

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

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As we begin the New Year it beckons us to pause and consider what the future holds for all of us.

For some – 2014 will offer opportunities of change: better paying jobs, more favorable working environments, improved school systems or other exciting new adventures.

For others, 2014 may offer changes that are not so favorable.

Sometimes change is easy... and sometimes change can be difficult. Whether you understand it or not – the Republican River Compact is federal law and Colorado must be in compliance. In an effort to comply with the Compact the Republican River Water Conservation District (RRWCD) will be operating the Compact Compliance Pipeline during 2014.

Several years ago the State of Colorado had started the process which would have lead to the curtailment of irrigation in the Republican River Basin if there was no other path which would lead to compliance with the compact.

Before building the pipeline, the RRWCD Board investigated numerous concepts but in the end... the pipeline was the only answer that gave Colorado control of delivering the least amount of water possible to be in compliance.

Each well will only be allowed the historical consumptive use, (the amount used by the growing crop in previous years). Therefore during dry years, the pipeline will pump less water than when the wells were used for irrigation.

By working together Colorado, the RRWCD and the Sandhills Groundwater Management District have ensured Colorado will receive 100% credit for the water delivered by the pipeline.

It is a bittersweet success in acquiring the go-ahead to use the pipeline. Colorado and the RRWCD have worked hard for more than 5 years trying to receive this approval.

At the same time a lump grows in your throat as you watch our pure water flow down the river to the Compact Measurement Point at the Nebraska/Colorado state line. It is so disheartening... yet so absolutely necessary.

During this upcoming year, Colorado will continue to negotiate with Kansas in an effort to receive permanent approval of the pipeline. Colorado will achieve compliance when all of the states agree to this proposal.

Now the most emergent task everyone faces is to slow down the depletion of the aquifer. During 2013 a new organization made up of representatives from groundwater management districts throughout the Basin along with a delegate from the RRWCD and one member from CAPA, began meeting to discuss this extremely difficult concept.

What new changes will come from these discussions is hard to predict for now. One thing is for certain, to slow down the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer – and to continue to enjoy the benefits of living in this rural area – is going to require... change.