

Oakes Irrigation Research Site Groundbreaking Held

On a blazing hot August day, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) staff and board members participated in the groundbreaking ceremony at the Oakes Irrigation Research Site (OIRS), located just a few miles south of Oakes, N.D., for a new building that will house offices, a research laboratory and equipment storage. Distinguished guests at the groundbreaking ceremony included Sen. John Hoeven and North Dakota Ag Commissioner Doug Goehring.

Since 1969, when Garrison Diversion, Reclamation and NDSU entered into a working agreement for the OIRS, Garrison Diversion has been supporting the OIRS with financial resources in order to provide a highly effective irrigation research facility in southeast North Dakota. The valuable data gained from the research site throughout its history has positively impacted the agriculture industry.

Due to the outdated nature of the site, the OIRS was in serious need of major upgrades and improvements in order to continue irrigation research at the high level expected from the site. In 2013, Garrison Diversion and the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center (CREC) set a plan into motion for major upgrades and improvements to the facility and within time, for NDSU to take over full funding of the site. A proposal was developed to include Garrison Diversion's assistance with constructing a new building at the site, a six-year funding exit plan and passage of the land lease on to NDSU once construction is complete.

"It's been the vision of the Garrison Diversion board to successfully see this endeavor through," said Garrison Diversion Engineer Kip Kovar. "For over ten years, we



Sen. Hoeven addressing the crowd.

had a number of individuals and agricultural organizations working together to make improvements to the facility."

The building site is prepped and construction is scheduled to begin in early October. Garrison Diversion is providing the insulated shell and NDSU will complete the inside of the facility. Once construction is complete, Garrison Diversion will pass the land lease on to NDSU.

The data procured from the OIRS has been invaluable to southeastern North Dakota and through the remainder of the state for over 50 years, and now, with the facility upgrades, will continue to benefit farmers and irrigators for years to come.

