

Lewis & Clark
REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM

Explorer

Summer 2024

Sheldon Celebrates “Liquid Gold!”

Close to 100 people attended the ribbon cutting ceremony on April 23 at the new meter building to celebrate Sheldon’s connection and offer congratulations! Sheldon started receiving water on December 19. “As excited as we are for Sheldon, we’re not dumb. That is why we’re having the ribbon cutting today and not in late December,” joked Chairman Murray Hulstein of Sioux Center.

Congressman Randy Feenstra of Hull, who served on the L&C Board of Directors for several years noted, “We had cities and rural water systems drop out. They finally said we don’t believe. But we believed it would someday happen. We believed that working together we could accomplish this goal. The dream is real and now we have this liquid gold that will create economic development for the future.”

Other speakers included Reclamation Senior Advisor Roque Sanchez of Washington, D.C., Reclamation Regional Director Brent Esplin of Billings, Senator Chuck Grassley staff Jacob Bossman, Senator Joni Ernst staff Kolby DeWitt, Director Todd Uhl of Sheldon and Mayor Greg Geels. Many people were thanked including federal and state officials, Reclamation, Banner Associates and contractors. Current and former members of the Sheldon council and staff were recognized for their vision and leadership.

Sanchez: “The significant Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investment that Lewis & Clark has received has helped advance construction by about a decade. The Administration, Department of Interior and Reclamation are committed to bringing clean, reliable drinking water to rural communities.”



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Esplin: “We have a good partnership with Lewis & Clark – rural partners who have vision and persistence – and I look forward to that partnership continuing as we finish this project. It is getting close. The end result is economic development. To make sure we have good water.”

Bossman: “Senator Grassley has proudly been engaged and supportive the whole time. We are one step closer to the completion of the Base System to get Iowans connected to this safe, affordable, consistent source of water. Senator Grassley is looking forward to seeing the connection of Sibley as the last Iowa community.”

DeWitt: “For decades the folks at Lewis & Clark have worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition. The drought has shown just how critical access to water is for our communities. Senator Ernst has long supported this project and is excited to witness the progress. This milestone represents the dedication of local leaders, directors and staff.”

Geels: “31 years have passed since Sheldon joined Lewis & Clark. It has been a long and arduous road, but we have done it. We persevered together. Some may call it a pipe dream. Well, this pipe dream is now a pipe reality. Thank you to everyone past and present for staying the course and making this day possible. Thank you for the legacy to this community.”

Uhl: “The vision and dedication it took to make this project happen is nothing short of amazing. We have only had Lewis & Clark water for a few short months, but it is already having a huge impact in our community. Our water quality has improved substantially. We have enough water to continue to pursue growth and to continue to pursue a better Sheldon.”

“Congratulations to Sheldon! A new day has dawned in Orab Country,” concluded Hulstein. Prints were presented to Geels and Uhl. A lunch was held afterward.



Rep. Randy Feenstra



Reclamation Senior Advisor Roque Sanchez



Left to Right: Chairman Murray Hulstein, Mayor Greg Geels and Director Todd Uhl

Construction Begins on Treatment Plant Phase 3

PKG began construction in mid-May on the third and final phase of the treatment plant and is expected to last close to four years. They created two staging areas for materials and brought in three job trailers. Dirt work started in the separate areas where the second three-million gallon clearwell and expanded maintenance shop will be located. Adding two more solids contact basins and a second gravity thickener are also part of the contract, as well as a conversion from using sodium hypochlorite bleach solution to gas chlorine to disinfect the water.

As part of the gas chlorine conversion, the brine and sodium hypochlorite storage tanks in the chemical feed room were stripped of piping and removed, as well as the related sodium hypochlorite generation equipment. “In hindsight we should have used gas chlorine from the start because it is much cheaper. This will help keep our rates as low as possible,” said Operations Manager Jim Auen. The conversion is part of the Base System.

L&C started operations in 2012 with onsite sodium hypochlorite generation, which did not work as expected from the start. It was very inefficient and the equipment was not properly sized. L&C abandoned the onsite sodium hypochlorite equipment after about three years. “Purchasing bulk bleach solution was a temporary solution. However, we waited until the end of the project to make the conversion to gas chlorine because our focus was using funding to put pipe in the ground,” said Auen.



Dirt work begins for the second clearwell



Removal of tanks from chemical feed room for the conversion to gas chlorine

SD Approves Water Rights & ARPA Funding

Following legislative approval this past session, the SD Water Management Board on May 8 gave final approval to L&C’s request for an additional 17.07 million gallons a day (MGD) of ground water rights. The capacity is needed for L&C’s expansion to 60 MGD that is currently underway and is expected to be completed in 2030. “Our thanks to the Water Management Board for their approval, as well as to the staff at the Department of Ag & Natural Resources (DANR) and the Geological Survey. We greatly appreciate their hard work in reviewing and vetting our request, as well as their counsel throughout the process,” said Executive Director Troy Larson.

Following legislative approval this past session to make an additional \$89.38M in previously unallocated ARPA funding available to water projects, the SD Board of Water & Natural Resources (BWNR) on June 27 approved an additional \$5M for L&C. “A big thank you to Governor Noem, State Legislature, BWNR and DANR for the additional funding, which like the \$15M previously approved by the State will be used toward our expansion. The State has been a tremendous partner ever since this long journey started in 1990,” said Larson.

Hull Reservoir Taking Shape

DN Tanks is making quick work of the one million gallon reservoir a few miles southwest of Hull. Starting in mid-April they excavated the site, installed the underground piping, completed the foundation, poured the concrete wall and dome panels onsite, erected the shoring and installed the panels. Next up is wrapping it with high tension wire and multiple layers of shotcrete. This reservoir is part of L&C's expansion from 44.19 to 60 million gallons a day and is being paid for with ARPA funds from the State of Iowa. November 2024 is the substantial completion deadline.



Larchwood Pump Station Construction Underway

Rice Lake is making good progress on the Larchwood Pump Station on the IA side of the IA-MN border. They started site excavation in March, installed the underground piping, poured the footings and foundations and are currently erecting the masonry block walls. The contract also includes adding one more pump to the existing Rock Rapids-Rock County RWD meter building/pump station 11 miles to the east. This pump station and the additional pump are part of L&C's expansion to from 44.19 to 60 million gallons a day and are being paid for with ARPA funds from the State of Iowa. April 2025 is the substantial completion deadline.



Sibley to be Connected this Fall

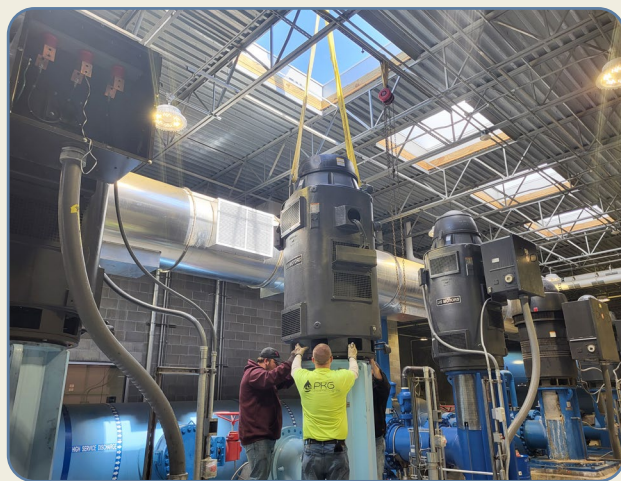
Meter Building & Service Line Nearing Completion

Construction of the Sibley meter building and 17 miles of 12-inch PVC pipe for the Sibley service line are both nearing completion. It is anticipated Metro Construction will reach substantial completion on the service line in late September and it is anticipated West Branch Construction will reach substantial completion on the meter building in late October. The date of the latter is when L&C water will finally begin flowing to Sibley and all 20 members will be connected.



High Service Pump Station Delays Continue

After many delays PKG finally reached substantial completion on the Base System portion of this contract in late February, which included the installation of two high service pumps, 1,250 hp motors, variable frequency drives, chemical feed improvements and adding more A/C units to the electrical room. A \$2.23M change order was approved in January 2023 to add two more high service pumps and motors that are for the expansion from 44.19 to 60 million gallons a day. The substantial completion deadline for that portion of the contract was June 2024. “PKG unfortunately has experienced many delays with this portion of the project as well. They have been waiting for the variable frequency drives, which are supposed to arrive in August but the delivery date has been a moving target,” said Operations Manager Jim Auen.



Installation of a 1,250 hp motor for one of the high service pumps



\$39 Million Repaid to Minnesota

A \$39,003,078.04 payment was made to the State of Minnesota on June 28; repayment of the “federal funding advances” the Legislature approved in 2014 and 2015. These were zero interest unsecured loans that were to be repaid with future federal funding as it became available. The repayment happened earlier than expected because of funding L&C received from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

As a result of legislation passed by the Legislature in 2023 and clarified in 2024, the four MN members (Lincoln Pipestone RWS, Luverne, Rock County RWD and Worthington) can draw down up to \$22M of this repayment to cover their cost share for the expansion to 60 million gallons a day that is underway. “A big thanks to Governor Walz, our local legislators, MN Management & Budget and MN Public Facilities Authority for working with us to make this funding possible! It will have a huge benefit to our respective rate payers. As a result of this funding, the MN members are forgoing a proportional share of the ARPA funding approved by the States of SD and IA, so it also benefits the SD and IA members,” said Vice-Chairman Scott Hain of Worthington.

Pedley Honored at Annual Membership Meeting

L&C’s 34th Annual Membership Meeting was held in Sioux Falls on June 27. Staff members from Senators Thune and Rounds, as well as Representatives Johnson, Feenstra and Fischbach were among the attendees, as well as legislators, mayors and board chairmen. Executive Director Troy Larson provided an update on operations, construction and funding, as well as the options being explored to address the members’ water needs beyond the expansion underway to 60 MGD.

Director Larry Pedley of Sibley was presented with L&C’s highest honor – the Lewis & Clark Trailblazer Award. It was also announced the Sibley meter building will be dedicated in his honor when it is completed this fall. Larry started serving on the City Council in 1985. In 1993 he made the motion for Sibley to join L&C. In 2006 he joined the Board of Directors and currently serves on the Budget, Personnel and Audit committees. During the last 18 years he has made multiple trips to Des Moines, as well as attended many local meetings with federal and state officials to help advocate for L&C. “Larry is a true public servant. Well-deserved recognition for his dedicated service!” said Chairman Murray Hulstein.



Chairman Murray Hulstein presents Director Larry Pedley (right) with the Lewis & Clark Trailblazer Award. Hulstein is holding the plaque that will be placed on the Sibley meter building in Pedley’s honor.

Madison Connection Expected in Late July



DN Tanks continues to make good progress on the one million gallon ground storage reservoir a few miles east of Madison. The electricians are finishing up work in the controls vault and the logo will be painted soon. Substantial completion is anticipated to occur by late July, which will allow L&C water to finally flow to Madison! A ribbon cutting celebration is being planned at the reservoir on August 21.

Rains Hampering Construction of Drying Beds

L&C currently has three lime drying beds, a decant pond and a stockpile area where the lime sludge is dried down further before being hauled off site. In May 2023 Lidel Construction began constructing three additional lime drying beds, a second decant pond and a second stockpile area. Each of the drying beds is nearly a quarter mile long. One of the new drying beds is part of the expansion to 60 million gallons a day and is being paid for with SD ARPA funds, but the rest of the project is part of the Base System.

After demobilizing in December, Lidel began dewatering operations in late May. To complete the dirt work they need dry conditions. They halted dewatering a few weeks later because of heavy rains. Lidel plans to resume work in late July. October 2024 is the substantial completion deadline, which becomes increasingly challenging to meet with each passing week.

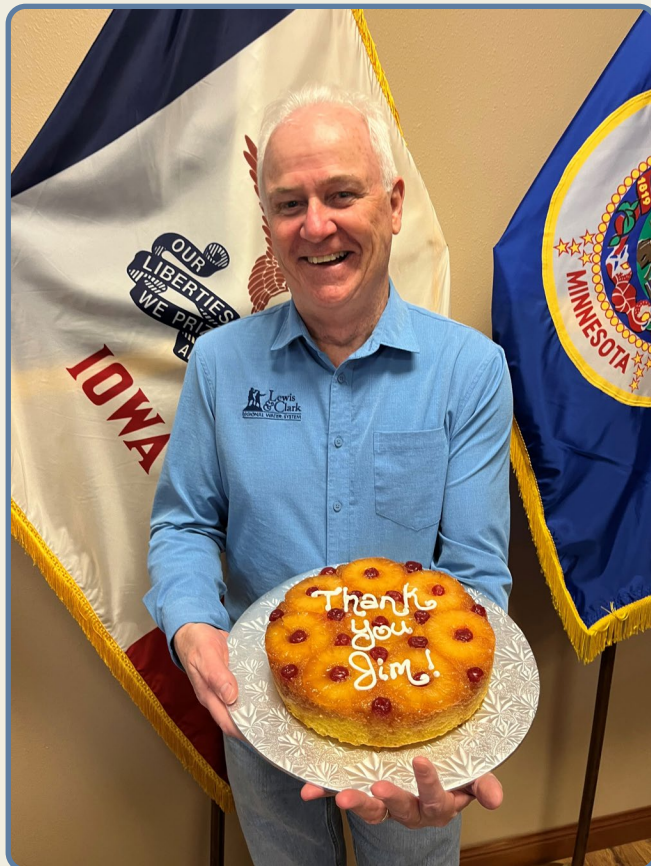


Hoye Retires and Wippert Appointed to Board

Director Jim Hoye, the long-time General Manager of Rock Rapids Municipal Utilities, retired on May 15. Jen Wippert took over on that date as the new General Manager and to also serve on L&C's Board. "Jim served with great distinction and dedication on the Board for 22 years. He was always willing to share creative ideas and he made many significant contributions along the way. His wealth of knowledge and great sense of humor will be missed. For generations to come the citizens of Rock Rapids and the surrounding region will enjoy an improved quality of life and expanded economic development opportunities because of water from Lewis & Clark. Jim can take great pride in the important role he played in helping to make that happen," said Chairman Murray Hulstein. Hoye received the Lewis & Clark Trailblazer Award in 2023 and the meter building that provides water to Rock Rapids was dedicated in his honor in 2018.

Jen is a Rock Rapids native and practiced law in Rock Rapids for the last 12 years, including representing Rock Rapids Municipal Utilities. She received a degree in Mass Communications from Morningside in 2008, and then a law degree from USD in 2012. While at USD she interned for the City of Vermillion where she first became familiar with L&C.

When Jen left for college she told her mom that she was not coming back to Rock Rapids to live and was not going to be a lawyer. She admittedly does not listen to herself too well. Jen and her husband Roman have two daughters – Natalie (8) and Harper (4). Jen enjoys gardening, reading and following NASCAR. "A warm welcome aboard to Jen! We are looking forward to working closely with her," said Hulstein.



Jim Hoye



Jen Wippert

Additional \$16 Million Approved for FY24!

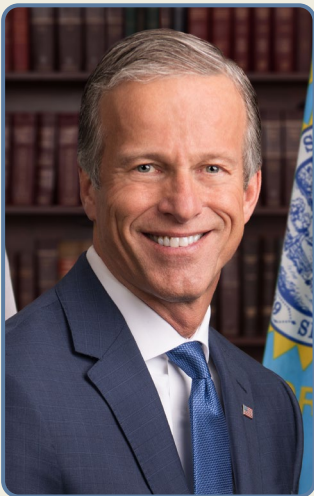
\$15M Requested for FY25 to Complete Base System

Project officials were excited to receive the great news that L&C is receiving an additional \$16M for FY24 from two separate funding sources! Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) announced on April 24 that L&C would receive an additional \$6M from the FY24 Appropriations Bill, which is on top of the \$18.825M previously approved for FY24. This “Additional Capability Funding” is part of BoR’s general appropriation that is not earmarked for specific projects.

BoR then announced on May 28 that L&C would receive an additional \$10M in FY24 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, which is on top of the \$7M previously approved for FY24. “This brings the total infrastructure funding L&C has received to \$152.5M for FY22, FY23 and FY24, which has advanced a decade’s worth of construction in a short period of time,” said Executive Director Troy Larson.

The combined \$16M will be used toward Phase 3 of the treatment plant. “A big thank you to our great Reclamation partners for their efforts to help get this project across the finish line in terms of completing the Base System!” said Larson.

Assuming L&C receives the \$6.825M proposed by the Administration in the FY25 Budget, Banner engineers estimate another \$15M is needed in FY25 to complete the Base System. “The last three fiscal years Senators Thune, Klobuchar, Rounds and Smith have submitted a congressionally directed spending request for \$12M. To secure enough funding in FY25 to complete the Base System, they have graciously agreed to increase their request to \$15M this year,” said Larson. As they have done in past years, the other six members of the tristate delegation will work to increase programmatic funding for BoR’s Rural Water Fund.



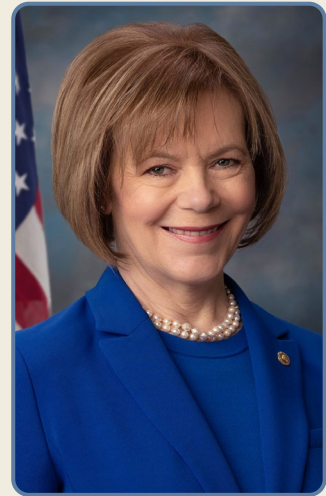
Senator Thune



Senator Klobuchar



Senator Rounds



Senator Smith

To secure enough funding in FY25 to complete the Base System, they have graciously agreed to increase their request to \$15M this year.

FROM THE PIPELINE



Executive Director Troy Larson (left) gave Rep. Dusty Johnson a project update at an event in Madison on July 16



Former Director Dennis Weeldreyer of Lennox passed away on April 18. Dennis was a long-time city council member and mayor. He served on the L&C Board from 2003 – 2018. For six years he also represented L&C on the SD Association of Rural Water Systems (SDARWS) Board. Dennis also served as a Lincoln County commissioner. He was recognized in 2018 with the Lewis & Clark Trailblazer Award, L&C's highest honor, and the Lennox meter building was also dedicated in his honor. Dennis also received the Spirit of Rural Water Award from SDARWS.



Following the Sheldon ribbon cutting on April 23, Bureau of Reclamation officials toured the Sheldon water tower. Left to right in the left photo: Area Manager Joe Hall of Bismarck, Program Specialist Angela Brown of Washington, D.C., Senior Advisor Roque Sanchez of Washington, D.C., Regional Director Brent Esplin of Billings, Rural Water Division Manager Dani Fettig of Bismarck, and Congressional and Legislative Affairs Chief Niall O'Connor of Washington, D.C. Not pictured Public Relations Specialist Michelle Boehm of Bismarck.





Director Todd Uhl, Water Treatment Superintendent Dave Andringa, Business Manager Lori Seten and Construction Administrator Clint Koehn on April 15 in the area of Sheldon’s water treatment plant where L&C water feeds into their distribution system



Nobody puts on a fish fry like Director Nate Vander Plaats of Lennox!



Bailey Beckman, Sen. Ernsi’s Legislative Aide who handles L&C in Washington, D.C., met with the IA directors and Executive Director Troy Larson in Sheldon on May 29 to receive a project update. She also toured the newly constructed Sheldon meter building and water tower. Left to right: Todd Uhl of Sheldon, Jen Wippert of Rock Rapids, Beckman, Larry Pedley of Sibley, Heidi Kramer of Hull and Murray Hulstein of Sioux Center in the Sheldon meter building.



Winners of the Sioux Metro Growth Alliance’s Gold Shovel golf tournament on June 11 in Brandon were (left to right): Banner’s Joe Munson, L&C Director Nolan Meyer of Harrisburg, Executive Director Troy Larson and Tea Mayor Casey Voelker



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Test Wells Results Being Analyzed

Their Wells started work in mid-May on the contract that includes drilling six observation wells and one test well at both Site C and Site A at L&C's wellfield southwest of Vermillion. The results from these test wells will provide the expected capacities from the future collector wells and geological information at both locations so the engineers can design them accordingly. They ran into some delays, including the delivery of screens for the test wells, that pushed the late June substantial completion deadline back to late July. The 72-hour constant flow pump tests of the Site C and Site A test wells were completed in mid-July and the engineers are currently analyzing the data.

The future collector well at Site C is mainly for L&C's expansion from 44.19 to 60 million gallons a day, but a small portion of the capacity is to complete the Base System. "The expansion is expected to be completed by late 2030, so the Site C collector well will need to be online by then. The future collector well at Site A is an operations expense. It will replace the capacity of the vertical wells that are steadily losing capacity and cannot be effectively rehabilitated. They will eventually be abandoned," said Operations Manager Jim Auen.

