

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

[www.ci.norfolk.ne.us](http://www.ci.norfolk.ne.us)

August 21, 2012

## “Water Usage”



It would seem that during one of the driest summers for decades that the City of Norfolk would be demanding that residents reduce their usage of water. After all, Norfolk is the largest city in the area and 26,000 people use a lot of water. According to Dennis Watts, City of Norfolk Water Director, Norfolk is in great shape as far as water supply.

“The total use of water in Norfolk doesn’t really compare to the amount of water used throughout Madison County. It may seem that our residents would use a lot but it isn’t that much and we have the capacity to take care of the water needs of our citizens,” Watts said.

There are 29 public or community wells in all of Madison County. Of those wells, there are 13 used by the City of Norfolk. The other wells are in the cities of Battle Creek, Meadow Grove, Tilden, Madison and Newman Grove.

Since private or domestic wells don’t need to be registered, there isn’t an accurate number available for how many of those types of wells there are in the county.

Most of the water in Madison County is used for agricultural use. There are 1,186 registered irrigation wells in the county.

“The total number of gallons pumped in Madison County per day is about 1.1 billion gallons of water. Of that number, only 17 million gallons per day are used by the public or come from municipal wells. The rest is used for domestic wells and irrigation,” Watts said.

Farmers in the area have had to use irrigation intensively this summer as corn and soybeans under irrigation will be the only crops to survive in many places in the county.

In order to put a half inch of rain on a 130 acre area several times throughout the summer takes a lot of water. An irrigation well can easily pump an average of 650 gallons per minute.

“When you look at the numbers, you can see that the City of Norfolk actually uses less than 1% of the total water used in the county,” Watts said.

He added that in the 12 counties of Northeast Nebraska, there are currently nine water restrictions for users in cities. Of those nine, eight are voluntary and one is mandatory.

“It’s not that we want people to waste water. A person always wants to use our natural resources in the wisest way possible. As the water superintendent for the City of Norfolk, I don’t see any reason to demand that people restrict their usage at this time. We’re in great shape as far as the water available for our citizens to use,” Watts said.