



# EXPLORER

## MORE GOOD NEWS COMES LEWIS AND CLARK'S WAY!

During the latter days of September, Congress once again demonstrated its support for the Lewis and Clark Rural Water System. During conference committee work on the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 2001, a \$1 million grant was included for Lewis and Clark. These grant funds are in addition to the \$600,000 emergency supplemental appropriation Congress approved in June when Lewis and Clark was authorized.

The timing of the \$1 million grant could not have happened at a better time. Because project funding was included for federal fiscal 2001, Lewis and Clark has been funded for two years in a row. "Now Lewis and Clark has an established history of receiving federal funding for project construction activities", said Pamela Bonrud, LCRWS Executive Director. "It will make it much easier for us to continue in our quest for additional federal funding for project construction."

Recently, Lewis and Clark signed an agreement with Banner Associates, HDR Engineering and TRC Mariah to complete

– Continued on page 4



Board members of LCRWS listen to a moderator during a strategic planning meeting.

## LEWIS & CLARK STARTS PLANNING PROCESS

With the news of congressional approval for Lewis & Clark and the first round of funding assured, the next step was for the board and staff to move towards long-range planning. With the help of a seasoned moderator, LCRWS invested a day in a strategic planning session. With deft, and at times, parliamentary-like precision, the group moved from issue to issue that was then categorized and broken to actionable sub-categories.

At times, as a letter and number defined the categories, an unsuspecting visitor might surmise that a bingo championship was underway. However, the grouping of letters and numbers was the moderator's way of staying on track with the task at hand – developing the highest priorities to assist LCRWS in the challenging process of getting the new water system operational.

After ten years of negotiating and persuading lawmakers about the merits of the project, the group didn't have any difficulty in defining the major issues and what challenges lie ahead for each of those issues. The general topics or issues, are listed with examples of some of their respective challenges or assessments:

- 1) Federal Oversight of Project
  - Role of Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) in the project.
  - BOR oversight requires a request from the Lewis and Clark RWS Board.
  - BOR has fiscal responsibility for administration of the grant funds for the project.

– Continued on page 3



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## LEWIS & CLARK RURAL WATER AUTHORIZATION



### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly things change. As our last newsletter went to print, we learned that Lewis and Clark's legislation received congressional approval. Not only did Lewis and Clark become law, but Congress also agreed to give us a \$600,000 grant to help us begin our final engineering and design activities. What a summer it has been since then!

We have had a number of opportunities to meet with our tri-state congressional leaders to thank them in person for all their hard work. It has been fun indeed to share in the excitement of seeing Lewis and Clark become reality. Our success in Congress could not have happened if it had not been for the persistence of our delegations and their staff in convincing their peers about the need for Lewis and Clark. We sincerely thank each one of them for their belief in Lewis and Clark.

Lewis and Clark must also thank our state legislative leaders, governors and state agency personnel from the tri-state region for all they have done on our behalf. We look forward to working with them in completing Lewis and Clark's construction.

– Continued on page 4

The passing of Lewis & Clark through the Congress was not without its share of drama. Considering that California and water projects from other states became a factor in the closing weeks before its final passage, the final version of the bill required some heavy lifting on the part of the tri-state delegation.

The funding for Lewis & Clark will be an annual event just like Thanksgiving. Staff and board members will gather around the halls of Washington, D.C. to tell the story they have told countless times over the last ten years. The first installment of appropriations, a total of \$600,000, was awarded after President Clinton signed the bill into law on July 13, 2000.

Now that the legislation to approve Lewis & Clark has passed, the "real work" has begun for staff and the agencies involved. Several agencies played a role in the discussions about the merits of Lewis & Clark. Those same agencies will be working closely with staff to ensure the project meets federal standards and design criteria.

The scheduling of priorities has taken center stage since the legislation was signed into law. Lewis & Clark staff conducted first coordination meeting with U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the appropriate state agency representatives to discuss federal oversight and local responsibilities for project construction.

In a more direct approach to making sure the organization develops and acts on its priorities, LCRWS held a strategic planning session for the board and membership to identify short- and long-term goals and outline the process for moving forward. [see article specifically about the strategic planning session]

The next several months will include working on 2001 budgets, defining new positions to be filled on staff and approaching the legislatures for funding. As the scope activities continues to expand part of the role for staff will be to determine the scope of services needed, completing an engineering contract and completing the final engineering report and environmental assessment report.

Support for the project continues to be strong. During the summer, LCRWS received \$60,000 from Iowa legislative appropriation and \$200,000 from the South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources.

LCRWS staff has been embarked on a informational visits to service clubs and other groups. The public meetings will continue and updates to the project will also be available on the LCRWS web site which can be found at [www.lcrws.org](http://www.lcrws.org).

– Continued from page 1

2) Discussion of Final Engineering Report

Report should demonstrate that it is still basically the same project.  
Report should demonstrate that the project can still be built within the budget limits.  
Feasibility Study; environmental report is in the NEPA format.  
Need to organize a group from each state, the water system, and the BOR to identify the items to be addressed in the NEPA compliance report.

3) Eminent Domain

Legal council stated that the project sponsors have the right of eminent domain.

4) Water Conservation Plan

Intent is that measures are taken to apply state of the art technology to conserve water within the project area.  
Water conservation requirements may carry over into the member entities receiving the water.

5) Value Engineering Discussion

BOR has specific requirements related value engineering based on a dollar threshold of \$300,000 of construction.  
VE review of feasibility study was acknowledged.  
VE review of final design will be required at 35% point in development of plans and specifications.

Iowa requires construction permits before construction can start in the state. At least two months will be needed for a review of an engineering report and a shorter time for review of plans and specifications. A field inspection follow-up will be done when water is starting to flow.

Currently, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) owns and operates nine dams from within their target. Funds for construction are pass through but they come off the target total for the regional office. Other projects competing for construction funds are Garrison Diversion, Mni Wiconi, Mid Dakota, and Perkins County. The South Dakota delegation has written in funds for South Dakota projects without increasing the total budget for the BOR. Because of the increasing demand and competition for construction funds in the BOR's budget, Lewis and Clark will work with its tri-state delegation in trying to find solutions to this dilemma.

Write-in appropriations will be necessary for first several years of the project due to the budget cycle. Currently, there is a \$45M construction budget and approximately \$125M in requests. There are two similar projects likely to be authorized in Montana. In addition, there will be two tribal projects coming in the future in South Dakota including Tri-County and Crow Creek.

In conclusion to the strategic planning meeting, the board identified some specific areas that require action in the immediate future. They include the following:

- Develop a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation
- Begin process for potential carryover of federal funds
- Begin technical scoping meetings and construction prerequisites
- Schedule meeting with BOR Regional director
- Make sure local BOR offices know of contacts elsewhere in the agency



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– Continued from page 2

Now, we move forward as a board and membership in beginning the process of building Lewis and Clark. We are completing contract negotiations with our engineering team and with the Bureau of Reclamation. Lewis and Clark is also working on state and federal appropriation requests for fiscal year 2001. Elsewhere in this issue, you will read about our activities since authorization.



**Happy Holidays**  
from all of us at  
Lewis & Clark Rural  
Water System

– Continued from page 1



Rep. John Thune, Sen. Tim Johnson and Sen. Tim Daschle present LCRWS with a copy of the signed bill and pen used by President Clinton.

the final engineering report and environmental assessment. The expected completion date for these reports is April 2002. Once completed, the reports will be sent to Congress for a 90-day review period. A project groundbreaking is anticipated during the late summer or early fall of 2002.

Project sponsors are also working with the Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) to finalize a Cooperative Agreement. This document establishes the working relationship between the BoR and LCRWS through the final design process, completion of the environmental assessment, and project construction.