**LEWIS & CLARK REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM**

*****In the same trailblazing spirit as our namesake explorers, we are dedicated to constructing and operating a first of its kind tristate drinking water system that will benefit an estimated 350,000 people in southeast South Dakota, northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota.*

* Lewis & Clark was incorporated in January 1990 and authorized by Congress in July 2000. It is a wholesale provider of treated water to its 20 cities and rural water systems in southeast South Dakota, northwest Iowa and southwest Minnesota. The source of water is a series of wells that tap into an aquifer adjacent to the Missouri River. Ground water rights are issued by the State of SD. The treatment plant is located near Vermillion, SD.
* A groundbreaking ceremony was held in August 2003. The first 11 members began receiving water in July 2012. As of October 2024, all 20 members are now connected. Work continues though on the third and final phase of the water treatment plant, which is expected to be completed in 2028.
* When completed the “Base System” will produce 44.19 million gallons a day (MGD) and benefit an estimated 350,000 people in the tristate region. The System is self-sustaining with water rates covering the operations and maintenance expenses.
* Construction funding for the Base System comes from a series of grants – roughly 80% from the federal government, 10% from the three states and 10% from the local members.
* The three states and 20 members have paid 100% of their cost share – a combined $154.1M. These 23 governmental entities were “paid up” at different times between 2007 and 2015.
* The final federal funding for the Base System was approved in FY25. Between FY01 and FY25 federal funding approved for the project totaled $554.2M. This includes $165.67M from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
* Construction on a first expansion to increase capacity from 44.19 MGD to 60 MGD started in 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2030. No direct federal funding provided for the expansion, but funding from the three states, which included some ARPA funding, has helped to offset roughly a quarter of the cost. The members are covering the rest of roughly $100M price tag.
* Based on Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) parameters, Lewis & Clark was meant to address the water needs of its members for 40 years. With growth far exceeding projections, project officials are working on a possible second expansion to provide additional capacity beyond 60 MGD; as much as 95 MGD more.
* An appraisal level study on a possible second expansion has been completed. The next step is a feasibility study. Lewis & Clark is working with its tristate congressional delegation to secure authorization for BoR to cover up to 50% of the estimated $2.7M price tag for the feasibility study, which will take 18-24 months to complete.

*Updated June 2025*