

THE BEST INFORMATION LINE**From your chairman...**

Hello, Fellow Irrigators:

I hope this edition of "The Wheel Line" finds you well. Another irrigation season will be upon us before you know it! The SSRID Board and staff are busy getting ready for the upcoming season. We will once again host our Annual General Meeting in April, however, the date is yet to be determined by the Board. You will receive adequate notice prior to our AGM, and I would remind everyone that our AGM is a chance to come together to discuss important District matters, including the 2024 budget, operations, maintenance, finances, investments, and expansion. I sincerely hope you will block off some time to participate in this very important meeting. I would like to send a thank you out to the staff and senior leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Security Agency: for their time, expertise and collaboration. SSRID remains committed to partnering with government in developing and improving irrigation in our District, creating sustainability opportunities, and promoting food security across our great province (and beyond).

All the best in the days ahead!

Sincerely,

Steve Primrose
Chairman, SSRID No. 1 Inc.



SSRID
SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER IRRIGATION DISTRICT NO.1

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Matthew Lawless, Director

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THE BEST INFORMATION LINE**LAKE DIEFENBAKER & ESPS UPDATE****Commentary from Steve Primrose, on behalf of the SSRID Board of Directors:**

Western Canada was extremely dry last year, and the lack of snow pack in the Rocky mountains has raised concern among irrigators, as well as, industry and the public who rely on water from Lake Diefenbaker for their livelihood. I'd like to take the opportunity to communicate with all SSRID ratepayers, about how the Board is collaborating with Water Security Agency (WSA) and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), to navigate challenges and manage our water usage.

Firstly, I would like to thank Shawn Jaques, WSA President, and his dedicated team for reacting swiftly to power supply issues at the East Side Pump Station (ESPS) last summer. WSA's effective and immediate action to these power issues was integral to avoiding a system-wide catastrophe. BIG THANK-YOU AGAIN TO THE TEAM AT WSA!

SSRID continues to meet with WSA and MoA to discuss and strategize around a number of outstanding questions as we move forward, together:

1. Will we have ample water for the 2024 season?
2. Is there a solid plan to have all 4 pumps operational (and running continuously, if needed) at the ESPS?
3. Is there a contingency in place, should one of the pumps at ESPS fail, or worse yet a main transformer fail?
4. Will the system accommodate an additional 5000 acres of water allocation to the SSEWSS?

Running all four pumps last season, the maximum inflow to the M-1 canal was 740 to 770 cubic feet per second (cfs) (average of ~5650 gallons per second). Our maximum system outflow peaked in July at 807 cfs, and weekly demand across our system in August averaged 679 cfs. We can all conclude from these numbers, that having all 4 pumps running at ESPS is CRITICAL to the success of SSRID and other water users.

I have asked WSA to comment on their plan to keep water flowing during the 2024 season.

Here is an update prepared by Patrick Boyle from WSA:

"As we prepare for another dry season in southwest Saskatchewan, WSA is accelerating its work at the East Side Pump Station to add pumping capacity into the M1 canal, as well as into the Broderick and other downstream reservoirs. A construction project is underway to replace the current electrical substation, which will allow for operation of all four pumps simultaneously and improve our ability to meet increasing demands.

For the 2024 season, maximum delivery from the ESPS will be 21 cms (740 Cubic Feet per Second) with four pumps running - in line with peak delivery flows last year. The ability to run all four pumps throughout the entire season will improve our ability to accommodate peak demands. WSA also completed modeling to evaluate various scenarios for irrigation expansion on the SSEWSS. The models indicated that operating all four pumps will provide sufficient volume to supply additional acres of new irrigation, while maintaining SSRID's current allocation. To ensure the pumps are in good working order for the upcoming season, WSA will be performing inspections and maintenance on the pumps prior to spring runoff and will continue to monitor closely throughout the season.

THE BEST INFORMATION LINE**LAKE DIEFENBAKER & ESPS UPDATE CONT...****Patrick Boyle, WSA, Cont...**

In 2023, reduced mountain runoff and the absence of significant spring and summer rainfall led to only 26 per cent of normal inflows, resulting in the reservoir's second-lowest water level in 33 years. WSA is closely monitoring the unfolding conditions across the basin, including Alberta, and is planning for potentially low flow conditions again this year. To manage for continued dry conditions, our winter operating plan focuses on retaining water while minimizing downstream impacts.

Historically, winter outflows averaged 240 cubic meters per second (m³/s); but this winter, we plan to restrict outflows to a fluctuating range of 60 to 110 m³/s. This will result in a minimal winter drop of one metre, compared to the historical average of 4.5 metres. Anticipating lower-than-normal inflows in 2024, we are adjusting our reservoir level targets. The April target is set at 552 metres (normally a May target), with the goal of achieving the targeted level for irrigation and recreational users earlier in the season. The May target is 553 metres (usually a June target), and depending on mountain runoff, we aim to reach 555 metres by July 1, 2024. With these adjusted levels throughout the summer months, WSA hopes to keep the reservoir levels in a range that meets the water supply needs.

WSA will continue to provide ongoing updates to the SSRID and its members and will be posting its preliminary spring runoff conditions at wsask.ca in February."

Continuation from Steve Primrose:

Thank you, Patrick Boyle and your team for your report.

SSRID used a record-breaking amount of water during the 2023 season, equating to 15 inches per acre. We all understand we cannot rely on timely rainfall, and therefore we must all be prepared to be diligent and use the District's water allocation efficiently.

Funding options are available for irrigators who wish to switch out older sprinkler packages for newer, more efficient options (Efficiency Program). Please update the District when you change a sprinkler package to ensure the data we use to calculate your water delivery amount/usage fee is accurate.

The SSRID continues to advocate for funding partnerships, to replace some of our open-ditch supplies with pipelines, wherever feasible. Not only will pipelines lead to a decrease in water loss due to evaporation, but decreasing our inventory of open-ditch supplies will also decrease instances of seepage, which will help us to realize more arable acres within the District. I consider pipelines a "win-win situation".

Cheers,
Steve Primrose, Chairman, SSRID No. 1 Inc.

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IRP PROGRAM

The following was approved by SSRID irrigators at our AGM in April, 2023:

- Ministry of Agriculture contribution of \$41.00 per acre, each year.
- Irrigator contribution of \$21.00 per acre, each year.
- 2:1 cost share, similar to previous IRP.
- Five (5) year term (2023 to 2027 inclusive).

The Board recognizes some frustrations associated with paying into the IRP program, but at the same time, consideration must be given to the declining condition of District infrastructure (which we all own, together). Current prudent investment, coupled with government as our partner, will place the District in a somewhat self-sustaining financial position for many years to come.

Sign-up fees for new acres within the SSRID continue to increase on an annual basis. The sign-up fees for new acres in 2024 will be \$126.00 per acre.



WATER ORDERS

Our website will continue to support the submission of multiple turn on/off requests in a given area (South, Central, or North), at the same time, for the 2024 season. This method of ordering has proven to be the most efficient for irrigators and District staff.

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IRRIGATION SASKATCHEWAN CONFERENCE 2023

SIPA and ICDC would like to thank all those who attended the 2023 **Irrigation Saskatchewan Conference** at TCU Place in Saskatoon this past December. Attendance for the conference was reported to be “outstanding”, and industry support for the conference, by way of sponsorship, was significantly increased over 2022.

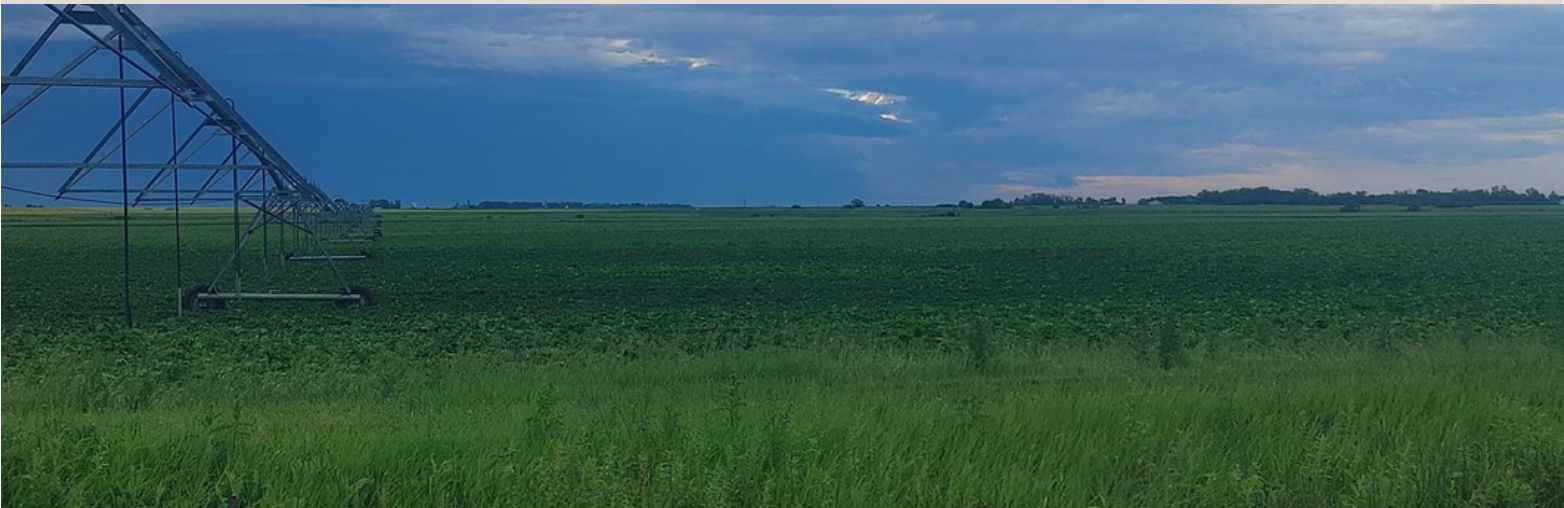
At the accompanying AGMs, ICDC and SIPA members **voted to officially unite** and become **Irrigation Saskatchewan**. This union will become official on April 1st, 2024, with SIPA being acquired by ICDC, and the operating/brand name of ICDC changing to “Irrigation Saskatchewan”.

The levy paid by all irrigators, as required under the *Irrigation Act 2019*, to Irrigation Saskatchewan will now be a **consolidated amount of \$1.75 per irrigated acre** (formerly a levy of \$1.15 for ICDC and a membership fee of \$0.60 for SIPA).

SSRID will continue to collect this levy on all irrigated acres within our District as part of our base rate, and submit payment to Irrigation Saskatchewan on an annual basis. Please be aware that, pursuant to the *Irrigation Act 2019*, this levy of \$1.75 per acre is **100% refundable**. Irrigators seeking a refund must contact Irrigation Saskatchewan directly within 12-months of paying the amount on which the refund is requested.

Matthew Lawless remains on the board of Irrigation Saskatchewan, and will vigorously represent the interests of SSRID. **Austin Ballek**, who previously served as a director of SIPA, will not continue as a director of Irrigation Saskatchewan.

THE BEST INFORMATION LINE



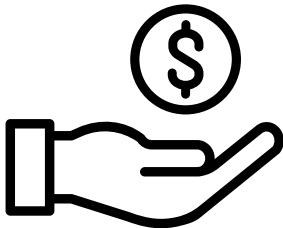
DISTRICT FINANCES

A friendly reminder to all irrigators that, per District bylaws, all base rates and water usage fees are to be paid to the District by December 31st of each year. Any accounts left unpaid after December 31st are subject to interest at a rate of 2% per month until the entirety of the arrears have been paid. Invoices for custom work are due within thirty (30) days of the date first noted on the invoice for said custom work.

In addition, any irrigator with an account left unpaid after January 31st shall be charged the upcoming season's base rates, which must be paid (in addition to all arrears) in advance of any water being turned on for that irrigator.

The SSRID office has the ability to accept various methods of electronic payment for base rates, usage fees, and custom work. Please reach out to Krystine directly at (306) 867 9923 to discuss these secure & efficient means of payment.

The 2024 operating budget (used to calculate our base rate and water usage fees) is currently under consideration by the Board and will be presented to ratepayers for your approval at our AGM in April. Please contact Krystine in the office or visit our website if you wish to review previous District budgets.



OUR MISSION

To be a leader in Saskatchewan irrigation and foster growth, efficiency, prosperity & sustainability in our district.

OUR VISION

- Strive to convey the cleanest water possible at a fair price.
- Establish positive relationships with district consumers, governments, and the broader community.
- Secure a shared revenue-stream from local, provincial, and federal sources, to enhance the viability & longevity of the district.
- Increase irrigable acres in our district by 20,000 before the year 2030.
- Replace failing canals with pipelines, wherever feasible.
- Rely on local personnel, businesses, and manufacturing, wherever feasible, to fulfill the operations & maintenance obligations of the district.

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