By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Findings of a wide-ranging report on the relationship between water availability and uses across the entire Republican River Basin will be presented during next week’s NRD meeting in Imperial Tuesday, June 7.

The report also examines that relationship in the Upper Republican Natural Resources District.

The presentation will be made by the engineering firms of Brown and Caldwell and H2Options.

Nate Jenkins, an assistant manager at the URNRD, said the presentation will be an excellent educational opportunity for members of the public, farmers and businesses who have an interest in water issues that affect their livelihoods and communities.

Information compiled for the Water Balance report provides an informative and unique overview of water sources and uses, he added.

This first-of-its-kind study in the basin was launched by the Republican River Basin Coalition nearly two years ago. Jenkins said it could help eventually aid in the development of water-management tools that minimize adverse impacts to key sectors of the economy.

Once water consumption in all its forms is better understood, unnecessary or low-value water

consumption could be managed in a manner that benefits uses that have high value, such as agriculture.

At its core, the water balance report analyzes the relationship between all water inflows, namely precipitation and surface water, and all water outflows, namely water consumption by vegetation and surface water that leaves NRDs in the basin.

The water balance concept is gaining traction across the state as water users and managers seek a more comprehensive understanding of all uses of water. It focuses on showing the uses that can be managed to optimize the water that is available while minimizing impacts on water that is stored both above and below ground.

Jenkins said the public is invited and strongly encouraged to attend. As coordinator of the Republican River Basin Coalition, he urged anyone wanting more information about the basin-wide report to call him at the URNRD office in Imperial at 308-882-5173.