miles of the Endangered Species Act are  
11 right in the middle of Central Platte from Lexington to  
12 Chapman. So Central Platte, some of our activities  
13 eventually get evolved with the Endangered Species Act and  
14 the flows in the Platte River, more flows or less flows,  
15 whatever there is. And I guess the only comment I would  
16 make and then we can go on to something else is, the  
17 Endangered Species Act is the law of the land and if you  
18 want to change it, you can't do it in a coffee shop in  
19 Kearney, Nebraska, you've got to do it in Congress. And I  
20 personally think we'd better learn to live with it because  
21 it is the law of the land and we have to be able to abide by  
22 it, good, bad, or otherwise.

23 MR. BARR: Seems like you've got a richness of  
24 challenges by being located where you are. Is that a fair  
25 statement?

1 MR. MERCER: Oh, yeah. We're actually --

2 MR. BARR: You're kind of at the heart of the  
3 whole thing of Nebraska water it seems.

4 MR. MERCER: I'd go so far as to say we're the  
5 envy of the world. We just had a world water conference for  
6 food in Lincoln and a bus full of those people came out here  
7 and I had the opportunity to have breakfast with them, and  
8 we've got an irrigation system to raise crops here that you  
9 can't hardly find anyplace else in the world.

10 MR. GANGWISH: And I think part of that is due  
11 to -- back to our comment about Ron Bishop, our manager, and  
12 the information that was brought together to -- early on,  
13 information and technology is the name of the game, and by  
14 doing that and collecting our groundwater levels and usage  
15 and a combination thereof, have been able to develop the  
16 situation that we currently have in monitoring usage,  
17 inflows, and all that goes with it to work within parameters  
18 to be able to maintain our usage of water, not only for  
19 agriculture and irrigation, but for the municipalities  
20 within our district.

21 MR. BARR: Have you worked as a district with the  
22 University or any other research --

23 MR. GANGWISH: Oh, yeah, we've had all kinds of --

24 MR. MERCER: Constantly.

25 MR. GANGWISH: Yeah, right from the start. Dick

1 had them on his farm. I had them on our farm. And it's  
2 been a relationship with the University from day one and  
3 it's been very well received, and the information developed  
4 from it to be put out step-by-step to develop to the place  
5 we are today.

6 MR. BARR: Did the NRD cost -- participate on a  
7 cost basis in that or --

8 MR. MERCER: Oh, yeah.

9 MR. GANGWISH: Yeah.

10 MR. MERCER: We've got a whole list of -- and all  
11 the NRDs across the state, I can't speak for them, but I  
12 know, Central Platte, we've got quite a list of cost share  
13 entities that we upgrade every year. We have a programs  
14 committee that goes down through all the cost share programs  
15 and every month we have a report from one of the staff on  
16 cost share requests, and we change it every once in a while  
17 because they become outdated, but the NRD Central Platte has  
18 done, money-wise, a lot of cost share over the years.

19 MR. GANGWISH: And it's worked really well because  
20 of the use of the committee system within the board to --  
21 for those individuals on committees to look at what the  
22 needs were and concerns, and then come back with  
23 recommendation to the full board because micromanagement  
24 wasn't ever part of Central Platte.

25 MR. BARR: What are some of your standing

1 committees and what's their -- just a brief role of what  
2 they do?

3 MR. MERCER: We have eastern projects committee,  
4 western projects committee, water resources committee, and  
5 programs committee.

6 MR. BARR: Which handles budget matters?

7 MR. MERCER: All of them.

8 MR. BARR: Oh, all of them do.

9 MR. MERCER: Each one of those come up with a  
10 budget and then they go to a budget committee, and then that  
11 proposed budget is presented to the board. We start on the  
12 budget because, see, the year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>, the new year  
13 starts July 1<sup>st</sup>, so we're in that period right now. And so  
14 the proposed budget for 2014 has already been -- gone  
15 through the committees and has been presented to the board,  
16 and the budget committee -- I don't know whether this  
17 information is necessary or not, but the budget committee  
18 will meet prior to the June meeting and then they will bring  
19 that budget -- proposed budget to the full board and that  
20 budget will be adopted and then it will be put out for  
21 public hearing 30 days later or something like that. The  
22 comment I would make, it's been very interesting because in  
23 the 40 years I've been on the board, the budget public  
24 hearing is interesting because nobody ever shows up to  
25 question the budget. Now, when I say nobody that's not

1 quite right, but theoretically there really has been hardly  
2 anybody -- and I would surmise that's probably the same way  
3 with any public entity that people accept the fact that  
4 you've got somebody on the board and they're taking care of  
5 it. But I think over the years Central Platte has done a  
6 very conservative setup on how they adopt the budget and  
7 it's very public as to how they do it.

8 MR. GANGWISH: And I think, along with that, a lot  
9 of it, as Dick said, the acceptance of the representatives  
10 that are there, but also as much, information and education  
11 is put out ahead of that so it isn't controversial to any  
12 degree.

13 MR. BARR: Do you want to just make any  
14 observations about some of the major accomplishments or  
15 challenges that you've faced over the years?

16 MR. MERCER: First one that comes to mind is the  
17 Grand Island flood and after the 1967 flood and the amount  
18 of money damage it made, when you organized the NRD, there  
19 was an entity then to bring that problem to. And I don't  
20 remember the year that it was done, but it took several  
21 years to get it done and it was about a \$16-, \$17,000,000  
22 project and that was the NRD and Hall County and Merrick  
23 County, I think, and the City of Grand Island, and the  
24 federal government, and got that project done. And the day  
25 we dedicated it, I remember making the comment, "I think we

1       ought to do away with it," because it hadn't rained since we  
2       built it. But shortly after that, we got a tremendous rain  
3       in that area and the Corps of Engineers or the Bureau of  
4       Reclamation will tell you that that flood was paid for with  
5       that one rain for the damage that it removed from the city  
6       of Grand Island. We also have a project, taking the  
7       drainage out of the city of Kearney, but it's not near the  
8       expense that Grand Island was.

9               MR. GANGWISH: And then we had one that's more  
10       with Central City with the water that was their problem.  
11       And the thing I think we ought to bring out is that, again,  
12       the length of Central Platte, the mileage, but yet these  
13       problems were in different areas, but yet the whole board  
14       had to help and say, "Okay, you've got a problem now. We're  
15       going to work with it," and other things, so it was the  
16       cooperation of the total board was phenomenal.

17              MR. MERCER: Carl brings up Central City. I was  
18       to a meeting of some kind in the Central City area after we  
19       did the flood control project and it's really rewarding to  
20       have people come across the room and thank you for what  
21       you've done to, quote unquote, protect their city from water  
22       damage that they've had for so many years. And then there  
23       are a number of smaller projects around. We've got Boxelder  
24       that was put in, which was one of the first ones, and then  
25       we've got one up north of Lexington that we built, then we

1       dried it up, now we've put water back in it again because it  
2       was a mistake to dry it. But we've got any number of  
3       projects around. Central Platte have -- we have done miles  
4       and miles of snagging and clearing along the many miles of  
5       creeks and rivers that there are in the district that would  
6       have never been done without the ability of somebody putting  
7       out a bid and hiring a contractor to clean up those streams  
8       and rivers.

9               MR. GANGWISH: It's really interesting, too, as  
10       Dick said, that we went through the process because we had a  
11       need and developed it in one way and then the climate  
12       changed or the needs changed and we looked at it, reviewed  
13       it, made a change and it was continually -- you know, it's  
14       been mentioned about Boxelder. Well, we -- living on  
15       Boxelder, I remember our first problem was -- in my  
16       lifetime, we were -- my parents were wanting to build a new  
17       house and so this was in the dry -- late -- after the '30s,  
18       into the '40s, and had the basement dug and, oops, we had a  
19       big rain up in Boxelder and that was full and water  
20       everywhere so we had to deal with that, and it went on from  
21       there. A few years later, we had another one and this was  
22       during the time of the process of looking at Boxelder's  
23       problem. And did the same thing, so Boxelder was built and  
24       originally it was a retention with a drawdown, and then  
25       looked at it again and now most of that area is being

1       farmed. But the flexibility -- and maybe that isn't quite  
2       the right term, but the information and technology of the  
3       needs of the area to adapt and adjust with the water  
4       situation.

5               MR. BARR: Dick, you had mentioned the water for  
6       food conference, and one of the side effects of this project  
7       is that Ann Bleed has been asked to write a paper about  
8       organization of entities to deal with natural resource  
9       problems, and she was going to be looking at how the Natural  
10      Resource District concept might be possibly a model for  
11      others around the world. Do you have any thought -- either  
12      of you have any thoughts on that question of how, as a form  
13      of dealing with natural resource issues, how the Nebraska's  
14      Natural Resources Districts might have some affect in the  
15      future at other places?

16             MR. MERCER: Well, the first thing you have to  
17      say, the natural resource district program is unique to the  
18      state of Nebraska. We're the only one of the 50 states that  
19      is organized that way. And you go to any of the meetings  
20      around the country and we are the envy because none of the  
21      other states are even close to being organized like  
22      Nebraska. One of the things that comes up, they haven't  
23      been able to figure out how we ever got it done that way and  
24      have taxing authority that we have. And so if we're -- if  
25      it's working in Nebraska and we're the envy of the rest of

1 the states, why not -- wouldn't it be worldwide? Now, not  
2 this exact type, but I really believe the idea of natural  
3 resource districts, local control, elected by the public,  
4 responsibility to do what's necessary, could be applied most  
5 any place.

6 MR. GANGWISH: Yes, it's amazing to me that -- how  
7 straightforward this mechanism of organization to deal with  
8 natural resources has not been accepted in any other area  
9 anywhere close to this form.

10 MR. BARR: When you talk to your counterparts in  
11 other states, do they have any thoughts of why they can't  
12 follow this approach or don't want to?

13 MR. GANGWISH: Well, I'd first say it takes  
14 leadership to get it started and then -- not only get it  
15 started, but to work with it and lay the ground work and go  
16 through the process. And again, back -- I dwell on  
17 information and education to get people involved and to  
18 accomplish it. Too many times I think we hear from another  
19 state, "We couldn't get that adopted. We couldn't" -- the  
20 taxing authority, different things. But timing probably was  
21 as important as anything for the state of Nebraska, the need  
22 at the time and the right leadership, and it is -- it's  
23 No. 1.

24 MR. BARR: Just getting to kind of a wrap-up type  
25 thing, can -- any subject you'd like to talk about related

1 to the Natural Resource District, the formation of that,  
2 that you would like to comment on how they've turned out in  
3 relation to what you might have thought in the beginning or  
4 future challenges that you see ahead from now on?

5 MR. MERCER: Well, over the years there's been a  
6 lot of changes and almost all of them have been on the  
7 positive side. I don't remember how long ago it's been, but  
8 it would be 25 years or so ago, every time we seemed to have  
9 a problem, one NRD was suing the other one. And we finally  
10 realized we were spending a lot of tax dollars on lawyers  
11 and weren't getting anything done, so today as a whole we  
12 fully cooperate with each other. The managers have  
13 meetings. The districts have two annual meetings where we  
14 get together and discuss similar problems. The cooperation  
15 between NRD districts has increased many times over what it  
16 was to begin with and that was something that time  
17 took -- you had to take this new toy and make it so you  
18 could make it really work. I've belonged to -- been very  
19 fortunate to have been on many organizations, many boards in  
20 my lifetime, and there's never been one that I've enjoyed  
21 serving on more than Central Platte. I don't remember how  
22 many directors, but there's been many dozens of different  
23 directors on there over the 40 years and the dedication of  
24 each one of those directors has been unbelievable. In fact,  
25 of all those years, I can only remember one time of a

1 21-member board not having a quorum to have a meeting. Now,  
2 that's dedication.

3 MR. BARR: And am I right, Dick, that it's still  
4 the only district that doesn't pay?

5 MR. MERCER: No.

6 MR. BARR: No? Okay, well maybe that's a  
7 different --

8 MR. MERCER: Go ahead. Carl was going to say per  
9 diem. It's only been the last, I'm going to say, eight  
10 years, that Central Platte was the only one that didn't pay  
11 per diem. So, for 30 years or more, you had the dedication  
12 there, that those people served no per diem, they were  
13 eligible to get mileage expense, but I know of some that  
14 didn't even turn mileage in. And today, Central Platte does  
15 pay per diem and those that want it can request it.

16 MR. GANGWISH: But that was, again, the dedication  
17 of the board to the need and the desire and the timing to  
18 put it together. And again, the right leadership at the  
19 right time to accomplish this, not only for Central Platte  
20 NRD, but the state of Nebraska and the natural resource  
21 districts.

22 MR. BARR: Any other comments you'd like to offer  
23 or suggestions for future organizers of organizations like  
24 this?

25 MR. MERCER: No.

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MR. BARR: Well, thank you again both, very much,  
for doing this.

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