



Lewis & Clark Rural Water System

EXPLORER

Summer, 1997

LEWIS & CLARK HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING WITH RENEWED OPTIMISM

The Seventh Annual Membership Meeting opened with great enthusiasm of what is expected to be the year of progress and good news from Congress. Over seventy people from South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa filled the meeting room and banquet while board members reviewed the past year and discussed plans for the upcoming year.



—Members and guests review the Annual Report at the 1997 LCRWS Annual Meeting.

Board Chairman Charles Kuehl welcomed the support of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman John Thune in their new roles as South Dakota's representatives in Washington and their support of water development. He also expressed thanks to the rest of the tri-state delegation. "Without your support, gentlemen, Lewis and Clark successes would be few and far between," said Chairman Kuehl.

Reflecting back on 1996 included the disappointment that the 104th Congress did not pass authorizing legislation. LCRWS appreciated the work of the Senate Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land Management who held a hearing on the federal authorizing legislation.

A new cost share commitment by Sioux Falls was negotiated in May. Senators' Daschle, Grams, and Johnson presented the new proposal to the Sioux Falls City Council. The Council approved the increase and paved the way for congressional action during the 105th Congress.

The grants from each of the states makes it possible for the project development to proceed. South Dakota has provided a \$50,000 grant. Iowa has provided a \$15,000 grant and Minnesota has provided a \$25,000 grant. Along with member dues, the grants are critical to the operations, lobbying efforts, and engineering costs to get Lewis & Clark to the construction phase.

Minnesota's grant is provided to the Minnesota LCRWS Joint Powers Board and is expected to be available each year. The LCRWS board must file a report on the ongoing efforts of the member cities and systems that conserve water and protect existing groundwater supplies.

With expectations of authorization by Congress, LCRWS has been preparing for environmental assessments and compliance. The LCRWS board contracted with Mariah & Associates to assess the 400 miles of pipeline to route the pipe around sensitive areas such as wetlands, and cultural or historical grounds.

The LCRWS won't file a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) compliance report until authorization is completed. (See inside story about Bureau of Reclamation and NEPA).

The NEPA report will detail environmental impacts of the proposed project. Secondly, NEPA informs the public that the agency did indeed consider environmental concerns in its decision making process.

After six years of work, the project is now ready for the last and most difficult hurdle, Congressional authorization and financing. The membership and attendees at the annual meeting left believing this project is too important to not receive support and final passage in Congress. Next year's annual meeting is expected to be a discussion of construction time frames and when the first drops of water will pour through the pipes.

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION TAKES NEW DIRECTION IN WATER MANAGEMENT



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

By Charlie Kuehl, Chairman LCRWS

It is hard for me to believe that we are already halfway through our summer. We are also eight months into the 105th Congress, leaving us approximately thirteen months to push through our federal authorizing legislation.

In May, Lewis and Clark enjoyed another successful annual membership meeting. I was pleased to see the high turnout of representatives from our membership, state legislative bodies and tri-state congressional delegations. It is gratifying to see the high level of commitment that remains for this project at the local, state and federal levels.

May also marked the introduction of S. 777 and H.R. 1688 in Congress—our federal authorizing legislation. We were extremely pleased to see the bills introduced with all six senators and three representatives from the tri-state project area as original cosponsors. After five months of intensive work between the project, City of Sioux Falls, and our congressional delegations, we were able to devise a compromise cost share package that keeps Sioux Falls, SD in the project. My personal THANKS to the City Council of Sioux Falls and Mayor Gary Hanson for agreeing to increase their cost share in Lewis and Clark and keep the project viable at the federal level.

We continue to work with the appropriate congressional committees and our delegations to schedule hearings on our federal legislation. Letters requesting these hearings have been sent by our congressional representatives to the committee chairmen. We are still waiting for word as to when the hearings will be scheduled.

The Bureau of Reclamation is a large, traditional federal agency created a century ago to reclaim the arid West by ensuring it an adequate supply of water. Originally designed to build dams—among its achievements are the Hoover and Grand Coulee—the bureau is today making the transition from public works to management of water resources

The scope of the change has been unprecedented. The bureau has redirected its policies, processes, and priorities to accommodate fundamental changes in managing water resources. The bureau now addresses the interests of more diverse constituent groups, has improved its business practices, given employees the authority and flexibility to innovate, and at the same time streamlined staff. The bureau's work force has been cut by 20 percent since 1993, from 8,000 to 6,400, with another 800 employees slated to retire this year. The agency's budget of about \$1.2 billion has declined \$100 million over the past two years.

The suggested changes went to the very heart of the organization, a traditional top-down bureaucracy. The blueprint recommended that decision-making authority be shifted to the lowest practical organizational level, that the layers of supervisory personnel be reduced, and that regulations be radically streamlined.

Employee teams were created to examine the bureau's activities and bring them into conformity with its new mission. The teams studied business practices and organizational relationships and recommended ways to eliminate unnecessary reviews, excessive management oversight, and costly organizational layering. In April 1994, an order from the Secretary of the Interior

authorized implementation of approved changes. The reorganization was formally completed in October 1994.

The bureau changed procedures that previously gave line managers too little discretion to address water-resource problems. It modified review and approval systems and stopped after-the-fact oversight reviews that had served primarily to fix blame, rather than find opportunities for improvement. In addition, the bureau has

reduced its regulations by 58 percent, thereby eliminating 6,500 pages of outmoded rules and requirements.

The success of the reinvention effort is already apparent. Programs are gradually changing from construction activi-

ties to water conservation, waste-water reuse, river basin management, and environmental restoration. Water users are now encouraged to enter into formal partnerships with the bureau to solve resource management problems cooperatively.

The bureau oversees NEPA, the National Environmental Protection Act. NEPA has two main objectives: 1) Consider every significant aspect of the environmental impact of the proposed action and 2) Inform the public that the agency did indeed consider environmental concerns in its decision making process.



—Bureau of Reclamation, Dakota Area staff; Michael Morris, Greg Gere, and Kimball Banks.

DID YOU KNOW?

Doctors recommend we drink 6-8 glasses of water each day!

FEATURE SYSTEM

CENTERVILLE, SOUTH DAKOTA

Centerville, South Dakota is like many small towns in the Midwest, it started with a few pioneers and built up alongside a waterway. Though many small towns are struggling to hold on to their heritage, Centerville is looking very actively towards its future.

It has been nearly 70 years since the Centerville Milling Company has

ground wheat into flour. The old mill was built in 1890 on the Vermillion River which meanders by the South edge of the city. Some say the mill produced the best flour for the best bread around. Like many good things in the past, some of them have come and gone. The Centerville mill was active up until it burned to the ground in 1930.

The real essentials in life are food and water.

Living in the Midwest, an abundance of food is available—sufficient quality water is another issue. Centerville understands water conservation and has managed to use part of a well system originally built in the 1890s. In 1889, the first well for water was commissioned by the city's governing board. It was a 16 foot well built just off from Centerville's main street.

In 1894, the city approved a \$7,000 water works improvement bond issue to build the mainstay of today's water system. Several modifications, including a new main trunk in 1993 have been

made over the years. Centerville has recently tripled its water storage capacity by adding a new aquastore tank.

The City of Centerville has always struggled to get a good supply of water. By less than one vote on a percentage basis, Centerville voters March 5, 1974, approved a water improvement bond issue in an amount up to \$130,000. All the bids exceeded the funds available. The City was forced to reject the bids and drop the project. As an alternative the City council approved a bid to build a new well and submersible pump.

Today, still needing a new source of water, Centerville is a growing, bedroom community of nearly 1,000. Main street is busy and new dwellings are

springing up around the city. Many of the people living in Centerville work in the surrounding communities of Vermillion, Sioux City, Canton and Sioux Falls. As the town continues to grow, so does its water demands. The city's water supply is high in nitrates and does not meet projected water demands for the future.

"We feel it's just a matter of time before we cannot afford to meet the new regulations under the Clean Water Act because of nitrates," said Centerville Mayor Ben Bjordal.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Pam Bonrud, Exec. Director, LCRWS

The Iowa Legislature gave its blessing to a \$15,000 appropriation for Lewis and Clark. These funds were included in the Department of Natural Resources budget for 1997 and the process is under way to have the money transferred to the project. I am also happy to report that the Minnesota Legislature agreed to provide a \$25,000 grant for the Minnesota Joint Powers Board for 1997 and again in 1998. These funds will be used with local dollars from the Minnesota membership to assist with project related expenses and for local water initiatives. A sincere THANKS to both legislatures and Governors Branstad and Carlson for their continued support of Lewis and Clark.

The recent in-service provided by staff from the Bureau of Reclamation Dakotas' Project Office was very helpful as we prepare for our federal authorization. These training sessions will assist us in understanding the processes that the project will need to undertake as a federally authorized project under construction. The Bureau has agreed to continue providing in-service training for Lewis and Clark throughout 1997. It is important that an active dialogue be maintained between the project and the Bureau.

Our efforts continue to intensify at the federal level with the introduction of authorizing legislation. We are actively working with our congressional delegations in contacting the committees seeking hearings. I am hopeful that our next issue of the *Explorer* will contain highlights of congressional hearings on our legislation.



—Centerville Milling Co., ca. 1910 (top); cutting ice from the Vermillion river, ca. 1895 (bottom).

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RURAL WATER PROJECTS GET \$10 MILLION IN FUNDING

The Senate Appropriations committee added \$10 million to President Clinton's funding plan for the Mid Dakota and Mini Wiconi water projects. Both projects are based in South Dakota.

U.S. Senator Daschle, Minority Leader in the Senate, is credited for getting it through the Senate and into the budget. "I think the committee was more receptive in large measure because the projects have been working on schedule and within budget," said Daschle. "If there were cost overruns and a lot of dissension, I don't think we'd be in the position to do what we did."

Congressman John Thune of South Dakota indicated that a House spending package contains similar boosts for water development in the state. He noted that differences between the Senate and House plans must be settled.

The Mini Wiconi will provide Missouri River water to the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian reservations. The Mid Dakota will serve 27,500 users in central South Dakota from the Pierre to Huron area. The Missouri River is recognized as a vital resource for many uses. Drinking water is one of the latest uses.

Water Terms To Know

Community Water System

A public water system which serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or that regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents. Compare non-community water system.

Cone of Depression

The depression or drop in water level near a well, resulting from the pumping of that well.

Confined Aquifer

An aquifer in which ground water is confined or overlain by an impermeable or semi-permeable formation. Compare unconfined aquifer, semi-confined aquifer.

Conjunctive Use

A program that coordinates the storage of imported surface water supplies in local groundwater basins for future withdrawal and use.
