

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

DOUGLAS D. BUSSELMAN



**STATUS OF INTERVIEW:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH**



Interview Conducted and Edited by:
Donald B. Seney in 1994
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STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF
DOUGLAS D. BUSSELMAN

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, DOUGLAS D. BUSSELMAN, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of RENO, NEVADA do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives"), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interview conducted on OCTOBER 21, 1994 at RENO, NEVADA and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: tape recording and transcript. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
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Date: Oct 21, 1994

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DOUGLAS D. BUSSELMAN

INTERVIEWER: DR. DONALD B. SENEY

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Introduction

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

In the case of the Newlands Project, the senior historian consulted the regional director to design a special research project to take an all around look at one Reclamation project. The regional director suggested the Newlands Project, and the research program occurred between 1994 and signing of the Truckee River Operating Agreement in 2008. Professor Donald B. Seney of the Government Department at California State University - Sacramento (now emeritus and living in South Lake Tahoe, California) undertook this work. The Newlands Project, while a small- to medium-sized Reclamation project, represents a microcosm of issues found throughout Reclamation: water transportation over great distances; three Native American groups with sometimes conflicting interests; private entities with competitive and sometimes misunderstood water rights; many local governments with

growing water needs; Fish and Wildlife Service programs competing for water for endangered species in Pyramid Lake and for viability of the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge to the east of Fallon, Nevada; and Reclamation's original water user, the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, having to deal with modern competition for some of the water supply that originally flowed to farms and ranches in its community.

The senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation developed and directs the oral history program. Questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed to the senior historian.

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**Oral History Interview
Douglas D. Busselman**

Seney: My name is Donald Seney, and today is
October 21, 1994.

**Executive Vice-President of the Nevada Farm
Bureau**

I'm talking to Douglas Busselman, the
Executive Vice-president of the Nevada
Farm Bureau at his office in Sparks,
Nevada.

Seney: Well, good afternoon. I want to begin by
asking you to tell me a little about yourself,
about where and when you were born and
your education, your mother and father.

Born and Raised in Minnesota

Busselman: Okay. Well, I was born and raised on a

dairy farm in Southwestern Minnesota. I'm the first of four generations to leave the farm. I was born on May 29, 1956.

Studied Ag Journalism at the University of Minnesota Technical College in Crookston

From an educational background, I attended the University of Minnesota Technical College in Crookston, Minnesota, in Northern Minnesota.

Seney: Is that an ag school? (Busselman: Yes.) Or did you major in agriculture?

Busselman: Yes, it was. Ag journalism was the background, and my degree is in ag journalism.

Seney: That seems like an unusual combination. Is it?

Busselman: Well, actually, my father said one time when I was growing up that he thought I would need to find a job where I could talk for a living instead of work for a living, and I couldn't talk fast enough to become an auctioneer, so I went into radio.

Hoped to Go into Broadcasting

That was basically what I went to college for, was to be a journalist from a broadcasting standpoint, although I was fortunate, I guess, in that my advisor in college wasn't going to allow me to *just* be a broadcaster.

Forced into Print Media and Took Course Work in Public Relations

He forced me into the print media as well.

And basically the course work that I took there was primarily public relations oriented.

Worked for KLOH in Pipestone, Minnesota, as a Farm Broadcaster

I did spend some time working at KLOH Radio in Pipestone, Minnesota, as a farm broadcaster and announcer, and took out the garbage when it needed taking out.

Seney: Small radio station, I take it.

Busselman: Very much. A 1,000-watt station.

Seney: What kind of coverage do you get off 1,000 watts?

Busselman: Well, in the part of the country that we were in, we probably went out five or six counties—coverage in both Minnesota and

South Dakota. From radio I went to work as
a

Seney: Let me stop you first and ask you about your
growing up. I take it you lived on the dairy
farm and did your share of chores
(Busselman: Oh yeah!) and that kind of
thing.

Raised on a Family-run Dairy Farm

Describe a little about what it's like to grow
up on a dairy farm in Minnesota.

**“. . . differing from the dairy farms here in Nevada,
the Minnesota dairy farms are traditionally very
small, family-run operations. . . .”**

Busselman: Well, differing from the dairy farms here in
Nevada, the Minnesota dairy farms are
traditionally very small, family-run

operations. We hired no outside help, we raised all of our own feed.

Seney: What sort of feed did you raise for them?

Busselman: We raised corn, alfalfa—although we never considered alfalfa as really a crop, that was just something you did to raise hay. We had soybeans and oats.

Seney: All that considered for fodder?

Busselman: Yes, exactly. We did have some small cash crop fields at the time: soybeans . . . We didn't really raise any wheat when *I* was on the farm. But anyway, the family's operation was all based, size-wise, to complement the dairy as well as the dairy complementing . . . We couldn't have any more cows than what we could feed, *or* that

we could get the chores done in time to get out and do the field work during the summer months.

Seney: How many acres?

Busselman: We ran about—probably in the time that I was there, the biggest that we ever got was maybe a half-section of a land, maybe three-quarters.

Seney: Three hundred and twenty?

Busselman: Yeah. Each quarter that we ran was 160 acres, and we had probably about two and two-thirds quarters that we were cropping.

Seney: Did you own? lease? combination of the two?

Busselman: Well, my dad was in the process of

purchasing the farm from my grandfather, and then he was renting another 120 acres from my grandfather, and then he also rented another quarter-section from one of the neighboring farms. But anyway, that was kind of the type of agriculture we had. I was the oldest of four children, and our operation was all family-run and operated. We all pitched in and did the chores and had different responsibilities.

Seney: What do you remember? What's most vivid in your memory about it?

Busselman: (laughs) Oh, it was pretty hard as far as . . . Looking back, it was a very consistent type of a lifestyle in that contrary to what many people believe, that cows give milk, they

don't—you have to go out and take it. And
you take it two times a day, 365 days a year.

“I remember the whole family’s lifestyle was geared around the dairy operation, and having to be there to milk the cows twice a day. . . .”

And I remember the whole family’s lifestyle was geared around the dairy operation, and having to be there to milk the cows twice a day. When I was very young, I started helping out with the chores as far as taking care of the young stock and having assigned chores and responsibilities. And it didn’t matter whether it was ninety-five degrees and eighty percent humidity, or if it was forty below and the wind chill was another twenty!

“We were responsible for caring for the animals before we took care of ourselves. . . .”

We were responsible for caring for the animals before we took care of ourselves.

That was an ethic that was ingrained in us as we were growing up, that we were responsible for doing our chores, and we were responsible for doing them right.

(chuckling) And if you didn't do them right, you got to do them again!

And so that was the type of . . . I think I look back on it and I feel very fortunate to have grown up in that kind of a work ethic, and growing up in the family that I did. In many ways, as now that I've moved to town and become a city guy, I

think my kids are really missing out on some of the things that I got to experience.

Seney: They have a pretty soft life compared to yours?

Busselman: Well, I don't know that they do. I don't know that my lifestyle was all that hard, other than it was just that growing up to learn responsibility, and responsibility was really part of your whole lifestyle and contributing to the family and doing the things that you did. When I was on the farm, growing up, it seemed like I couldn't wait to get old enough (laughs) to go away. And now, I almost consider it vacation to go back and play farmer.

Seney: Your dad and mom still on the farm?

Busselman: Yes, they do. I do have a younger brother now who is trying to get started in the farm, taking over from my dad.

Seney: How's he doing with it?

Busselman: My dad still has the farm, and really the retirement isn't planned, or the partial retirement isn't planned until the end of this year, and then kind of phasing my younger brother in.

Seney: Is your dad going to be able to quit?

Busselman: I don't think so.

Seney: Has he worked too many years to stop now?

“. . . he stopped milking cows shortly after I left the farm. . . . He had started during the winter months kind of a side business of doing remodeling and some general contracting, construction work. That eventually grew into a

full-fledged business . . .”

Busselman: Well, I think what it becomes is, he doesn't have the dairy anymore, and actually, he stopped milking cows shortly after I left the farm.

Seney: Why was that?

Busselman: He had started during the winter months kind of a side business of doing remodeling and some general contracting, construction work. That eventually grew into a full-fledged business, and it just didn't work to have the dairy cows and the construction company.

Seney: Which was a better income and a better source of income?

Busselman: Well, yes. And I think, too, it was just a change in lifestyle that he was looking for. From that time, after several years in the construction business, he also then purchased or started a business in town of a lumber yard. So right now, at his retirement age, he has a full-time job as an owner and operator of a small-town lumber yard. He still has his construction company, he still has the farm. And my two younger brothers, one of them is involved in the lumber yard and the construction company; and then the other one has just come back to the farm this fall to kind of get started in taking over the farm.

Seney: Will he go back to dairying, do you think?

Busselman: I don't know. I think it'll depend a lot on what kind of income scenarios and other types . . .

“One of the things that many people look at, as farming being a lifestyle and a way a life, and it is that, but it's also a business operation. . . .”

One of the things that many people look at, as farming being a lifestyle and a way a life, and it is that, but it's also a business operation. Many times the types of production—whether you're in crops, whether you're in pigs, whether you're in whatever—is dependent upon what your interests are, but also what the economics are for getting started in the operation. I think when my dad got started, it wasn't that

he was necessarily thrilled about the idea of milking cows, but with a dairy operation you do have a paycheck every two weeks. And I think that played a big role in getting farmers started. But it was a pretty typical kind of farming operation for the area that we lived in. All the neighbors basically had the same kind of operation, and there were variations, but for the most part . . . We also had pigs and we had sheep and everything was much more diversified.

Agriculture Was More Diversified When He Was on the Farm

But then agriculture as a whole was much more diversified (chuckles) at that point in time, compared to where we are today in

some of the . . .

Seney: And you're not a particularly old man. I mean, we're not talking about a *long* time ago. (Busselman: No.) So there have been some very important changes recently.

“There have been a number of dramatic changes that have come about, even in my lifetime. . . .”

Busselman: There have been a number of dramatic changes that have come about, even in my lifetime. I was just getting out of high school when the Russian grain deal happened. (Seney: The embargo?) Well, not the embargo as much as the (Seney: The beginning of the sales?) first beginning of the sales. And when we saw the export opportunities expand and farmers began to

realize—and not just farmers in terms of a sector, but farmers in terms of an individual operation—as they began to see opportunities for producing more specialized types of crops, one type of crop as opposed to lots of different kinds of crops, and then producing for that international market, there was a dramatic shift during *those* years. Then when the . . .

Seney: When people began to plant fencepost to fencepost.

Busselman: That was one of the . . . (Seney: Slogans?)
Slogans, I guess, that people were talking about. I don't know that it really ever happened as much as it was . . . What happens on a farming operation or in the

farming community, many times is reported on in the public press from a perspective of not really understanding agriculture and farming and ranching in the first place. And so it's easy to identify trends and make it sound like those trends are the way it's going all over, when in fact you have a conglomeration of individual farmers and ranchers, each making independent business decisions, and each doing and competing in *their* business operations for the markets that their neighbor down the road (chuckles) is competing for. But that was one of the trends that was identified as saying, well, we've become agribusiness and the evil

corporate farm, supposedly, was in the process of running the family farm out of the country and out of our way of life. And Norman Rockwell was spinning over in his grave because there went Americana, and in fact that really *wasn't* what was happening, but there was some shifts and some changes where the diversified type of family operation was evolving into more of a one- or two- or three-type crop specialty. And at the same time, the genetics, the various developments that were going on with seed made it possible to grow larger amounts of corn further and further north and further and further west or wherever. And so there were a lot of things happening within the

industry that made it possible for the transformations that were taking place. And then right after that, in the eighties, at that time I was already working for the Farm Bureau. Then we had the “great crash” from a farm economy standpoint, in the Midwest, and there were again a lot of changes that were brought about [in] as the way¹ lending

1.

Note that in the text of these interviews, as opposed to headings, information in parentheses, (), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this editing.

and the approaches that were being used.

Seney: And the amount of debt that began to be accumulated on the farm.

“ . . . agriculture is really an evolutionary process, and . . . various things . . . have all sent shock waves and impacts into the way farmers and ranchers do business. . . . bend and mold and shape the kind of agricultural operations that we have. . . . ”

Busselman: Exactly. And where we are today in agriculture is really an evolutionary process, and there have been various things that have happened in history, going way far back, or else very recently, that have all sent shock waves and impacts into the way farmers and ranchers do business. And all of those effects bend and mold and shape the kind of agricultural operations that we have.

Seney: Let's go back for a minute and talk about you, and then we'll get into all these trends, because that's exactly what I want to talk about, particularly here in Nevada, which I think one would not think of as a particularly agricultural state (Busselman: No.) and I want you to comment on that and give me a kind of a sense of what *is* agriculture here, what does it amount to, and what kinds are there? But I take it you must have gone to a small elementary and high school?

Grew up in Lake Benton, Minnesota

Busselman: The hometown that I grew up in was about 800 people.

Seney: What was the name of the community?

Busselman: Lake Benton, Minnesota. My graduating class in high school had thirty people in it. And so I came from a very rural, small-town type of setting. The Midwestern type of lifestyle also has towns every seven or eight miles apart, fourteen or fifteen at the very most. The land areas are divided into neat square sections of land. When you fly over it in an airplane, you see almost like a checkerboard below you, and the roads run straight and we were probably a mile, mile-and-a-half, from a tarred road. All the gravel roads are probably there, township-type roads that here, in some of the rural areas of Nevada, would be considered major

thoroughfares. (Seney chuckles) But it was a very neighbor-oriented type of lifestyle, community.

Finds it Odd to Live in Nevada with its No-growth Arguments While His Home Area Was Struggling to Find Industry and Growth to Keep the Younger Generations in the Area

The communities were starting to go through the process of seeing their next generation leave and go elsewhere for employment, and they were struggling as communities to find identities for themselves that would create opportunities for jobs and industry to stay in those areas. It's been strange in coming to Nevada, and living in the Reno area and dealing with the no-growth philosophy, having spent my

whole life in an area where *any* kind of development, *any* kind of opportunity for economic growth for the community was looked at as being a gift from heaven, and the maneuvers of stealing a business from this town (chuckles) or that state, or whatever—and then to come here and to see the attitude that says, “Well, I’m here, now let’s close the door.” That’s been a strange transformation to have to adjust to, and try to figure out. But I feel very fortunate to have grown up in the area that I did, in the community that I did. This last summer I went back for my twentieth year class reunion: about a third or maybe even half of my classmates still live in the area.

Seney: I wouldn't have guessed as many as that, somehow.

Busselman: Well, many times they left and then came back. Even we, when we first got married, went back for a short period of time until it just got to the point where you couldn't see a way to stay there, economically, and other career opportunities.

Seney: What did you try to do when you got married and went back?

Started Working for the Farm Bureau in Minnesota

Busselman: Well, that was when I was working for the radio station and for the newspaper. Then I went back, finished college, and then started working for Farm Bureau in Minnesota.

I've been with Farm Bureau now for sixteen years, starting out as a communications person in the Information Division for the Minnesota Farm Bureau.

Moved to the Farm Bureau in North Dakota

I was there for three-and-a-half years, and moved to North Dakota Farm Bureau and was based in Fargo. And then during legislative years, [I] would go out to Bismarck and live out there during the legislative session. And I was in North Dakota Farm Bureau as the director of communications for four-and-a-half years.

Moved to the American Farm Bureau in Chicago

Then I went from North Dakota to the *American* Farm Bureau, and I was based in

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Chicago. (Seney: Is that the headquarters?)

That's the national headquarters, is in Park Ridge, Illinois, which is just outside of Chicago.

Seney: I take it at this point you had probably made a choice to make a career out of working for the Farm Bureau, and they may have said, "We want you too." Is that part of what you do, then, is to have to go to national headquarters and work for a while there to get that perspective?

How the Farm Bureaus Work and Interrelate

Busselman: Well, not really. In the Farm Bureau structure, each of the State Farm Bureaus are separate organizations. We are a

federated structure in that the individual Farm Bureau members join the County Farm Bureau. The County Farm Bureau organizations join the state federation, and then we, as a State Farm Bureau, belong to the *American* Farm Bureau Federation. So technically, each of the organizations is autonomous, and yet at the same time they're affiliated, and there are channels between all of the State Farm Bureaus.

Seney: So your paycheck says Nevada Farm Bureau on it.

Busselman: Right, I work for the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation.

Seney: What about your retirement? How does that work? Is that through the American Farm

Bureau? Do they have a system for that?

Busselman: No, again, each of the organizations have their own separate retirement program and benefits package, and they're completely separate organizations. And they're affiliated or federated even on policy issues, we have processes that allow us as a State Farm Bureau, if we don't agree with the national position, that we have an opportunity to abstain from that particular policy. And there's some organizational systems and processes that allow us to do that.

Seney: How do you move up through the ranks?
There must be job advertisements and so

forth. So you start out just as a kind of lowly employee I take it, (Busselman: Uh-huh.) in Minnesota. Then you become director of communications -- do I have that right?--in North Dakota.

Busselman: Right. In Minnesota I was the number two person in a two-person information staff, and North Dakota Farm Bureau had made a change in their director of communications, which is a one-person shop. The division manager became something else, and that opened up and they asked me if I would come to North Dakota and we made the job switch to there. Before I left North Dakota, we had added some staff people in the division. When I went to the American

Farm Bureau . . .

Seney: Let me just stop you to ask you, What do you do in communications for the Farm Bureau? What did you do in Minnesota, and then what did you do in North Dakota?

“I did the Minnesota Farm Bureau’s radio program. . . .”

Busselman: When I was in Minnesota, most of my job responsibilities involved broadcasting-type activities. I did the Minnesota Farm Bureau’s radio program.

Seney: You make this available then to the radio stations?

Thirty-six Radio Stations in Minnesota Carried Their Programs

Busselman: We had a network of thirty-six stations in

Minnesota that carried our radio programs.

I also worked with the County Farm Bureau organizations and we had established an advertising program that the County Farm Bureau organizations would purchase the time or the sponsorship of the program *on* the radio stations, and then we handled that type of thing as well.

Seney: So a local radio station might have a regular spot, "Here's Doug Busselman from (Busselman: Exactly.) the Minnesota Farm Bureau with the weekly Farm Bureau news. Take it away Doug." What kind of thing would you report on?

Busselman: Well, the type of program that we did was a commentary program on the various ag

issues that were taking place at the time. I guess throughout my Farm Bureau career, I've been involved in the issue arena, dealing with, and presenting Farm Bureau's positions on the various issues of the day.

Seney: Maybe pending legislation or . . .

Busselman: Pending legislation: it could be state, it could be national, it could be trends that were going on, and our commentary on those issues. And then the program would be sent out on tape and broadcast at different times, depending on when the sponsorship had been bought.

Besides that, we also did—many of the farm stations or the local stations didn't

have news departments, and we would do news clips with actualities in them.

Seney: “Actualities” meaning?

Busselman: We would do an interview with a Farm Bureau person or a legislator in some cases, speaking on an issue or a piece of pending legislation or what-have-you. We would put that together in a news story for a radio station and send it to them over the phone lines. We were semi their farm reporters as well. And that gave us an opportunity to get our side of the story told, by being the reporter that did the report.

Seney: I would think that would be a very effective way . . .

Busselman: It was like a news release for radio.

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Seney: Did you have a lot of autonomy in this? Or were you pretty closely watched when you first . . .

Had Lots of Freedom in Developing His Jobs

Busselman: In working in the State Farm Bureaus that I've worked in, I've been very fortunate to have had a lot of freedom in doing what I thought needed doing with the people that I found. It was the kind of job you created for yourself. I think you had the chance to either be successful doing it, or else reel off enough rope to hang yourself completely.

Seney: This was essentially what you took, these same responsibilities, when you went to North Dakota, only (Busselman: Exactly.)

you had a little more authority over things, I would take it.

Job in North Dakota Was Similar Except Now Also Included a Monthly Magazine

Busselman: Right. And also, when I went to North Dakota, I became responsible for the monthly magazine, and there my writing background that I had not really (chuckles) wanted to get, came in very handy. We had a monthly twenty-six-page magazine.

Seney: Wow, and you edited that?

North Dakota Also Published about Three Monthly Newsletters and a Weekly Newsletter When the Legislature Was in Session as Well as Radio Programs and Other Public Relations Activities

Busselman: I wrote it, edited it, licked the stamps, and did all of those things. We also had about three newsletters that went out on a monthly

[basis], or even, during the legislative session, we had a *weekly* newsletter that went to our Farm Bureau leaders who were interested and on the mailing list for those legislative issue updates. I did the radio program there. We also did other kinds of public relations activities, as far as working in trade shows and promoting not only agriculture, but promoting Farm Bureau and what Farm Bureau was doing for Farm Bureau members.

Seney: Between the two states I'm trying to get a sense of which had more agriculture in it, where the agriculture was more profitable. I'm not quite saying what I want

to say. Maybe you understand what I . . .

Agricultural Differences Between Minnesota and North Dakota

Busselman: Well, Minnesota is a much bigger state than North Dakota, first of all. Another thing about Minnesota is that it is very diversified in its geography. When you get down into the southern part of the state where *I* grew up, and even further south and maybe east of where I grew up, you're really in northern Iowa as much as anything, and much of the agriculture reflects that. As you move north, the growing season gets shorter, and the land areas and the *type* of agriculture changes to probably smaller-type operations or even hobby kinds of operations in some

of the further northern parts. You get into the northwestern corner of the state, and you're in the Red River Valley, and the Red River Valley splits both North Dakota and Minnesota, so there's a Minnesota Red River Valley side and there's a North Dakota Red River Valley side. And that whole area, the swath that runs through those two states is extremely rich soil, very flat: you had sugar beets and potatoes and very high-dollar cash crop type operations.

The difference, I think, between Minnesota and North Dakota is the fact that besides Minnesota being a lot bigger, Minnesota has a larger population because

of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. You had seven counties in Minnesota, which was the metropolitan area that had half the population of the state of Minnesota living in it. And so you had Minneapolis-St. Paul, and the rest of the state. When you go to North Dakota, North Dakota has

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 21, 1994.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 21, 1994.

Seney: You were saying Minnesota's got seven counties with Minneapolis-St. Paul. That's where the major part of the population is. And you've got essentially large towns, and *no* real cities in North Dakota.

Busselman: Exactly. And you have a state economy in North Dakota that's completely dominated

by agricultural production, whereas in Minnesota you've got more of a diversified economy from a statewide perspective. So that was a difference in making the change from Minnesota to North Dakota.

Seney: So agriculture is more important, then, in North Dakota than it was in Minnesota?

Busselman: Well, I think in *both* it was important, but yes, it was more of a dominating force (Seney: That's kind of what I'm trying to get at, yeah.) that most of the businesses in North Dakota were agriculturally-related, and everyone was associated with agriculture to some degree. It was a bigger "bear in the woods"

(chuckles), I guess.

Seney: So for you it was definitely a step up the career ladder (Busselman: Oh yeah.) in terms of being . . .

Busselman: Right, it was a slightly smaller State Farm Bureau, but it still—and since then, I think North Dakota has grown considerably, to the point where membership-wise, it's probably very much the same as Minnesota.

There Were Differences Between Agriculture in Minnesota and North Dakota

There were definite changes, though, in the *type* of agriculture. The average-size farm in North Dakota is a thousand acres, and you've got a dramatic change in the type of crop production. You had very specialized

wheat farms, you had sugar beet farms, you had potato farms, so you started to get away from that diversity of operations, more into specialized areas where maybe one or two crops at the most might be the only commodities they were involved in. And part of it was because of North Dakota, and part of it was because of the changes that were happening, as we had talked about earlier, in the specialization of producers to become more oriented to one- or two-crop type productions.

The Energy Boom in Oil and Coal Was on in North Dakota and Resulted in a Boom-Bust Cycle

The other thing that was happening in North Dakota when I was there was the

energy boom was on. And it was really the first exposure that I'd ever had to industries that came and went. And the time that I was in North Dakota, they had both the coal and the oil exploration that really caused some of the western communities to boom big-time as far as the amount of people in jobs and the economy and all of that. And before I left, I also saw it go bust. (laughter) And then see towns that turned into ghost towns overnight because they had finished that phase of the development project. And whereas once upon a time you couldn't build homes or businesses or communities, schools, roads, all of those things fast enough, suddenly you had a half a town

sitting there completely empty, because there was nobody left there to buy it—and agriculture was still there. And it was that tradition, I guess, of agriculture *always* being there, besides being as *big* as it was in terms of the overall importance to the economy. Our State Legislature in North Dakota was very much a citizen-type legislature. You had farmers and ranchers who were elected to be House members, or to be in the State Senate. The Governor, when I was in North Dakota, was a farmer, and was elected, to a large degree, because he *was* a farmer.

“ . . . you had a whole culture that was geared toward agriculture . . . The industries that were

sought after to come in were brought into the state because of their processing or complementary features to production agriculture. . . .”

And so you had a whole culture that was geared toward agriculture, and of course was also very interested in the well-being and promoting agriculture as their . . . The industries that were sought after to come in were brought into the state because of their processing or complementary features *to* production agriculture. And so North Dakota is a very rural state and a very agriculture-oriented people.

Seney: Did you enjoy living there?

Busselman: I've enjoyed—well, except for Chicago—I've enjoyed every place I've ever been.

Seney: When did you get married, by the way? I take it you were in college, this interrupted your college years.

Busselman: Yup. Well, it did. I was married right out of the cradle, actually, at nineteen.

Seney: How old was your wife?

Busselman: She was nineteen as well. We got married half-way through college, then I went back and finished later on.

Seney: Where is she from? Is she a rural small-town farm-type as well?

Busselman: My wife is from the northern corner of the state, from Crookston, where I was in college. Her dad was a banker, so she didn't really have any exposure to farming and

agriculture, other than her grandmother had a farm.

Seney: But she was used to small-town life?

Busselman: Well, small town I guess in terms of if you're from an urban background, but from where *I* was from (chuckles) it was a pretty big town! (laughter) I don't even know, I suppose they had 10,000 or maybe 15,000 people. To me, it was "going to the city." *Cold* city, because Crookston is about seventy miles from the Canadian border. It was a lot colder than it gets here. (Seney: Right.) But anyway, we, I suppose, got married because we didn't know any better, and have stayed married because we *still* (chuckles) didn't know any better.

Seney: Do you have children?

Busselman: We have three kids.

Seney: What are their names, and when were they born?

Busselman: Our oldest daughter, Shannon, we adopted from Korea when I was with the Minnesota Farm Bureau. About ten months after she got off the airplane, the stork delivered our second.

Seney: You thought you wouldn't have any? Is that why you . . .

Busselman: Exactly.

Seney: This frequently happens, does it not, that people adopt and all of a sudden (Busselman chuckles: I don't know.), for whatever

reason . . .

Busselman: Our next daughter, Megan, then was born when moved to North Dakota. And they're fourteen months apart age-wise, but from our standpoint, it was like having twins almost, because we had (Seney: Two babies, right.) two babies, two different sets of diapers, and two different kinds of formula and all those things. Our son, Jordan, was born . . . Well, just as we were getting ready to leave North Dakota to . . . My last year in North Dakota, he was born before we went to Chicago. And that's kind of the family background. Right now the two girls are . . . Well, Shannon is going to be thirteen in a couple of weeks, so I get to

start dealing with teenagers. And Megan will be joining her in the teenage ranks in about a year, and Jordan is seven—will be eight, again, in a couple of weeks.

Seney: Good. So from North Dakota you go to Chicago to work at headquarters.

(Busselman: Right.) And this looks like a good job? I mean, they call you, they say, “Doug, we need you here. We’ve got a good opportunity for you.”

Moving to the American Farm Bureau in Chicago

Busselman: Exactly.

In North Dakota Started Working on Connecting Members to Information Through Computers

And what I was working on at the time, one of the other responsibilities that I had taken

on when I was in North Dakota was the Farm Bureau had started a computer program that farmers-ranchers, using computers and modems were able to dial up into a data base and receive market information, whether it be commodity futures prices and quotes, whether it be cash markets from the various terminals—it was a commodity newsletter type service that they would get off of their computers.

Seney: Hard to get the farmers to do this?

“Oftentimes the work ethic of farmers and ranchers is that you’re judged on how good you can *grow* a crop, whereas from a business side, you are judged based on how you’re able to market that crop and sell it for a profit. . . .”

Busselman: It was a challenge, because a lot of the farmers . . . Well, the majority of the

farmers were still in the process—and today they're still in the process—of learning how to market, and the aspects of marketing, and what role that plays in their business operation. Oftentimes the work ethic of farmers and ranchers is that you're judged on how good you can *grow* a crop, whereas from a business side, you are judged based on how you're able to market that crop and sell it for a profit. So after we went through the '80s and the economic hard times there, the ones that survived *in* the business were much more sophisticated in their ability to handle credit, to handle marketing, and the market information type service was starting

to become more of an asset that farmers and ranchers understood and took advantage of.

Went to the American Farm Bureau to Deal with Development of the Computer/Satellite Assistance to Farmers

When I went to the American Farm Bureau, I went there for that particular program at the national level, and I was involved with—it's called *Farm Bureau Acres*. While I was with the *American Farm Bureau Acres* program, we also expanded the program into not *just* delivery of computer-to-computer, but also satellite. I was involved in the program where we would send out the market information on a communications channel that was a side channel to WGN-TV that was based in

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Chicago. And so when people would be watching with their satellite dishes, the Cubs play, they had a character generator that was collecting data on the market information, and they were able to turn the screen over the other way and watch the markets, and the various kinds of reports that were coming to them off their satellite dish. And so when I went to the American Farm Bureau, it was to participate and work in that program.

Seney: That sounds interesting—was it?

“ . . . we were very much on the cutting edge of not only the technology of sending out communications, but also on the edge of whether or not farmers would know what to do with the information that they were getting. . . . ”

Busselman: It was *very* interesting. It was an interesting time from the standpoint that we were very much on the cutting edge of not only the technology of sending out communications, but also on the edge of whether or not farmers would know what to do with the information that they were getting. (Seney: Right.)

“ . . . we also started working with a . . . market education program where we would teach farmers various techniques of using futures or options or hedging, or whatever types of marketing tools were available to them . . . ”

And we also started working with a program that we adopted and nationalized, I guess, from American Farm Bureau standpoint, a market education program where we would teach farmers various techniques of using

futures or options or hedging, or whatever types of marketing tools were available *to* them, so that the information that they were receiving had some significance in terms of them *being* more profitable.

Seney: Again, I want to ask if it was hard to get them to *use* these new methods. Obviously, what I'm implying here is that we know that farmers are kind of . . .

Busselman: Traditionalists! (laughs)

Seney: Exactly, exactly. And it may be difficult to get [them] to adopt new methods. Is it hard to get them to use these things?

Busselman: I think it's not hard to get them to use it, once they decide that they *want* to use it.

And once they see some of the innovators in their community being successful using it . . .

Seney: Would you go after particularly prominent farmers who might have that kind of . . .

Busselman: Exactly, exactly. And from a national perspective, I worked with State Farm Bureaus all across the country. It was actually the State Farm Bureaus who worked through *their* structure, either commodity committees, or through their County Farm Bureau organizations to identify individuals. And my responsibilities were more service-oriented, as far as making sure that they were connected to the system, and taking care of

the State Farm Bureaus so that they had the equipment and the information. And we worked together in developing different kinds of state reports, and the transmittal processes of getting market information from local community elevators or wherever—cash markets sent into our data base in Chicago so that it was able to be, again, sent back out to the farmers in that particular area. In many ways, in the Midwest, you have opportunities where I can load up a truckload of grain, and even if I don't want to use the more sophisticated tools of hedging and all of those things, I can still go four or five different directions

with that load of grain, and there are price differences depending on which direction I go.

Seney: And you were able to help them understand all that.

Busselman: That was the idea of saying, “Here are your five towns in your neighborhood”– either on a computer screen or on their television screen from the market that they had pulled down off the satellite, and they could say, “Well, I can see that I can make two cents more a bushel by going to Tyler instead of going to Arco.” And that was the kind of very simplistic types of applications that we worked with, as well as the sophisticated people who were charting futures contracts

and who were involved in various hedging and commodity option type scenarios, where they were dealing with a broker and watching almost tick-by-tick, what was happening on the Chicago Board of Trade or Kansas City Board of Trade. I've met some *very* sophisticated producers who are even using Treasury notes and hedging their credit needs, based on from an input standpoint, when interest rates were maybe seventeen or eighteen percent during some of those more difficult years. They averaged, because they were doing the hedging with the financial instruments that were available, their credit was probably six

or even seven points less than other people in their area. And again, it was that—you know, depending on the level of sophistication, and the business savvy of the individual operators. But the bulk of the farmers and ranchers (chuckles) wouldn't know what to do with the information if they got it today, even. (Seney: Yeah, exactly.) But you have that innovative group that tries it.

Seney: They'll be trying new crops (Busselman: Exactly.) and raising new animals, and taking new . . . in other ways.

Busselman: Exactly. They're constantly looking at ways to improve the bottom line, and they know what their bottom lines are.

Seney: Yeah, minute-by-minute. (Busselman: Exactly.) How long did you stay in Chicago?

“I was only in Chicago for probably eighteen or twenty months. . . .”

Busselman: I was only in Chicago for probably eighteen or twenty months. (Seney: And then to) And then I came here.

Move to Nevada

Seney: To Nevada? (Busselman: Right.) And this was to be the head of the operation here in Nevada. (Busselman: Exactly.) And again, I take it the job is advertised, and they're looking for someone? (Busselman: Exactly.) How did you get the job? How did that work? Did you come out and

interview with a committee, I take it?

Supervises the Nevada Farm Bureau

Busselman: I was interviewed by the Board of Directors. As the Executive Vice-president, I work for the Nevada Farm Bureau Board of Directors. My responsibility is to hire and supervise the rest of the staff.

Seney: How many do you have working for you?

Nevada Farm Bureau Service Company

Seney: Is that the store I see downstairs?

Busselman: That's the store downstairs. There are three people that work there.

Seney: I just looked in the door. It seemed to sell . . .

Busselman: Farm supplies, agricultural input type

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supplies, whether they be fencing and gates
and panels . . .

Seney: Ah, you're gesturing out the window here.
And now I'm seeing all kinds of These
are gates?

Busselman: Gates and panels and fence posts and
fertilizer and feed and seed. We have a full
line, a range of agricultural supplies, that are
sold to Farm Bureau members.

Seney: If I come to you as a Farm Bureau member,
am I going to get a better price on this gate
here than I'm going to get . . .

Busselman: We hope we're as competitive as we can be!
(laughter)

Seney: . . . than I'm going to get from the guy in

town who might sell these too?

Busselman: Well, that's the idea.

Seney: And if you're *not*, you're not going to sell any.

Busselman: Right. And the farm supply business is a very competitive type of business where you may be pennies less today and a dollar more tomorrow, and it changes. You're maybe less expensive on one item, in one area, and more expensive on another, in another area. And you could be (laughing) all talking about the same product! So again, because of, I guess, the system that we're fortunate to operate in, every businessman . . .

Seney: . . . capitalist system, obviously, you mean.

Busselman: Exactly. Correct. Everyone has the

opportunity to try to structure their business as best they see to attract customers and to serve their needs and to price their products or services accordingly.

Seney: Is this typical for a Farm Bureau to have this kind of operation?

Busselman: No, Nevada's Farm Supply Store really began as a venture to provide baling wire to Nevada farmers and ranchers at a time when there wasn't any competition, and people, because alfalfa hay is their number one cash crop, they're very dependent on needing baling wire for their production. And the cost of baling wire was such that it was becoming very difficult for them in their

farming operations to be able to use the product and still have money left over when the bills were all paid. So Farm Bureau really got into the baling wire business to bring about some competition and to provide a service to the members. And from there it grew into what you see today.

Seney: How long ago did that begin?

Busselman: I think the service company began like in the mid-60s or early 70s, from what I understand.

Seney: Is it profitable, are you making money off of this?

Busselman: It's about a break-even proposition for our business.

Seney: But you're not looking to make a profit.

Busselman: Well, we're looking to cover expenses, basically. It's primarily a service-type situation where we're providing products that our members need in their operations. From a Farm Bureau standpoint, the main reason we exist is to do what we can to enhance the net farm income of farmers and ranchers, and whether that be in the legislative arena, serving as spokesmen for the legislative arena, serving as spokesmen for the industry in an advocacy-type role, or whether it be providing competitively-priced input products to reduce the expenses. We're always looking for ways of serving the farmer-rancher members, and to make

their operation more profitable. That's part of our mission in life.

Seney: But you don't see the farm store as a source of funds for the organization—you subsist on dues, I would take it. (Busselman: Exactly.) And how does that work? If I'm a farmer and I want to join, how do I . . . Is it based on how much . . .

Busselman: It's an annual membership, and it's not just for farmers. Although what we do in the issues area, and the work that we do, you have to be a farmer-rancher to be a voting member of the organization. But we have a substantial number of associate members who have joined for economic services that are provided to members only. But it's a

membership . . .

Seney: Do I see an insurance company downstairs too?

Services to Various Categories of Membership

Busselman: Yes, we're affiliated with Country Companies Insurance, and if you want to buy Country Companies Insurance, you need to be a Farm Bureau member to buy that insurance. We have several dues structures, depending in whether you're a farmer-rancher, or whether you're an associate member. Our farmer-rancher members pay an annual membership dues.

Seney: Is that a flat fee, flat amount?

Busselman: Right. In Nevada, that's the way it's

structured. And the membership year runs from the first of November through the end of October, and if you were to join as a Farm Bureau farmer-rancher member today, you would pay the annual membership, and you would be a member until next October.

Seney: What would my dues be?

Busselman: Seventy-five dollars is the annual membership dues for farmer-rancher members.

Seney: What about an associate member?

Busselman: The associate member, it depends a lot on what type of service that you're looking to get. If you want to be a *full-service* member, who would be entitled to shop at the store and use the other services that are

provided, it's fifty dollars a year. If you're interested in purchasing only the insurance products, that's fifteen dollars a year.

Seney: I see. Okay. And how many members do you have?

Busselman: We finished the 1994 membership year with 8,100 member families.

Seney: That would be farmers, ranchers, and associates?

“A member is a member, except in terms of only farmers and ranchers are able to vote and hold office. . . .”

Busselman: Right. A member is a member, except in terms of only farmers and ranchers are able to vote and hold office.

Seney: I know a little bit about the Newlands

Project—I mean a *little* bit, as much as I’ve tried to learn and study, there’s lots to know. And I want you to include that, but tell me about agriculture in Nevada.

“ . . . Nevada agriculture has really been an interesting thing . . . ”

Busselman: Well, Nevada agriculture has really been an interesting thing, having been born and raised on a farm and thinking I grew up in agriculture and knew what it was all about, and having spent most of my sixteen years working for Farm Bureau— well, all my working career has been tied-in with agriculture in some way. Coming to Nevada and experiencing western agriculture has been . . . (Seney: You’re smiling as you say

this.) Well, it's been an interesting challenge to learn not only *how* they do things, but (chuckles) *why*. And many times the techniques are the same to accomplish something completely different. In the Midwest where we did ditching and different kinds of things, it was to get the water *off* the fields. Here in western agriculture that depends on irrigation, you're doing the ditching and trying to get the water *onto* the fields in an irrigation sense.

“Most of Nevada’s agriculture is ranching oriented. And Farm Bureau is a general farm organization . . .”

Most of Nevada’s agriculture is ranching oriented. And Farm Bureau is a general

farm organization, so it covers agriculture from soup to nuts, as far as the variety of commodity interests that we got involved with. But sixty-six percent, about two-thirds of our agricultural economy in Nevada is livestock-based.

“ . . . alfalfa hay is the top agricultural commodity that’s grown for a cash-crop . . . ”

As I said earlier, alfalfa hay is the top agricultural commodity that’s grown for a cash-crop-type situation.

Agriculture in Nevada Is less Dominant in the Economy and the Presence of Federal Land Changes the Situation Considerably

The amount of agriculture in the state, in terms of dollar volume, is a lot smaller than where I’ve come from, where I

was born and raised, and North Dakota.

Nevada agriculture is not *the* number one sector of our economy. It probably ranks about third on the list. So it's been a change in dealing with agricultural issues in an urban setting—not only here in Reno, but in Las Vegas where many of the people, even who live here, don't necessarily equate agriculture to Nevada. So it's been an interesting adjustment to come out West to deal with public lands issues that we are very deeply involved in, because, I mean, I come from private-ownership-based states where private property and all of that was considered normal. You come to Nevada,

and eighty-seven percent of the state is under the control of Federal agencies. That changes the world dramatically, in many ways.

Seney: How do you mean?

Busselman: In a private setting, you're doing most of your farming and ranching practices as you see fit. Yes, you live within the law, but you don't have a regulatory person looking over your shoulder saying, "That cow can't take another bite here." (laughter)

“. . . that domination of Federal agencies really controlling the entire agricultural economy of this state, is an interesting scenario—not only with the Bureau of Land Management, but Forest Service, and of course when we get into the irrigation arena we get into the Bureau of Reclamation and the various kinds of regulatory decisions that are made by bureaucrats deciding how things are going to be done, whether that fits the needs of

the person producing or not. . . .”

And so having that domination of Federal agencies really controlling the entire agricultural economy of this state, is an interesting scenario—not only with the Bureau of Land Management, but Forest Service, and of course when we get into the irrigation arena we get into the Bureau of Reclamation and the various kinds of regulatory decisions that are made by bureaucrats deciding how things are going to be done, whether that fits the needs of the person producing or not.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1. OCTOBER 21, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 21, 1994.

Today is October 21, 1994. My name is Donald Seney, and I'm with Mr. Douglas Busselman, Executive Vice-president of the Nevada Farm Bureau, in his office in Sparks.

Seney: You know, we were starting to talk about the differences in agriculture here in the West, and as we were turning the tape over, one of the things you pointed out to me out here in your yard where you now have fence posts, this used to be potato fields. And again, as we were saying, the whole of the Truckee Meadows was really agriculture. Is this different than what you saw in the Midwest in terms of the encroachment of urban land onto farm area too?

“ . . . that's one of the reasons why private

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property and private property rights means so much to farmers and ranchers, because that private property is their retirement benefits . . . they will scrape by for a lifetime in conducting their farming and ranching businesses, with the idea that when they retire, when they sell that business operation, is when they will be able to collect the benefits that they've worked a lifetime to achieve. So selling one's property into development makes for a lot better market to sell in . . ."

Busselman: There was some encroachment taking place, but again, we didn't have . . . It wasn't perceived at that time as being a negative thing there. And I don't know that it is here, by farmers and ranchers. Farming and ranching are very capital-intensive types of business operations. And when a person gets involved in becoming a farmer-rancher, it takes a lot of money to *be* in the business,

and you're very asset-rich and very cash-poor. And that's one of the reasons why private property and private property rights means so much to farmers and ranchers, because that private property is their retirement benefits that they're working on. And they will scrape by for a lifetime in conducting their farming and ranching businesses, with the idea that when they retire, when they sell that business operation, is when they will be able to collect the benefits that they've worked a lifetime to achieve. So selling one's property into development makes for a lot better market to sell in, because other farmers who are going to buy your ranch, if

they're going to buy your ranch or your farm, they're not going to pay a lot (laughs) to keep it in farming, whereas the highest and best use will definitely increase and enhance the lifestyle you have once you aren't farming and ranching anymore.

Seney: Certainly the amount of farming has shrunk in Nevada.

Busselman: There are about 2,500 farmers and ranchers in the state. That's using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's statistics, and their definition of farmer and ranchers are somewhat liberal. I think you need to have \$1,000 a year in income from a farming and ranching operation to be considered a

farmer-rancher. So there's a lot of hobby farms and other kinds of situations—not that they're not farmers, although from the Bureau of Reclamation's standpoint we get into different issues on that. But I mean from a farming and ranching standpoint, there are a number of people who have off-farm jobs as well as the farm and ranch that they're trying to start.

Seney: Why don't we talk a little bit about the Newlands Project and what's going on over there, because that's definitely—I think one can fairly say—agriculture under pressure. How did you begin to see the issue when you got here? Did you know anything about the Newlands Project before you came to

Nevada?

“In the six years that I’ve been in Nevada, we’ve been very involved . . . in trying to serve as advocates for the farmers and ranchers in the Fallon and Fernley areas as they’ve been really pressed in facing the challenges that have come about *in the system and the operation of the system over the years. . . .*”

Busselman: No. When I came to Nevada, I didn’t even know anything about irrigated agriculture at all, let alone the Newlands Project that was really an irrigation system. Besides the irrigation, it was very dependent on the system. In the six years that I’ve been in Nevada, we’ve been very involved, from an organizational standpoint, in trying to serve as advocates for the farmers and ranchers in the Fallon and Fernley areas as they’ve been

really pressed in facing the challenges that have come about *in* the system and the *operation* of the system over the years.

“There was the initial change was the operating procedures of how the irrigation system is going to be run–OCAP . . .”

There was the initial change was the operating procedures of how the irrigation system is going to be run–OCAP [operating criteria and procedures]–and when I first came here, that was a very critical issue from the standpoint that the farmers and ranchers in that area . . . In Nevada, I think more people like to consider themselves to have ranches–they may be farming, but they’ve got “ranches” where they do it.

Seney: What *is* farming and ranching . . .”

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Busselman: Well, I don't know if I know. As I said, in Nevada, everyone has a "ranch," even if they're farming. I think traditionally the definitions were along the lines of if you were raising crops and tilling the soil, you were involved in farming; and if you were conducting your business operation out of a saddle and involved strictly with livestock, you were considered to be more of a rancher. But from *our* perspective, farmers and ranchers are synonymous.

But as they were dealing with the OCAP situation, their operations and how they managed and used their waters were being . . . There was a change brought about

because of OCAP, and they were having a difficulty in dealing with that change.

Seney: How did your organization take a part here in all of this?

“ . . . most of our participation has been in the public policy arena or in the public relations area. But in the public policy area, we’ve been involved in the discussions that led up to passage of Senator [Harry] Reid’s water settlement bill, and the other things that happened . . . ”

Busselman: Well, most of our participation has been in the public policy arena or in the public relations area. But in the public policy area, we’ve been involved in the discussions that led up to passage of Senator [Harry] Reid’s water settlement bill, and the other things that happened before that. I mean, that was not a one-year process, that was several

years in the making. And there were a couple of times where it didn't happen. (chuckles) And so we were involved in those discussions.

Seney: Involved how? Did you meet with the Senator?

Busselman: Ah, yes, we met with the Senator. We have written letters, phone calls, shared our observations with the media—all of the kinds of things that you do when you're in a public policy debate. And we also really followed the lead of the community and the irrigation district in the work that they were doing. We had public meetings that we participated in—a couple that we sponsored

and hosted—to discuss the various intricacies of the proposed legislation, or what the proposed plans were, or what-have-you.

Senator Harry Reid and the Newlands Project

Seney: Can we go back to Senator Reid for a minute? (Busselman: Sure.) He’s a very important player in these matters. And I get a number of explanations as to why, but for whatever reason, he’s motivated to make some changes here in the Newlands Project—and I should say maybe in how the water on the Truckee River is allocated.

“He’s really been more . . . concerned about how the plumbing is operated on the system to make sure that more water goes into the Pyramid Lake . . .”

Busselman: I think it’s more from a perspective of his

work being along the lines of what happens with the Truckee River, and what happens with Pyramid Lake, and the amount of water . . . He's really been more interested, I think, and concerned about how the plumbing is operated on the system to make sure that more water goes into the Pyramid Lake than what was going in before.

Seney: I was going to ask you what you thought his overall motivation and interest was.

Busselman: And I think that's really what it is, is that you've got . . . Pyramid Lake serves as an important cultural icon for the Pyramid Lake Indians. You also have the scenarios of a listed endangered species, the *cui-ui*. You

also have (intercom interrupts)

Seney: You were talking about the *cui-ui* being endangered.

Busselman: Yes, you have the endangered species issue that's involved there. You also have the environmental issues of what happens in riparian corridors, and the overall environmental perspective that we're not supposed to manage water, we're supposed to leave natural things happen as they supposedly naturally do. And so all of those kinds of things have been side issues, and I think a lot of what Senator Reid's been involved in has been from a legislative perspective, trying to address *all* of those concerns that what he perceived that the

public was interested in having these situations addressed. And in the case of where we were before all this began, you had agriculture and irrigation as being the dominant use *of* those waters, and the ownership of the water rights and those types of things. When the Newlands Project was built, we lived in a time, in an era in this country where making ground and resources productive in a sense that natural resources were there to be used and to be managed so that they were gaining a maximum benefit from a production standpoint, and now we have other agendas that appear to be more on the public's mind

as far as having natural resources *not* used, and considering *that* a value—the fact that it’s not used is considered to be a value, even though it may not accomplish anything other than just being natural. And then of course you get into the pointing fingers at history and saying, “This was a mistake,” and using today’s value system to make judgement calls about decisions that were made back in history that were made very legitimately and very properly. And now you have to justify why it is you want to destroy a system and calling it a mistake and all of the other kinds of rhetoric that gets thrown around is how that’s brought about, to justify in the public’s mind, tearing the

crap out of a system that has been working, and working very well to do what it was supposed to do.

Seney: Saying, in other words, that Newlands should *never* have been built, so that's the justification for tearing it up now?

(Busselman: Exactly.) You know, I know you must have many members amongst the farmers over in the Newlands area: Do you find that the Farm Bureau's point of view on the Newlands Project questions—of this whole range of questions dealing with the Newlands Project—are you pretty much of the same mind as TCID? Or are there areas where the Farm Bureau may have a different

point of view?

How the Farm Bureau's Position Regarding the Newlands Project Has Evolved

Busselman: I think that when I first came to Nevada, the farmers and the ranchers in the Fallon area perceived what was good for TCID as an irrigation district—it was their irrigation district—what they perceived as good for TCID was good for agriculture. As time went on, and the politics started changing and you started seeing the irrigation district needing to preserve the irrigation *district*, you started to see not a split like in a fork in the road, but some side paths being pioneered on the edge where water *users* were starting to say, “Well, we need a good

irrigation district, but at the same time, as an individual farmer-rancher-owner of the water right, I have an interest that *I* have to address as well.”

Seney: “Maybe I’d like to sell my water right,” in other words?

Busselman: Either sell my water right, or make sure I *get* my water right, that that’s my property. And from a Farm Bureau perspective, we’re only now starting to see a change in *our* policy.

Farm Bureau Public Policy Is Developed by the Farmer and Rancher Members

Our public policy is developed by the farmers and ranchers through our annual policy development process. We don’t have

things in our policy book except if farmers and ranchers *put* them there. And so whatever is on the minds or in the hearts and the kinds of opinions that farmers and ranchers have, who participate in that process, that's where we as an organization are going. When I first came here, like I said, OCAP was a big issue, and we were very critical of OCAP as far as being a senseless exercise in lack of water management, and it wasn't fair, and all of these other things. And really OCAP was cited as being the reason why the Stillwater wetlands were drying up, was because the Bureau of Reclamation and the government was standing on the hose, and so there

wasn't as much water in the system, let alone the ability to have the water available to use for production purposes. And a lot of times, I think our policy positions were very similar to that of TCID at that time. A lot of the people who were very instrumental and involved in our policy development process were also people who were either in leadership positions or who were very close to the operations as interested and knowledgeable members *of* that irrigation district. I think over time it's changed a little bit. The policy positions, for instance, that we'll be considering at our next convention the second of November in

Fallon is, I think, a little more broad-based, not necessarily in lock-step with TCID—although I don't know where TCID is right now on some of the issues. (Seney: Right.) But you've seen some transformations taking place in the Fallon area in order to save the rural community: There's been an expansion to a community-wide type of an appreciation for the issue, and discussions involving not just farmers and ranchers, but people from the school districts and people from the community at large, have gotten involved to look at preserving, really, the agricultural system that they have in place there, and negotiating and discussing in much *broader* terms than

just the irrigation district and what's good for TCID. So there's been some changes in that, and that is starting to reflect in the policy positions that *we* have. I remember when Stillwater first was broached as an issue and they started talking about buying water for the wetlands there. Our policy position at that time said, "Well, we don't *oppose* that purchase, as long as you're buying it from a willing seller." And we thought that from a policy perspective, that *no one area* should have to contribute more than 20,000 acre-feet of water. That policy position has evolved over the years to the point where now our policy resolution that

will be acted on takes out the 20,000 acre-feet of water, it takes out ten percent of . . . There was also, somewhere along the line, a thing built in about ten percent of the water, and all that.

“ . . . now we’re talking about making sure that there are still 45,000 acres of agricultural land in that community . . . ”

And now we’re talking about making sure that there are still 45,000 acres of agricultural land in that community to maintain that agricultural community perspective. So we’ve gotten away now from talking about water and really getting down to the nuts and bolts of saying, “We need to keep 45,000 acres in production to be able to still be a viable agricultural

community.”

And so that’s been kind of the changes that have been brought about on the water supply type situation. And a lot of it was based on the continual discussions that have been taking place on a community-*wide* basis, and you’re seeing more than just a handful of very knowledgeable people who are involved in operating TCID set, really, the dialogue of what’s going on in the continuing negotiations, and continuing processes that are out there. During this last spring, it was interesting, the Bureau of Reclamation came forth with an interesting little exercise that involved getting public

input for negotiating a new operating agreement with TCID.

Nevada Farm Bureau Suggested Reclamation Assume Control of the Newlands Project

The position we took on that in our public meetings—there was a public meeting held in Fallon, then there was a public meeting held here in Reno—and we participated in both of those meetings, and our policy position that we shared in the public input process was, “Why not just take TCID out of the picture and Bureau of Reclamation, *you* run the damned thing?”

“ . . . our perspective was the way things had been operating, the Bureau of Reclamation has acted as kind of the big bully in ordering TCID around They didn’t want to have to deal with the farmers, because those officials who know, understand very clearly that the water out there in

the Newlands area is a private property right, and it's their water, and they've been using TCID . . . as the scapegoat to . . . step on the hose . . .”

And our perspective was the way things had been operating, the Bureau of Reclamation has acted as kind of the big bully in ordering TCID around—they've been jerking on TCID's chain saying, “You can't be suing us, and you can't be doing this, and you've got to operate it this way, and you've got to do this.” They didn't want to have to deal with the farmers, because those officials who know, understand very clearly that the water out there in the Newlands area is a private property right, and it's their water, and they've been using TCID kind of as the

scapegoat to manipulate the process—step on the hose, if you will—and we said, “Why have both ends play against the middle? Just get TCID out of there, and you guys run the Project.” It’d be the Bureau of Reclamation’s responsibility to get the water to the irrigation headgates in the quantities that it’s supposed to be there. “And instead of you beating up on TCID with OCAP and all these other things, saying TCID is running an inefficient system, *you* run the system and make it efficient. All we care about is that you make sure our farmers and ranchers get the right amount of water.”

And of course that wasn’t something that I don’t think Bureau of Reclamation is

interested in, because they would much rather play the games of beating up on TCID and the politic-type stuff.

“And then TCID, of course, they’re not really caught in the middle, because they’re playing games the other way too. . . .”

And then TCID, of course, they’re not really caught in the middle, because they’re playing games (chuckles) the other way too. And so you’ve got really a lack of accountability in how things get done. The issue becomes fighting as opposed to solving problems.

Seney: In other words, you think the water rights would be more secure if you got TCID out of the middle.

**Farm Bureau Believes the Water Rights on the
Newlands Project Are Private Property Rights**

Busselman: I don't know if they'd be more . . . There shouldn't be any reason that the security of those water rights . . . We believe that those are private property rights—it doesn't matter *who's* running the system.

Seney: Right, but they'd be more secure if the Bureau didn't have TCID to bully around?

Busselman: I think to a degree.

Seney: That's sort of what I'm hearing you say.

Busselman: I think to a degree that they would at least have to be responsible—if they were playing games, *they* would have to be the ones that would be *accountable* for not having the water to satisfy those needs. (Seney:

Right.) Right now they can blame it on OCAP, and they can blame it on TCID and their inefficiencies or whatever—which is also a crock in our opinion.

Seney: The inefficiencies are a crock, you mean?

Busselman: Exactly.

Seney: You see the OCAP then as just a ploy, a way of . . .

“ . . . we’ve also been long-time advocates of saying we need to get credits for the water that’s returned to the system— a return credit flow. . . .”

Busselman: It’s a way to stand on the hose, and to cut off the supply, and to jerk people around in, “Yes, you are entitled to 3½,” or “Yes, you are entitled to 4½ acre-feet of water, but golly, there isn’t that much water in the

system.” Right! (chuckles) All you do is keep it from going into the system and with whatever mechanism, from the standpoint of we’ve also been long-time advocates of saying we need to get credits for the water that’s returned to the system– a return credit flow. Well, if you were to give a credit for the return flows that *weren’t* used by the farmers and ranchers, the system then becomes on paper *so* efficient that OCAP no longer applies. And that’s the kind of bureaucratic juggling that’s going on. And then of course the most recent change now is the Bureau of Reclamation doesn’t even want to be *in* the irrigation business, they’re *water managers*, and agriculture be damned,

from *their* perspective. We now have a more politically correct crowd running the show, deciding that if you put water into a crop, that's wasting it, it's inefficient, or what-have-you.

Seney: Or it's just one of many competing ways to use the water.

Busselman: Exactly. And so you have to change that, and the only way . . . The Newlands Project was, and I don't know, I think it's the only irrigation project that Bureau of Reclamation ever built—it was the first one—but it was the *only* one that they ever built on the basis that the farmers *owned* the water.

Seney: I think that's correct, yes. The rest—they never did that again.

“ . . . our perspective has always been, they *own* that water right, and that water right had better be wet. . . . ”

Busselman: They had contracts, and you provided water and you bought water from the Bureau of Reclamation under a contract situation, but in Newlands, those people *own* that water. And our perspective has always been, they *own* that water right (raps table for emphasis), and that water right had better be wet. And if you're not having a wet water right, it's because somebody, somewhere, is playing games, manipulating the process to do things that prevent the supply from being there, being able to satisfy those water

rights.

Seney: Do you think one way or the other the Bureau of Reclamation, and maybe Senator Reid too, simply want to do away with the project? Is that the end of the game, do you think, whether they'll say so or not?

“I don't know *what* Bureau of Reclamation is trying to do, but it seems very much like what they're really intent on is just jerking people around for the sake of jerking people around. On one hand, they do everything they can to take away water from the system that's needed to satisfy those water rights. . . .”

Busselman: I think that . . . It's been a very interesting kind of situation to watch, from the standpoint that in many ways—and I don't know if it's more organizational or personal—but I think that . . . I don't know

what Bureau of Reclamation is trying to do, but it seems very much like what they're really intent on is just jerking people around for the sake of jerking people around. On one hand, they do everything they can to take *away* water from the system that's needed to satisfy those water rights. On the other hand, if the farmers in Fallon say, "Screw this! I want to sell my water, and by the way, my water happens to run by Reno, and so why not make a deal where I will either lease or sell my water to Reno?" Well, then suddenly we get the same people who are doing everything in their power to crash the system, saying, "Well, you can't take any water out of the system. We have

the sanctity of the system we have to
preserve here.”

**“It’s like a kid with a jackknife torturing a frog or a
bug, and poking it here and poking it there, and of
course the people in Fallon jump every which way
when they get poked! . . .”**

And so it almost comes across as
bureaucrats jerking people around for the
sake of jerking people around. It’s like a kid
with a jackknife torturing a frog or a bug,
and poking it here and poking it there, and
of course the people in Fallon jump every
which way when they get poked! And it
doesn’t take much of a poke to get them to
jump one way or another. And then they get
all fired up and foaming at the mouth. And
really, when we said what we did at the

hearings this past summer, “We aren’t playing this game any more. Let’s quit playing the games. You’re trying to beat *us* up by going through TCID. If you want to have the accountability to run the system, and you think you can do it better, then you come out here and you run it.”

Seney: Did you discuss your testimony with TCID?

(Busselman: No.) Did that surprise them when you came and said this?

Busselman: I don’t know if it did or not.

Seney: My impression is they feel pretty strongly that they want to continue to run the system.

“ . . . you have changes taking place where farmers who depend on the water aren’t as interested necessarily in saving the irrigation district any more, as they are in saving themselves and their water. . . . ”

Busselman: Right, but as I said earlier, you have changes taking place where farmers who depend on the water aren't as interested necessarily in saving the irrigation district any more, as they are in saving themselves and their water.

Seney: What do you see or hear that leads you to that conclusion?

Busselman: I think the formation of the various organizations in the Fallon area.

Seney: The Lahontan Valley Environmental Alliance?

Busselman: That's one. But also the Newlands Protective Association. And there were several other attempts before that, even

when Harry Reid was working on his
legislation where there were the water
users . . .

END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 21, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 21, 1994.

Seney: The water *users* are now wanting to
represent themselves too?

**During Hearings on Contract Negotiations with
TCID the Farm Bureau Testified That Reclamation
Should Take Control of the Project and Deliver the
Water it Was Responsible to Deliver**

Busselman: I think so, because I think they've seen that
where the preservation of the system is
certainly important, not always what's in the
irrigation district's best interest is the best
interest of those people who need to get the
water. And I think our position . . . And it
was interesting after they went through all

the exercise of having these hearings and threatening to pull the contract of TCID, and then we came up and said, “Well, have it! We’re not going to be your victims any more. You take the contract, you run the show, and you make sure we get the water.”

“ . . . right after they went through the exercise of ‘torturing the frog’ some more, through those hearings, all of a sudden no more is there any discussion whatsoever about whether TCID has a contract or not. . . . ”

All of a sudden after that—and I don’t pretend to think that they changed because we took the position *we* did (Seney: Sure, I understand.)—but right after they went through the exercise of “torturing the frog” some more, through those hearings, all of a

sudden no more is there any discussion whatsoever about whether TCID has a contract or not. Now we're moving into a whole *new* arena for negotiations and things like that. You go into these public hearings saying, "We want public input on what kind of a negotiated contract we should have," and it was all one-sided, as far as "What kind of responsibility should we place on TCID? What can we do to restrict them in terms of so they don't sue us anymore? What kinds of ways can we force them to make sure that only farmers, legitimate farmers, get the water?"

Meanwhile, in a contract you have responsibilities and agreements that go *both*

ways, and you say, “Well, what is it that Bureau of Reclamation, what are *you* going to be responsible for?” “Well, we don’t know that, we can’t come up and tell you that yet, because we would be negotiating in the open. And we would not be able to get the best deal that we should get.” I mean, it’s sucking and blowing at the same time. (Seney: Yeah.) And it was really, I think a farce, but that’s the way government does things, so we do the things that we have to do.

Seney: What do you say to people who say both *in* TCID and *outside* of TCID, that the District messed up on some opportunities to

negotiate a settlement, and now they're really kind of behind the eight ball, and they're likely to come out worse off than they would have if they'd been able to make an agreement in the past.

Busselman: Hindsight is always twenty-twenty, and it's easy to be a Monday morning quarterback and say, "Well, you should have done this and you should have done that." At the time that they were negotiating, the only ones who had anything to give up, to lose, were the people in TCID or the farmers. At that time, the position really was that TCID was doing what they were doing in the negotiating process as part of their responsibilities to take care of the people

who got the water. And if I come in to you and say, "Let's negotiate, you give me half of all your money," I didn't bring anything to the table, and you say, "Well, you can go to hell, because I'm not going to give you half my money." Well, then a little while later I come back in with five or six big guys named Guido and say, "Now, I want to get seventy-five percent of [your] money." Are we supposed to think that you were a fool because you didn't give me fifty percent of your money at the time?

"The people who *had* something to give up were the ones that were asked to negotiate, and were criticized as not negotiating in good faith because they didn't give up what they had. . . ."

And really, this negotiation has been all

about that. The people who *had* something to give up were the ones that were asked to negotiate, and were criticized as not negotiating in good faith because they didn't give up what they had. Meanwhile, the people . . . I've never seen anything in terms of Bureau of Reclamation saying, "Well, we will do this to improve the efficiency of the system." It's always been, "We're going to take more away from you and you're going to like it, because that's the way you're supposed to negotiate."

“. . . of course it's all couched in 'waterese,' which makes it so that John Doe Public can't follow anything. . . .”

I mean, of course it's all couched in

“waterese,” which makes it so that John Doe

Public can't follow anything. (Seney: Right.) Either TCID talking waterese, the Indians talking waterese, or the farmers talking waterese, and it gets all lost.

“You’re talking about having a negotiation to interrupt the system and make it have less water supply, which then endangers the ability to provide the water that those people own. . . .”

But the simple fact of the matter is, when you cut through all the crap and get down to talking plain English, that's what it amounts to. You're talking about having a negotiation to interrupt the system and make it have less water supply, which then endangers the ability to provide the water that those people own.

There was an interesting discussion

about, there's been this one channel or one ditch that services this one place that has been identified time after time in the Reid hearings and all over, it's always held up as the inefficient, wasteful place—and yet TCID is required (raps table for emphasis) to deliver the water to that place. And if Bureau of Reclamation—and I heard *this* at the hearing here in Reno—they said, “Well, okay, *you* tell us not to deliver to them. If it's so inefficient, and we can't get water there, and it's a one-way street that has a dead end at the end, and it screws up the whole efficiency, if you don't want us to deliver water there, then you tell us. We're your contractor, remember? That's what

you want us to believe? You tell us not to deliver water there.” Well all of a sudden then Bureau of Reclamation has to say, “Well, that’s their private property rights, we can’t shut ‘em off!” And like I said, you’ve got these games that are going on, and it all gets lost in Senator Reid with his ability to “spin doctor” what’s going on, so it always comes out looking that whatever it was that he was doing was the Lord’s work and the way it was supposed to be done, and any reasonable and rational person couldn’t see any other thing about it. Well, okay, but there *is* another rational perspective that nobody ever hears about. And it comes

down to that “you’re trying to take away their water.”

Seney: You know, you said earlier that the Farm Bureau was willing now to settle for 45,000 acres.

Busselman: That’s the policy resolution that’s being proposed.

Seney: At this point. And my understanding is although the figures vary, and it’s odd to me that no one quite knows *exactly* how many acres are being irrigated at the moment, it’s something in excess of 60,000 acres.

Busselman: Fifty-seven [57,000] I think.

Seney: Is that the number? It varies.

Busselman: I don’t understand either why you can’t tell how many acres. (laughter)

Seney: It's beyond me! But anyway, it's definitely more than 45,000 at this point. (Busselman: Uh-huh.) So *you're* willing to accept a smaller Project?

Busselman: Well, that's what's being proposed from a . . . It's not our policy yet.

Seney: But it will be discussed, and perhaps it will be.

Busselman: Right, and it's basically saying, "This is how many acres of agricultural land we need to continue in production, in order to stay as a viable ag community." And I believe that it probably *will* be passed, and *will* be accepted. But again, that's coming from a much more broad community base as

opposed to “we got to save TCID.”

Seney: Yeah. But these will only be the farmers and the rancher members who’ll be able to vote on actually something of this kind.

Busselman: Exactly.

Seney: Let me ask you, are you all taking part in the Settlement II negotiations at all?

(Busselman: No.) Are you observing or anything? (Busselman: No.) You’re not watching or . . .

“We never got a chance to go to the table . . . the people who are there are only there because the powers that be decided that they *could* be there. I mean, you’ve got a pretty narrowly-stacked deck. Even in the Truckee River Operating Agreement, we have farmers and ranchers who still own water rights in this valley, and as they’re going through the process of negotiating the Truckee River Operating Agreement, there’s no farmers or ranchers in that process. . . .”

Busselman: We never got a chance to go to the table. I mean, the people who are there are only there because the powers that be decided that they *could* be there. I mean, you've got a pretty narrowly-stacked deck. Even in the Truckee River Operating Agreement, we have farmers and ranchers who still own water rights in this valley, and as they're going through the process of negotiating the Truckee River Operating Agreement, there's no farmers or ranchers in that process. That's not the way it's supposed to be with Senator Reid and his approach to "you get the players that will agree to sit down and talk to a solution that's acceptable" as

defined by, I guess, Senator Reid.

Seney: Be more specific. What are you trying to say? Take the bark off. Give it to me with the bark off.

“TCID at that time was criticized for not staying at the table. Well, they were thrown out, they weren’t allowed to *be* at the table. . . . they walked away because they said, ‘Well, you don’t have anything for us to talk about.’ Well, then the people there settled and agreed to take away their water, and TCID wasn’t there, and now they’re being blamed for not being there. . . .”

Busselman: We saw in the original negotiations that Senator Reid was interested in being the “Great Mediator.” The groups would come to his table and they would *solve* the problems. And TCID at that time was criticized for not staying at the table. Well, they were thrown out, they weren’t allowed

to *be* at the table.

Seney: These are the negotiations over Public Law
101-618?

Busselman: Exactly. And they walked away because
they said, “Well, you don’t have anything
for us to talk about.” Well, then the people
there settled and agreed to take away their
water, and TCID wasn’t there, and now
they’re being blamed for not being there.

**“Senator Reid . . . wasn’t going to be able to *get*
his solution if *all* the people participated, because
if you had to have all the people participate,
including those that had the water, you wouldn’t
end up with the same solution. . . .”**

And it was Senator Reid that wanted
to have this solution. And he wasn’t going
to be able to *get* his solution if *all* the people

participated, because if you had to have all the people participate, including those that had the water, you wouldn't end up with the same solution.

“It’s primarily Senator Reid and Mr. Bradley and others who are going to have a solution. ‘We’re going to face up to the tough issues.’ Well, yeah, but you ain’t got anything to lose in the process. What did you bring to the table to negotiate?! . . .”

And so what I’m saying is that you have a very restricted kind of negotiating process, and you’ve got the judge and the jury deciding whether somebody even gets to *be* in the discussion. It’s primarily Senator Reid and Mr. Bradley and others who are going to have a solution. “We’re going to face up to the tough issues.” Well, yeah, but you ain’t got anything to lose in the process.

What did you bring to the table to negotiate?!

Seney: So in other words, the only ones invited are the ones who are likely to come to Senator Reid's conclusions.

Busselman: I appears that way.

Seney: It appears that way to you, that's how you all look at it.

“From our perspective, there has never been any attempt whatsoever . . . to invite farmers and ranchers who own the water rights to come to the table and have a dialogue and a discussion . . .”

Busselman: From our perspective, there has never been any attempt whatsoever from our perspective, to invite farmers and ranchers who own the water rights to come to the table and have a dialogue and a discussion

that allowed for people to say, “That’s our water and you can’t have it.” “Oh, okay, we’ve got an agreement. We agree that it’s your water and we can’t have it unless we buy it.” But that’s not one of the solutions that’s accepted.

“ . . . in the end they would like to *try* to get rid of the Newlands Project, but they don’t want to pay for getting rid of it. They want to get rid of it basically by stealing it, and making the people who depend on the water go belly-up, and then the water that isn’t being used there can go where it’s more politically correct to go. . . .”

You know, when you said earlier, Do I think that they’re trying to get rid of the Newlands Project?, I think that in the end they would like to *try* to get rid of the Newlands Project, but they don’t want to pay for getting rid of it. They want to get rid of it basically by

stealing it, and making the people who depend on the water go belly-up, and then the water that isn't being used there can go where it's more politically correct to go. And I think a lot of the torture that I talked about earlier of just playing the games that bureaucrats play, is prompted to a large degree because they know they own the water down there, and as long as they're using the water, it's their water. And under our constitution and under our system of private property rights, if you want to take it from them, you can take it from them, but you pay them for it. And I don't think they want to pay them.

Seney: I guess what you're saying is if they can torment them enough to get them to quit (Busselman: Exactly.) then you'll have abandonment (Busselman: Exactly.) and they can take the water because it's not being used.

Busselman: Exactly. You can crash a system a lot less expensively when you do it through that process, as opposed to going and saying, "We don't want to have the Newlands Project anymore. We've decided in our infinite wisdom here on the Potomac that it doesn't really fit with the agenda. And we'll buy you out, and here is what a fair value is, based on whatever. We're offering you this opportunity to sell your water." They don't

do that. They screw around with regulations, they screw around with another public law here, another public law there. You know, there'll be a Settlement II, and all these other things, and it's just jerking people around to the point that they say, "I can't survive, I'm out of business, I'm gone." And then they say, "Well, okay, we got the water. Let's go get the next guy."

Settlement I and Settlement II

Seney: In this context, you're talking about Settlement II and that's what these negotiations that are going on are called now, Settlement II negotiations.

Busselman: That's what they're being worked on, yes.

Seney: I've been told by other people that I've interviewed that there was enough in Public Law 101-618 to solve all these problems, that you didn't really need to go any further and have more negotiations, that if they wanted to buy the water from TCID's willing sellers, the authority was there to transfer it to the Stillwater Marsh or to Pyramid Lake. (Busselman: Uh-huh.) But that the Settlement II negotiations are going on anyway. Does this square with your sort of, I don't know, for want of a better word, your sort of "torment theory" here, that new negotiations are being forced to kind of prolong and . . . maybe divide the community in Fallon and so forth?

Busselman: I think there was a realization after Settlement I that not all the issues were settled, there are still loose ends out there.

Seney: Okay, so you think there *are* loose ends?

“How can you have a negotiated agreement and have the people who have the water not be involved in the agreement?! I mean, yes there are *definite* (laughs) loose ends out there! . . .”

Busselman: Yeah! How can you have a negotiated agreement and have the people who have the water not be involved in the agreement?! I mean, *yes* there are *definite* (laughs) loose ends out there! And I think what they’re trying to do now is to . . . And I think the exercise of discussing the renegotiation of the contract with TCID and all that, that was to set the stage to make sure that the

negotiations came about to have an orderly system and make people want to come to participate in the process.

Seney: Ah-ha. So this last spring the Bureau's negotiations with TCID over changes in the contract were just a tactical preliminary, then, to Settlement II, you think?

Busselman: I believe so, yes. And I believe based on the documents of the hearings that took place in Washington, that there was never any intention to having . . . The decisions were made before the public hearings of how things were going to go. And the people within the Bureau of Reclamation, they already know what they want, and it's just a case of getting things lined up to bring about

that conclusion that they've preordained as being the way things are going to be.

(pause) Of course, I could be wrong.

Seney: You're very suspicious of the Bureau of Reclamation, obviously. And I don't have any trouble with that, even though this is a Bureau project. I have no problem with that, I just want to know why, and your general feeling and your analysis of the Bureau. Maybe you've already given it to me.

Why He Is Suspicious about Reclamation

Busselman: Well, I guess the reason that I'm suspicious is the public exercises that go on, and what I also hear about the other activities that go on

behind the scenes . . . Bureau of Reclamation, like every other organization, likes to be perceived as being nice people doing good things (Seney: Sure.) and yet they wouldn't have to go through—I mean, if they've decided the way it's going to be, they have supposedly the authority to do it, why screw around with all this public participation? Because it's going to end up the same way. The suspicion that I have is based on what they *say* and what they *do* not necessarily being the same. You don't *need* to have public hearings to establish the parameters for a contract that's only going to be one side burdened.

Issues Reclamation Would Have to Face If TCID

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Was No Longer the Contractor

If you don't want TCID to be the contractor anymore, fine, get rid of them! Don't sign the contract! Get a new contractor! Of course you're going to have to deal with the little situation of the fact that they *own*, that they are a political subdivision under Nevada law, and they own a bunch of real property that's used. From a technological standpoint, it would be very *difficult* to work around them, because they don't have to go away, things still stay there, and be TCID forever—they just aren't the contractors any more. I have a problem in understanding why it is . . .

Seney: You mean they own some of the features that are necessary to operate the system.

Busselman: Exactly: The right-of-ways, the different kinds of things, the equipment. I mean, they've built the system. They've become very much ingrained as part of the delivery system. And that part that's ingrained doesn't belong to the Bureau of Reclamation anymore.

“I don't think the Bureau of Reclamation *could* run the Project. . . . We've got state water law that doesn't seem to mean squat to the Bureau of Reclamation. . . .”

I don't think the Bureau of Reclamation *could* run the Project. You've also got corridors and watermasters and all these other things that are out there, but Bureau of

Reclamation seems to be able to write their own rules as they want around those kind of things. We've got state water law that doesn't seem to mean squat to the Bureau of Reclamation. I mean, the suspicions that I have are based on all of the other things in the big world, and yet how Bureau of Reclamation acts within . . . I mean, they don't want to necessarily leave their cushy offices in Carson City and go down and get dusty and dirty, managing water. They want to sit at their computer terminals and plug in the numbers that they want to have happen and make it happen that way. And that's supposedly managing water, by stepping on

the hose.

“ . . . then I think too, the thing that makes me suspicious of the Bureau of Reclamation is the transformation or the change in their mission, that they decided themselves. . . .”

And then I think too, the thing that makes me suspicious of the Bureau of Reclamation is the transformation or the change in their mission, that they decided themselves. I was under the impression that Bureau of Reclamation had authorizations to do what they were doing based on legislative processes. We're seeing with a number of government agencies who have decided their new mission for themselves, “and the laws be damned, we're going to be what we want to be, because this is the

politically correct thing for us to be now.”

Seney: You mean water managers in the case of the Bureau.

Busselman: Water managers or whatever. In the case of the Bureau of Reclamation, yes, water managers. “We’ve decided that if we’re going to preserve our own institution, we have to be in a different business. And we’re going to be in that business by administrative decree.”

Seney: And so far as you know, the Congress has not reauthorized their mission, or redefined it through legislation.

Busselman: I don’t believe that they necessarily did. You know, they’ve been having the exercise

the last several years of Congress and the vocal leadership *in* Congress, screwing around with this project and that project, and the Central Valley, and the legislation that passed there, and all of those kinds of things. (Seney: Right.) But I mean you've got political types that are just making a name for themselves, saving the world by effecting something that they don't have any—it doesn't affect them at all, whether you're talking about Bill Bradley straightening out how the water is run in the West, when you're from New Jersey and you're doing it as a statesman, or you've got the ex-congressman Mr. [Michael Lynn] Synar fixing the grazing problem when he

lives in Oklahoma, and there *are* no public lands. I mean it's easy, you know, to pick up a mission, a political mission, and make a big name for yourself doing the right thing, but yet there's no consequence to you.

Seney: Do you feel the way some of the farmers in the project feel, that agriculture is really under siege at the moment?

“The one thing that bothers me to a degree is the siege mentality that it's almost like “Why is everyone always picking on me?”—the victimization. . . .”

Busselman: I think that agriculture is facing many challenges. The one thing that bothers me to a degree is the siege mentality that it's almost like “Why is everyone always picking on me?”—the victimization. You

know, you're victims when you *decide* to be victims. And if you don't want to be a victim, you don't have to be a victim anymore, and you can change. You can't change the world unless you're able to change yourself first. Whether it was the financial crunch in the 80s in the Midwest, or whether it's range reform '94 here in the West, or whether it's the Fallon situation with water—I mean, you have to choose your own mental attitude in how you approach the challenges that come to you.

**“I think that there *are* many challenges, and I don't think all the challenges out there are fair. . .
.”**

And I think that there *are* many challenges, and I don't think all the

challenges out there are fair. I don't think the game is necessarily fair, but that's the way the game is, and I think you have to get involved and participate in the game to the best of your abilities—not only in a political sense, but also in a business sense. You can still say, “Screw it, I'm going to sell my water, and I'm going to sell it for 'X' amount of dollars.” If somebody wants to come along and pay for it, fine. Or you can also take the position that looks at it that says, “Well, they've changed the water, the bench/bottom . . .” That was something that just came out in the last couple of months. You can say, “Well, I want to be a farmer, I

want to farm this land. The government took an acre-foot of water from me for each acre that I've got, just out of the goodness of their heart, supposedly, according to the Bureau of Reclamation reports, they did these people a favor by taking away their water, reclassifying. You can say, "Well, okay, I'll figure out a way to grow what I need to grow with 3½ acre-feet of water." You can take *that* position and say, "I'm going to still be farming. I want to farm. I'll grow a different crop, I'll adjust, I'll do whatever I have to do. Since I'm not going to get any credit for my tailwater, I'm going to make it so there *ain't* no tailwater. And I'll use that water again *myself* to irrigate. I

mean, you're a victim if you chose to be a victim, and that's, I think, the thing that concerns me the most about those who say, "Well, agriculture is under siege, and why is everybody always picking on us? Just leave us alone!" They're not going to leave you alone.

“. . . if you want to *be* a farmer in the future, you're going to have to do your farming and ranching a different way, to survive. . . .”

The world has changed in such a way that “that ain't gonna happen.” And if you want to *be* a farmer in the future, you're going to have to do your farming and ranching a different way, to survive. You're going to have to develop new innovations.

It's really those challenges, when we look back historically, it's been those challenges that have propelled the industry to do new things different ways. It's human nature to continue to want to do things the way you always did them, because it's easier. But when you're forced to make a change, those that are able to adapt and change with the situation, are the ones that are going to be survivors.

Seney: And there are going to have to be some changes, you think, in the Newlands Project?

There Will Be Changes on the Newlands Project

Busselman: I don't think there's any question that there will be changes. And a lot of those changes

may very well be outside of the realm of the people having control over their own destiny. But that's the way life works.

Seney: Well, listen, we're about out of tape. Let me thank you for telling me all these things, this has really been fascinating.

Busselman: Well, I don't know that I've done anything

Seney: Oh, you've been more helpful than you know, really. This is really good stuff, and I appreciate your views on the negotiations, especially. It's an interesting perspective in terms of the way in which the government agencies are operating here.

**“. . . from my perspective, I'm on the outside
looking in . . .”**

Busselman: Well, from my perspective, I'm on the outside looking in (Seney: Right, exactly.) and I only hear what I hear when I hear it. And that's the way it appears from sitting in my chair looking on the outside in.

Seney: Alright, great. Let me turn this off.

END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2. OCTOBER 21, 1994.
END OF INTERVIEW

**Appendix 1: Doug Busselman: Available Blog Entries
for the Nevada Farm Bureau**

<http://www.nvfblog.org/>
about 2:30 p.m. on October 7, 2009.

The Government To Do As The Government Says?

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

It will be interesting to see how the federal government walks the walk in regard to this newest Executive Order to come from President Obama. We would agree with the assessment he made in his statement that the federal government is the largest consumer of energy in our economy – they are the biggest everything and continuing to get bigger. How they will reduce their carbon footprint will be interesting to watch.

We'll have to see whether the measurement for their reductions will come along the same lines as the jobs they say that they are saving – in other words make up a number and say that's what their results are...or, come up with something concrete that can actually be backed up with solid data. While they are doing the activities associated with figuring out how they will do their carbon footprint cut-back, we hope that all agencies just doing less, with fewer people and less restrictive regulations (it would be great if we could determine that government regulations cause green house gases) could be an option. The statement didn't go into lots of detail on whether the President's

travel, which seems extremely excessive, might also be reduced in the effort to have government cut back.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/5/2009 2:53 PM

A Done Deal That's Having Some Problems In Happening

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

From all indications, the people who think that they run the world, have decided that the international decision on destroying the United States economy is all but finalized (even if the approval of the United States government hasn't been or won't completely be wrapped up). Are there still those out there who might question whether our "negotiators" aren't going to sell out our interests when they get into the discussions on forcing us to subscribe to the faulty idea of forced carbon reductions in spite of the lack of others doing their share? It's extremely disgusting to read such an account and consider the single-mindedness of our "representatives" in selling us out.

The object is to increase government control and authority over more areas of our lives and doing so in the name of international good or an imagined scientific hoax will work just fine. As this approach continues to play itself out, we can only hope that the push-back of American citizens will become more severe and committed voter disapproval will translate into a lot of different people sitting in the seats of our representatives after November of 2010.

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Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/5/2009 7:26 AM

The Misinformation Of Health Care Reform

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

As the “debate” over health care continues, the “news” accounts surrounding the issue continue to help slant the real information away from fundamental truth and down the path for pro-governmental action. The companies providing health care insurance are vilified as being profit-greedy, discriminating corporations who need to be forced by government authority to do what’s right and pay everybody’s health insurance bills.

If the service provided by insurance companies was pre-paid health care, the conversation would and should be something other than what is portrayed in the conversation Washington, D.C. is attempting to present.

As a resident of a state where the principles of gambling are a central core of our economy, perhaps we can help others understand the way “insurance” is supposed to work. Health insurance is supposed to be a risk management tool – not a guaranteed, all expenses pre-paid health care system. The companies who sell health care policies are in some ways “betting” that they will have enough customers purchasing policies that won’t need immediate coverage to pay for the expenses of those who will. Picking the bets

that make sense (evaluating pre-existing conditions) isn't discrimination – it's going with the odds and making business decisions that fit into the insurance model.

The government option that's being considered isn't and shouldn't be thought of as an insurance program or a competitive alternative to what's available from the private sector. If taxpayers are going to fund an automatic everything-paid health care, everybody can participate in system...that isn't insurance and shouldn't be thought of in that perspective.

What is being contemplated is really a system where citizens are forced to pay private companies and government (in the form of taxes) to provide health care benefits for anyone and everyone who requires health care. Instead of hiding behind the mis-stated "insurance" label, we should be considering the idea on the basis of what it really is.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/4/2009 4:51 AM |

Unemployment Problem Must Be Obama's Fault

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

If we're supposed to believe that the benefits of the federal stimulus bill (and the jobs that President Obama would like to take credit for saving) should be hailed, worshiped and glorified – doesn't that also require there being accountability for the not-so-good things we're getting?

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This piece by Conn Carrell of the Heritage Foundation, rightfully assesses that there are economic reasons for things being as bad as they are and those reasons are linked to things that the current powers of Washington, D.C. screwed up.

This account would seem to indicate that there are reasons to believe that whatever might go up because of government spending also has a down-side when the spending binge wears off...to say nothing of the unbelievable debt and tax burden that has to be paid for on a going forward basis.

I can't remember the person who is credited with observing (I think it was Sir Winston Churchill) that government thinking it can spend a country to prosperity is like believing you can lift yourself up by standing in a bucket and pulling upward on the handle. That sort of insight would be worth supporting for election in 2010...there certainly aren't enough of those who have that basic understanding involved in our government bodies now.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/3/2009 10:30 AM

The Value Of Politically-Correct Pursuits

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

Why would corporate giants consider the objectives of climate change legislation as being good public policy? Perhaps as Kimberley Strassel points out here in the *Wall*

Street Journal, being on the right side of the command and control power curve, where government policy selects winners and those less fortunate (like those of us who pay for the energy we use) – has its advantages.

The piece also highlights the way in which the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) folks approach transparency and making certain that information is used to reach pre-determined results.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/3/2009 6:38 AM

Move To North Dakota

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

In his attempt to justify the merits of a public option, columnist Joe Rothstein holds North Dakota up as a shining example of what is possible in a socialistic state.

It's not my intent to impugn North Dakota or the friends I have who live there. I have lived in North Dakota and fondly remember the experience as a pleasant and worthwhile time of my past. I didn't live in North Dakota because of the benefits of it's socialistic institutions, so I don't buy his arguments as to why the rest of the nation should subscribe to a national expansion of the federal government's take-over of enterprises which don't belong under government operation.

I would suggest that North Dakota's present positive

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economic climate is not attributable to having a state-owned bank or a state-owned elevator. I also would suggest that these two enterprises don't justify (or have anything to do with) the federal government providing health care payments for all who wish to have or need health care payments made.

Mark Levin in his book, *Liberty and Tyranny* identifies the values of a federal system where individual states are free to pursue whatever programs, projects or approaches that they wish to experiment with. Instead of the entire population of the United States being forced to subscribe to socialized medical care -- those who see this as a requirement for government to provide, could move to North Dakota and benefit from having a state-owned elevator and state-owned bank.

(For those considering this option, as someone who's been there, you might want to plan on bringing a warm winter coat...)

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/2/2009 2:05 PM

Wild Horse Management And Policy Conference Planned

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

Although not nearly as simple as the Congressional solution for solving the wild horse and burro over-

population problem (by erasing the lines for wild horse territories), the concept of basing management or policy on solid resource science might be more than we should expect when it comes to these animals. In spite of this, the efforts of the Nevada Section for the Society for Range Management should be saluted for their hosting a conference on Wild and Feral Horse and Burro Management and Policy. This event will be held in Sparks, NV at John Ascuaga's Nugget, November 3-5. Registration information and additional details can be received by clicking on this link.

Information to be presented and discussions surrounding the ideas surfaced may assist in forward progress for effective management and policy. Then it will only require the political will of our elected representatives to make the choice for facts and reasoned approaches to take precedence over emotion and public posturing.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/2/2009 10:55 AM

Then What?

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

This morning during my multi-tasking exercise of watching Sports Center and reading several different on-line newspapers, a TV commercial was shown, promoting Michael Moore's latest film project -- bashing capitalism. Additional details on the film "Capitalism" are available here.

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Given the recent developments in Congress and the associated perspective that our capitalistic system has caused us to be in the dire circumstances we find ourselves to be. As we should clearly understand our only possible salvation is the federal government coming to our rescue -- paying for our health care requirements, giving us money to purchase new autos, stimulating our economy with massive spending infusions to save our jobs, in spite of the ones that are being lost.

The overwhelming evidence has caused me to wonder what might be the outcome if we just quit fighting the efforts of those in charge of our government and went along with their grand socialistic design.

Maybe if we went and saw the Michael Moore film we could all come away converted to see how profits are indeed evil and something which ought not be pursued by anyone -- since only the greedy are benefited.

On a universal basis, involving all business enterprises or those who provide private sector employment -- we should call all our employees together and share with them how we have come to our senses. Because of the insights we have gained from Democratic party leaders at the state and national level (and superior moral progressives who have advanced the cause of how wrong everyone is who has any type of financial resources) we recognize that government is the solution. Everyone should simply go home and sit on their couches or chairs and wait for the government checks

that we all deserve to receive.

We fully understand and obediently accept that health care is a Right, bestowed by government. Not only those who are not capable of receiving health insurance coverage, but everyone (including those who currently pay for their health care or who benefit from a health care insurance service) should simply receive health care with the bill picked up by the federal government. No one should be required to shoulder any of these types of responsibilities – financially or otherwise -- because it is a Right that our government should simply provide. Since we've all stopped being employed because the pursuit of profits was not appropriate (and without profits employment was not possible) we all require the federal government to provide for us anyway.

Since we're just sitting on our couches waiting for the government to deliver us what we need, we will cut back on our terrible misuse of fossil fuels. Government purchased wind mills or solar panels will be able to generate the eco-friendly energy we require, although we'd have to figure out how or why anyone would want to work to install or operate any of the required systems...but, that's probably something we shouldn't bother ourselves worrying about anyway. Elected representatives could figure that out behind closed doors and come forward with the answer they have decided for us because they just know better than any of us anyway...

In our socially-correct and government-financed Utopia,

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free of the evils of profits we could just expect that whatever we might require would be available without there needing to be anyone or anything producing or providing. It is as we need it and because we need it – it should be available...the same principles that Nevada legislators use when it comes to determining state spending.

Instead of being the villains that we are made out to be by film makers and Democratic legislators, we should just accept the wisdom of the insights they have to offer – quit fighting for an economic system that is intended to reward on capitalistic principles...join them in the committed belief that government can and should provide everything we need, want and deserve to have.

If that were to be the outcome, which would be the result of continuation in the direction things are going -- Then what? Can anyone else see a possible problem that we might have missed?

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/2/2009 10:01 AM

Federal Government Positions For Assault Against Americans

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

It was a busy day in Washington, D.C. on Wednesday with both the U.S. Senate and the Environmental Protection

Agency (EPA) getting themselves in position for the work of forcing our energy costs higher using the excuses of Climate Change and carbon-dioxide-as-pollution. Highlighted here, we see that the bureaucratic action will probably advance ahead of lawmakers passing a law to accomplish the objective of inflicting financial damage for carbon-linked energy. Then it will only be a question of which entity of federal government excess can top the other in pursuing the agenda of the greatest burden possible.

In addition to the rules that EPA has in mind for penalizing carbon emissions, other considered actions also propose even greater expanse of command and control.

The biggest challenge is attempting how to install meaningful protection from our government's actions. Defeat of the Senate proposal (however it finally ends up) is one key priority as is giving full attention to presenting arguments on how the regulatory over-reach will accomplish little more than negatively affecting our collective bottom-line.

Posted by Doug Busselman at 10/1/2009 5:03 AM

We've Been Here Before

By: Doug Busselman, Executive Vice President

Over the past several months the biography of John Adams has repeatedly attempted to avail itself for my reading, but until this past weekend I've avoided giving it a try. This

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isn't intended to serve as a book report, but more to share parallels that seem to be making themselves apparent, linking the early days of our country's formation and today's challenges.

Author David McCullough, at least by my reading so far, has done a good job of establishing the context in which Adams (our Second President – but more importantly a central figure in the pre-revolutionary war Congresses which eventually adopted the Declaration of Independence) outlined his thinking on what type of government a free people ought to have. It is interesting to read his thoughts on the benefits of having two houses of the legislative branch...one more closely aligned with the people and the other, a smaller body, selected by the larger legislature – somewhat of a council, capable of being less swayed by the populace.

Perhaps most refreshing is to look back at the time-frames and events of the early days of our country and see many of the same things which dominate our culture today. The highly proclaimed thoughts of liberty as documented in such literary classics as Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" could easily be viewed as a series of postings on a popular blog of our day. The endless and consuming debates of the Continental Congress were probably just as pitched as today's (without the benefit of C-Span to make the public audience part of the process).

Consider the anger of our colonial forefathers over the

taxation imposed from a far-off (physically as well as culturally-disconnected) government, requiring stamps as a method of taxes or assessments on tea... Now explain how those impositions and the proposals in Washington, D.C. to levy taxes on carbon emissions are any different. (If you consider the thinking that the King of England was pursuing in implementing his system of taxation, you could actually make more of a case for those taxes being legitimate than the ones our elected representatives are contemplating today.)

Back around July 4th it was suggested that a total read of the Declaration of Independence would cause you to smile at how similar circumstances caused our patriot ancestors to chafe and declare enough was enough. In reading the John Adams biography and evaluating the current conditions of our government, I'm not so sure that the things our government is growing to become don't exceed the intrusion which caused our founders to revolt.

Then again our forefathers were accustomed by their lifestyle and culture to believe that self-reliance was a natural and desirable status. Freedom and liberty were core concepts which celebrated and pursued individual rights on the basis they were bestowed by God – not political handouts of a benevolent federal government.

Those who dreamed, charted and then sacrificed to make their ideas of freedom take shape might be amazed at how our generation views, nearly as essential, the importance of an all-providing (cradle to grave) system of government.

Would they also be as impressed with how willing we are to give over to our government providers the liberty they so earnestly sought?

Posted by Doug Busselman at 9/29/2009 8:52 AM