



**Dave Heineman**  
Governor

# STATE OF NEBRASKA

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
**Michael J. Linder**  
Director

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## DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

### CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Replacement Water Service Meters  
APPLICANT: Hartington, Nebraska  
COUNTY: Cedar  
POPULATION: 1,554 (2010 Census)  
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311552  
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: \$213,158  
ESTIMATED PRINCIPAL FORGIVENESS AMOUNT: \$42,632

The City of Hartington has applied for funding, through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), to replace their existing water service meters. Hartington has a permit to operate a public water supply system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179.

According to the Priority Ranking System this project is considered to be a low priority but eligible for Green Project Reserve (GPR) funding, and was included on the Project Priority Planning List in the State Fiscal Year 2014 Intended Use Plan (IUP). The project can be funded in accordance with the IUPs listed bypass criteria for high priority projects, as the bypass date of October 1, 2013 has passed. Including this final GPR project in the high priority bypass process is considered a minor change from that noted in the IUP, based on recently issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance for awarding GPR funds in a timely manner, as this project will close out the GPR funds that remain available from the Federal Fiscal Year 2011 grant. Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEQ, this project was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan with corresponding principal forgiveness capped at 20% of project costs. The installation will

consist of an upgrade to automatic radio read meters with leak detection capability, and thus are categorically eligible for funding under the GPR. The project will help minimize operation costs for the PWS through less labor required to read water meters and reduced pumping through the detection of water leaks in the system. Further, the project achieves the goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Drinking Water Infrastructure Sustainability Policy for the upgrade and/or replacement of existing infrastructure.

The City is eligible for a 20-year loan at an interest rate of 2.0 percent with 20% forgiveness assistance per the criteria listed in the IUP. In addition to principal and interest, an administrative fee of 1.0 percent of the loan balance will be assessed. The current residential water rate is \$8.33 per month for the first 2,500 gallons with a usage rate of \$0.60 per every 750 gallons thereafter. That equates to an approximate water bill of \$12.73 per month, based on a common household water use of 8,000 gallons. The projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) for the project is \$13,282. Half of that amount will be billed twice a year in semi-annual installments. Based on 799 active service connections, monthly household rates will be raised \$1.40 to an average just over \$14 per month to pay for the project.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. The project as proposed is solely a replacement of existing water service meters. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as wetlands, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat;
- A small section of the City (northeast) is within the 100-year floodplain; however as this is a water meter replacement project there will be no new disturbance within any flood area.
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;

The proposed project is determined by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Department of Public Health to promote conservation and will help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The NDEQ shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEQ. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Steve McNulty, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services at 402 471-1006 or email [steve.mcnulty@nebraska.gov](mailto:steve.mcnulty@nebraska.gov), or John Danforth, Water Division of NDEQ at 402 471-3373 or email [john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov](mailto:john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov).

Signed this 7<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2013.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Linder", written over the printed name.

Michael J. Linder  
Director

Attachments:     Distribution List  
                           Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST

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DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA STATE  
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P.O. Box 82554  
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DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Carol Malcolm  
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Lincoln, NE 68509

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Michael George  
203 West Second Street  
Grand Island, NE 68801

LOCAL NEWSPAPER (Public Information Only)

The Cedar County News  
PO Box 977  
Hartington, NE 68739-0977

CONSULTING ENGINEER

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PO Box 1424  
Norfolk, NE 68702-1424

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Environmental Coordinator  
601 Riverfront Drive  
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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Lincoln, NE 68508

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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STATE CONSERVATIONIST

Soil Conservation Service  
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APPLICANT

Brad Peitz, Mayor  
City of Hartington  
PO Box 427  
Hartington, NE 68739-0427

LEWIS & CLARK NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

Tom Moser, Manager  
PO Box 518  
Hartington, Nebraska 68739-0518

