



Lewis & Clark Rural Water System

EXPLORER

VOL. 1 FALL, 2001

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The following comments are excerpts from Chairman Kuehl's report to the membership during our annual meeting in May): June 2000 was a trying month for those of us who had made a commitment to Lewis & Clark over ten years ago. The battle raged on in Congress over how and when Lewis & Clark would receive its congressional blessing of authorization. Those of us in Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota anxiously waited by the phones for any word from Washington, D.C. as to what was happening with our legislation.

Finally, in the waning hours of congressional compromises before the July fourth recess, hope appeared on the horizon. The Military Construction Appropriations Act was ready for passage. Our tri-state congressional delegations were working back and forth between political alliances and the two houses of Congress to convince their peers of the importance of including Lewis & Clark's authorization in the conference committee's language. Success came on June 30, 2000 when Congress approved a final version of the military construction appropriations act that just happened to include authorizing language for Lewis & Clark! Exciting indeed!

In addition to the language that authorized Lewis & Clark, was language concerning the project that also had a huge impact. Contained in this legislation was an emergency supplemental appropriation of \$600,000 for Lewis & Clark to begin its final engineering and design activities. What a triumph for Lewis & Clark and our congressional delegations.

It is important that I take the time to personally thank the tri-state

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LEWIS & CLARK OFFICIALS MEET U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR SECRETARY GALE NORTON

On July 16, 2001, officials from Lewis and Clark met with the new U.S. Department of Interior Secretary, Ms. Gale Norton. Secretary Norton was in Sioux Falls, SD to promote President Bush's energy policy.

LCRWS' Chairman, Charles Kuehl, and Executive Director, Pam Bonrud, represented the project during the meeting with Secretary Norton. Joining LCRWS during the meeting were representatives from the Mid-Dakota RWS, Mni Wiconi RWS, West River/Lyman-Jones RWS, Perkins County RWS, Lower Brule RWS, Rosebud RWS, and the South Dakota state rural water association.

Each project was given three to five minutes to present the Secretary with an overview of their project's status. Collectively, the projects echoed the need for additional funding for the Bureau of Reclamation. Each project recognizes the importance of the individual projects to their respective areas and has vowed to work together in finding enough funding for each to be completed.

"It was an excellent opportunity to meet directly with the Secretary to talk with her about the importance of these projects to our customers", said Pam Bonrud, Executive Director. "We were also able to show her that we stand unified as projects and that we are respectful of each other's needs. Our joint presentations made quite an impression on Secretary Norton as she commented about how refreshing it was to see projects working together instead of fighting amongst themselves."

Secretary Norton told the project representatives that she is willing to work with our congressional leaders and the projects in finding ways to meet our financial needs within the administration's budget goals. She was very impressed with the successes that South Dakota has created in building large, regional rural water systems. Because she is from Colorado, she has a personal appreciation for the importance of adequate drinking water supplies to support our citizens and future economic growth.



Gale Norton, Secretary of Interior meets with Pam Bonrud, Charles Kuehl and John Thune.

FUNDING UPDATE: NATIONAL AND STATE

The Lewis & Clark project made progress in the recent budget hearings. The House and Senate approved \$2 million and the Bush Administration included the legislation in their budget for 2002. The Energy and Water subcommittee will include the bill in conference committee sometime in September and could be approved in September or October.

In addition to the federal appropriations, the SD Board of Water and Natural Resources formally approved our \$200,000

grant from the 2001 legislature and was approved by Governor Janklow.

The State of Iowa approved \$60,000 and the State of MN approved \$54,000 for 2002 to assist with project construction needs. The state of MN funds are appropriated to the MN Joint Powers Group which is comprised of the four MN members. They then use those funds to help cover their expenses related to LCRWS.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT CONTINUED

congressional delegation and their staff for all of their hard work in gaining congressional approval for Lewis & Clark. Our sincerest thanks to Senators Daschle and Johnson from South Dakota, Senators Grassley and Harkin from Iowa, Senators Wellstone and Grams from Minnesota, South Dakota's U.S. Representative John Thune, Iowa's U.S. Representative Tom Latham and Minnesota's U.S. Representative Dave Minge.

Since last July, Lewis & Clark's board has been working hard to refocus our efforts from strategies related to passing federal legislation to strategies designed to complete final engineering reports, an environmental assessment, a water conservation program and building a working relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation.

To help us achieve these new goals, we have hired an engineering team comprised of Banner Associates, HDR Engineering and Mariah Associates. We are very pleased with our selection of these technical experts to help us in designing a system that will efficiently meet our needs.

One of our first priorities was to begin negotiations on a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau is the federal agency that will be providing oversight of the project's construction and expenditure of federal grant funds. The cooperative agreement provides the framework for the working relationship between the Bureau and Lewis & Clark. This document is also important from the perspective that once it is signed, Lewis & Clark will be able to begin accessing its federal appropriations.

Our attention has also been focused on the identification of potential well sites. Just this past month, we completed a preliminary investigation of six different sites along the Missouri River, south of Vermillion, South Dakota. A final analysis of these sites will be forwarded to Lewis & Clark in the coming weeks.

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TEST DRILLING OFFICIALLY BEGINS PROJECT

Test soil drillings for a possible production well were initiated this May along the shores of the Missouri River at Mulberry Point located south of Vermillion, SD and on private lands upriver from Mulberry Point. Preliminary results indicated that the best locations for further investigation were those along Mulberry Point.

Because of these initial results, a decision was made to move forward with a test production well at one of the Mulberry Point sites. In early July, Lewis and Clark advertised for bids from qualified well drillers to construct a 12" test well and a series of 4" observation wells around the test well. The work entails pumping the test well for 72 hours. During the test pump period, measurements will be taken from the observation wells to determine what, if any, impact there is to the aquifer. These samples will also tell Lewis and Clark about the quality of water that can be obtained from the aquifer. After the 72-hour test pump is completed, Lewis and Clark will continue to monitor the observation wells to see how long it takes the aquifer to recover.

In addition to the test well, two more soil tests will be taken at other sites to



see if we can find any other sites that may need additional investigations.

Information obtained from the test pump is critical to the process of determining how many wells may be needed to supply enough capacity for LCRWS. It will also be used to help Lewis and Clark to decide what water treatment process is needed to treat the water to meet drinking water standards. This information is needed for the reports we must submit to Congress next year.

The bids for the building of the production well were awarded at the July board meeting. Layne-Western Construction, a Nebraska company, will begin drilling for the production well in late September with the test pumping to begin in early October.



LEWIS AND CLARK RWS-ENGINEERING UPDATE

Representatives of Banner Associates and Lewis and Clark met with the SD Game Fish and Parks to discuss procedures to be used for obtaining a right of access to one of the Mulberry Point sites for a production pump test well. We also discussed the need to gain access to the Clay County Park area for an additional exploratory soil boring. The initial investigations conducted in May were permitted under a right of entry agreement specific for the activities proposed at that time. Execution of an agreement for a long term lease for the proposed well sites is still some time in the future, making it necessary to execute a separate agreement to occupy the site for the production pump test well and associated monitoring wells.

In a meeting with Game Fish and Parks, we reached agreement to enter into a "State Lease" arrangement for the production pump test well site. It was decided that a letter of agreement constituting a right of entry and occupancy for the exploratory drilling site in the Clay County Park would be appropriate. The SD Game Fish and Parks Department drafted a "State Lease" agreement for presentation at the Game Fish and Parks Commission meeting on July 12 and 13. The Commission approved the lease agreement at that meeting. Governor

Janklow and the Commissioner of School and Public Lands also approved the lease. Lewis and Clark was able to proceed with the bidding and contract award for the production pump test well while the lease documents were working through the formal approval process.

Representatives of Lewis and Clark also met with the SDDOT on Monday, June 25. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the procedures required to obtain an approach for the proposed well site(s) on Mulberry Point. A follow-up meeting to discuss the requirements for a permanent private approach was scheduled for July 27, 2001, which included representatives of the SDDOT, the SD GF&P, and Lewis and Clark.

At the July 27th meeting, everyone was in agreement that we would continue to work together in finding an acceptable method for giving Lewis and Clark permanent access to its potential well sites. All parties understand the importance of Lewis and Clark to the tri-state area's future and that approaches are needed for the project to be able to conduct maintenance on its wells. Whatever the final solution is, it is one that must be compatible with the use of the area and the need to protect the area's wildlife and aesthetic values.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT CONTINUED

On a separate, but related track, Lewis & Clark is working on its environmental assessment report. As a part of this process, public input meetings were held throughout the project area. These meetings were an opportunity for the public to participate in the design process for Lewis & Clark. Numerous meetings have also been held with a variety of federal and state agencies.

Another aspect of the environmental assessment process is the evaluation of historic sites within the proposed project area. To date, a survey of printed records that identify known historical sites has been completed. Our engineers are using this information in planning the location of distribution routes and our permanent physical structures. Our consultants will also soon begin the process of an actual field survey to determine if there are any sites that need to be avoided or if there are new sites not previously identified.

Lewis & Clark has established an aggressive schedule to complete the documents needed before construction can begin. It is our goal to have our final engineering report, environmental assessment and water conservation plan to Congress by April 2002. We are expecting to host a project groundbreaking ceremony during the fall of 2002. How quickly Lewis & Clark is able to complete its construction will be heavily dependent on the level of annual federal appropriations.

In closing, I would like to recognize Pam Bonrud, Bill Dempsey, Michelle Anderson, Larry Kast, Jay Cook, Dave Odens, and the Board of Directors for their commitment to Lewis & Clark. The contribution of these individuals goes to show that when a group of leaders put their minds to something, they will be successful in whatever endeavor they choose.


MAIN OFFICES HAVE MOVED

We have moved the Lewis & Clark RWS offices to a new location which provides us with additional space. Our new mailing address is **401 East 8th Street, Suite 306, Sioux Falls, SD 57103**. From the corner of 8th Street and Cliff Avenue we are approximately seven blocks west. Our phone number and fax numbers are the same.

Lewis & Clark Rural Water System

**401 East 8th Street
Suite 306
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*** Please Recycle This Newsletter!
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*We at Lewis & Clark Rural Water System
wish to express our deepest sympathies
to everyone who was affected
by the devastating events
of September 11th.*

Our Thoughts and Prayers are with you.

God Bless America