

J. Michael Jess

2010 Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award Winner



MIKE JESS

J. Michael Jess received the 2010 Maurice Kremer Groundwater Achievement Award. Jess was presented with the Kremer Award at the Nebraska Water Resources/Nebraska State Irrigation Association Conference held November 21-23, 2010 at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Kearney, Nebraska. The Kremer Award was established in 1985 to recognize Nebraskans who have made a substantive contribution to the conservation and protection of Nebraska's groundwater. Selection committee member and general manager of The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, Don Kraus said "Few can match the depth of Mike's knowledge of and experience with Nebraska's water resources. His efforts over the years to improve the management, regulation and sustainability of the state's water resources, to promote a better understanding of the interrelationship between groundwater and surface water, and to protect the quality and quantity of groundwater make him a very deserving recipient of this award."

Jess' early career choices included assistant hydrologist for the Conservation & Survey Division at the University of Nebraska; first lieutenant (active duty) for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and, staff hydrologist at the Illinois State Water Survey. In 1975, Jess returned to Nebraska to become the deputy director of the Nebraska Department of Water Resources, which later became the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, where he was appointed director in 1981. During his tenure at the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Jess served as an Administrative Law Judge and arbitrated hundreds of water rights disputes. He also served as Nebraska's Commissioner for the U.S. Supreme Court decree in *Neb v Wyo* and for four interstate Compacts charged with apportioning river flows among Nebraska and adjoining states. While serving as Chairman of the Nebraska Boundary Commission, Jess successfully negotiated boundary Compacts with South Dakota and Missouri. In 1999, Jess held appointments with the Conservation & Survey Division and the Water Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He taught several undergraduate and graduate classes in the School of Natural Resources and at the Law School. His research interests included investigation of Nebraska's rivers and aquifer systems and the formulation and execution of policies which govern uses of water. Jess currently works as a consulting engineer specializing in an array of water resources matters such as identification and mapping of groundwater deposits and disputes over irrigation, and, drainage and property boundaries near rivers and lakes. In addition, Jess has published numerous articles about Nebraska water issues.

The Kremer Award is chosen by a selection committee appointed by The Groundwater Foundation Board of Directors. 2010 selection committee members include: Jim Goeke, University of Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division; Jane Griffin, President of The Groundwater Foundation; Don Kraus, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District; Bob

Kuzelka, University of Nebraska Environmental Studies; and Susan Seacrest, Founder and Former President of The Groundwater Foundation.