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**(Neb.)-Panhandle Man Selected For Governor's Task Force**

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 07/03/2013 11:16 AM

(Lincoln)-A Gordon man has been selected by the Governor to serve on a state water task force. Gov. Dave Heineman announced the appointed members of the Water Funding Task Force on Tuesday. This task force was created with the passage of Legislative Bill 517e.

Members include: Rex Peterson of Gordon, Brian Barels of Columbus, Joel Christensen of Omaha, John Heaston of Cozad, Tim Luchsinger of Grand Island, D. Chandler Mazour of Gothenburg, Roric Paulman of Sutherland, Gerry Dale Sheets of Sargent, Scott Smathers of Lincoln, Walter Dennis Strauch of Mitchell and Lennie Adams of Waterloo.

The task force was created to make recommendations to the Legislature for a strategic plan that prioritizes programs, projects, and activities in need of funding; ranking criteria to identify funding priorities based on a variety of factors; legislation on a permanent governing board structure, application process, and a process evaluating priority projects; an annual funding amount; and statutes and regulations that would need to be modified in accordance with the task force's recommendations.

According to the law, the task force consists of 34 total members. Sixteen are to be the current members of the Nebraska Natural Resources Commission and 11 members must be appointed by the Governor from the following categories: public power; public power and irrigation districts; irrigation districts; a metropolitan utilities district; municipalities; agriculture; wildlife conservation; livestock producers; agribusiness; manufacturing; and outdoor recreation users.

Additionally, seven members are ex officio non-voting, including the Director of the Department of Natural Resources or his or her designee, the chairperson of the Natural Resources Committee and five members of the Legislature appointed by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.

The task force must submit their final recommendations to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2013, and will terminate at that time.

(Information courtesy Gov. Heineman's Office)