

Lewis & Clark  
REGIONAL WATER SYSTEM

# Explorer

Winter 2025

## Halleluia! Sibley Last Member Connected!

After over 34 years in the making, all 20 members of Lewis & Clark are now connected after water finally started flowing to Sibley on October 16! A large crowd, including ten L&C directors, several Banner officials and many past and present Sibley leaders, helped celebrate the milestone on October 28 with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Senator Chuck Grassley, the only member of the tristate congressional delegation who has been a part of the project from the very start, was the featured guest. Other speakers included White House Director of Strategic Engagement Will McIntee, Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Roque Sanchez, Reclamation Regional Director Brent Esplin, Mayor Jerry Johnson, Director Larry Pedley, Chairman Murray Hulstein, Kolby DeWitt from Sen. Joni Ernst's office and Wes Fopma from Rep. Randy Feenstra's office. Mayor Johnson summed up everyone's sentiments by exclaiming "Halleluia!"

**Grassley:** "I am glad to be with you at the finish, as well as at the start...While today marks the final connection to L&C, you can be sure of my continued support through future construction and expansion projects...I've viewed my support for this initiative as an investment...in our communities. This investment was made possible because of the hard work of those here today and those who were champions for this effort in the past... Thank you to those with L&C that have been tirelessly committed to improving their communities. Future generations will benefit from your pioneering work."

**Hulstein:** "I applaud Sibley's elected leaders and staff who have played a role through the years in helping to make this dream a reality. It took tremendous vision, faith and determination. You can all be very proud of what you have accomplished."



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At the end of the ceremony the meter building was dedicated in honor of Director Larry Pedley. Pedley has been a strong advocate for L&C in his 39 years of public service – 34 years on the City Council and five years on the Osceola County Board of Supervisors. He even made the motion for Sibley to join L&C. Pedley has served the last 18 years on the

*“Not many people can say they have spent most of their life chasing a pipe dream and caught it.”*

L&C Board of Directors. “In honor of Larry and his many contributions to help bring water to Sibley and the rest of the tristate region, I am incredibly pleased to dedicate this meter building in Larry’s honor. May all who enter it know that a good man named Larry Pedley went above and beyond to improve the quality of life for the good folks of Sibley,” said Hulstein. In his remarks, Pedley said “Not many people can say they have spent most of their life chasing a pipe dream and caught it...My name may be on the building, but it represents Sibley and all the good people who worked on this project to make it happen.”



Reclamation Regional Director Esplin



Mayor Johnson exclaims "Halleluia!"



Chairman Hulstein, Senator Grassley and Director Pedley



Director Larry Pedley

## Chairman's Report



Chairman Murray Hulstein

L&C's first expansion from 44.19 million gallons a day (MGD) to 60 MGD is expected to be completed in late 2030. In our planning in the early 90's, we used the BoR's limiting criteria of estimating needs for the next 40 years. A recent survey of the members shows combined they may need another 82.5 MGD – a total of 142.5 MGD.

In the fall of 2023, Banner was tasked with conducting an appraisal level study on a possible second expansion of L&C beyond 60 MGD. They expect to complete this broad overview study this March. Next step in the federal authorization process is a more detailed feasibility study. With congressional approval BoR can cover up to half the estimated \$3M price tag for a feasibility study using existing programmatic funding; no appropriation is needed.

Senators Mike Rounds and Amy Klobuchar last summer co-sponsored a bill that would restore for eight years

the authority of the Bureau of Reclamation to participate in feasibility studies without first needing congressional authorization, which they had from 2006 – 2016. Rounds and Klobuchar are planning to reintroduce the bill and we are thankful for their efforts.

We are also very thankful that Senate Majority Leader John Thune has readily agreed to continue taking the lead on a complimentary parallel track – working through the existing process to secure legislative authorization for BoR to participate in L&C's feasibility study. We appreciate our elected leaders "burning the candle at both ends."

Dakota Mainstem Regional Water System (DMS) is a possible alternative for L&C to secure additional capacity instead of a second expansion. L&C became a member of DMS last September. Eighteen of L&C's members are also members of DMS. Total membership is now at 56 cities and rural water systems. The feasibility study L&C is pursuing will be helpful regardless of which of the two options our 20 members eventually choose, so it probably will be a year or two before the decision needs to be made. In the meantime, we will continue riding both horses.

## Larchwood Pump Station Nearing Completion

Rice Lake Construction is nearing completion of the Larchwood pump station on the IA side of the IA-SD border. They are working on the interior process piping and controls. The current substantial completion deadline is April 18. This project is part of the expansion to 60 million gallons a day. ARPA funding from Iowa is being used to construct it.



## Water Treatment Plant – Phase 3

The treatment plant is being built in three separate phases. Phase 3 when completed will allow L&C to deliver the members' combined reserved capacity of 44.19 million gallons a day (MGD) at the same time. It is only when Phase 3 is finished that Base System construction will be completed. There are a handful of interim substantial completion deadlines for different components of the contract, but the overall substantial completion deadline is currently October 2027 with a final completion deadline of April 2028.

PKG is making good progress. The first major deadline is completion of the second three-million gallon underground clearwell, which is the only part of the Phase 3 contract that is for the expansion to 60 MGD. The rest of Phase 3 is for the Base System. SD ARPA funds are being used to cover roughly half the cost of the clearwell. Those funds need to be spent by the end of 2026.



Excavation for two more solids contact basins



New maintenance area

## Highlights of PKG's progress:

- Roughly **75%** of the concrete has been poured for the clearwell. The baffle walls ensure the first water into the clearwell is the first water to leave the clearwell.
- Added maintenance area is nearing completion.
- A lot of time and effort has been spent related to the conversion to gas chlorination. This has involved significant demolition and remodeling of the chemical feed room and chemical storage area.
- Excavation is underway for two solids contact basins.



Construction of the three-million gallon underground clearwell

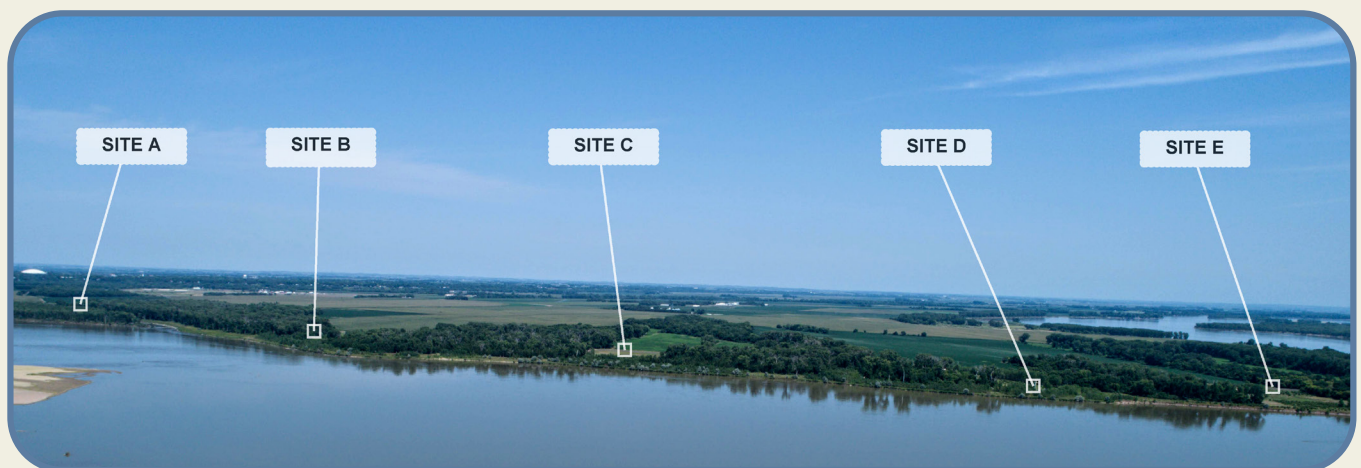
## Two Collector Wells Planned for Site C “Gusher”

L&C’s primary wellfield is at Mulberry Point, just north of the Vermillion-Newcastle Bridge. It is broken up into different sites that are designated by letter. Site A is the northern-most site and Site E is the southern-most. L&C currently has a 22 million gallon a day (MGD) collector well at Site B. L&C was next planning to construct one collector well at Site C. However, testing has determined the site will produce significantly more capacity than originally thought so L&C now plans to construct two collector wells there. “Great news that Site C is a gusher!” said Executive Director Troy Larson.

Based on the pump testing of observation wells last July, HDR’s well consultant estimates one collector well at Site C should produce a minimum of 55 MGD and very likely more. For context, the two largest collector wells in North America are both in Kansas City and are both 50 MGD. “Our engineers feel confident we can get a minimum of 65 – 70 MGD in overall capacity if we construct two collector wells at Site C roughly 500 feet apart instead of just one. We occasionally need to take wells offline for maintenance and repairs, so it is far better from an

operations standpoint to have Site C’s capacity split between two collector wells instead of consolidated in one. In addition, the overall price tag is surprisingly less to construct two large collector wells with 16-foot diameter caissons instead of one giant collector well with a 20-foot diameter caisson. Lastly, we do not need 55 MGD of well capacity at this time, so constructing one collector well now and the other whenever the capacity is needed helps us spread out the financial impact for the members. For all these reasons, it was an easy decision to make the switch to two collector wells instead of one,” said Larson.

With a wider footprint now expected at Site C, Their Wells was hired to do six additional soil borings to determine the location of bedrock and other materials in previously untouched areas. These borings will be done in March. With the much higher than expected capacity at Site C, physical and computer modeling were also recently approved to help the engineers determine the best well design to maximize capacity at the site. The goal is to award a contract for the first collector well no later than June.



# FROM THE PIPELINE



Rock Rapids Municipal Utilities officials toured the treatment plant and wellfield on November 6. Left to right: Water Operator Mark Peterson, Water Operator Nick Lupkes, L&C Operations Manager Jim Auen, Ex-Officio Board Member Sam Halse, Board Member Brendan Metzger and Board Member Rhonda Menning.



Executive Director Troy Larson was honored with the 2024 Manager of the Year Award at the SD Association of Rural Water Systems' Annual Technical Conference in Pierre on January 14. He previously received this recognition in 2013. "It was a momentous year for L&C with major milestones reached. Team effort," said Larson.



Each year the USD Project Management class tours the treatment plant. L&C staff and Trevor Stahl (far left), Banner's on-site rep for the Phase 3 construction, provided the class tour on November 4.

## Final Contracts Awarded for Base System

On January 23 the Board of Directors awarded the final two construction contracts for the Base System – a second backup generator for the Tea pump station and a fourth backup generator for the water treatment plant. American Electric was the low bidder for the Tea pump station at \$2,470,000. This is for a used 2,250 kw Caterpillar generator. No bids were provided for a new generator. Muth Electric was the low bidder for the treatment plant at \$3,786,374. This is for a new 2,000 kw Caterpillar generator. No bids



## Rhoden Sworn in as Governor

Larry Rhoden was sworn in as SD's 34th governor on January 27 after Gov. Kristi Noem received congressional approval to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. "Big thanks to Governor Noem for her strong support of L&C in D.C. and Pierre! She has been a true champion of the project. We congratulate Gov. Rhoden and look forward to working closely with him. He has been a strong supporter of rural water throughout his long and distinguished legislative career," said Executive Director Troy Larson. State Rep. Tony Venhuizen of Sioux Falls was appointed Lt. Governor. In the last legislative session Venhuizen successfully sponsored L&C's resolution to secure additional water rights in the House.

were provided for a used generator. Used generators are preferred because of the onerous environmental regulations on new generators.

***L&C awarded 72 construction contracts to 36 different firms totaling \$589.2M for the Base System.***

"Construction started with the installation of a casing pipe under Highway 19 near our treatment plant in August 2003, so feels great to award the final contracts needed to complete the Base System. The generators though are like shooting off a couple roman candles for the grand finale of a fireworks show," said Executive Director Troy Larson. L&C awarded 72 construction contracts to 36 different firms totaling \$589.2M for the Base System. This does not include service orders for engineering or controls integration services, nor does it include contracts awarded for the expansion to 60 million gallons a day. The total amount is subject to change as construction is ongoing with five contracts, including Phase 3 of the water treatment plant.



Team SD Association of Rural Water Systems at a clay pigeon shooting event near Humboldt on October 25. Left to right: WEB RWS General Manager Shane Phillips, SDARWS Executive Director Jeremiah Corbin, then-Lt. Gov. Rhoden, Larson and SDARWS lobbyist Lindsey Riter-Rapp.



## \$13.17M in FY25 Infrastructure Funding Approved

### Mayor Lindsay and President Biden Meet by Video

White House Director of Strategic Engagement Will McIntee announced at the Sibley ribbon cutting ceremony on October 28 that a video meeting took place on September 19 between President Biden and Madison Mayor Roy Lindsay. This was part of a series of video meetings Biden held with officials who benefited from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). At that time L&C received a combined \$152.5M in FY22, FY23 and FY24. BIL funding was used to construct the Madison reservoir, which was the last piece of infrastructure needed to start delivering water to Madison.

Reclamation announced on January 16 that L&C is receiving an additional \$13.17M in FY25 BIL funding! These funds will be used toward Phase 3 of the water treatment plant and bring to \$165.67M the total BIL funding L&C has received. Prior to the BIL funding, L&C averaged \$12.5M from the annual appropriations bill from FY01 – FY21, so the \$165.67M represents about 13 years of average appropriations funding. “The infrastructure funding has made an incredible impact to our construction schedule and we are very thankful for the additional funding. We expect to complete the Base System in 2028 when the third phase of the water treatment plant is finished. This is about 13 years later than was thought when L&C was authorized in 2000, but about 13 years sooner than would have been the case without the infrastructure funding,” said Executive Director Troy Larson.

It is expected the FY25 Appropriations Bill when approved will include the final funding L&C needs to complete the Base System. The Administration proposed \$6.825M and a congressionally directed spending request from Senators John Thune, Amy Klobuchar, Mike Rounds and Tina Smith added another \$20M for a total of \$26.825M. Reclamation’s announcement means \$13.17M less is needed in the FY25 Appropriations Bill.



Mayor Lindsay meets by video with President Biden at the Madison reservoir



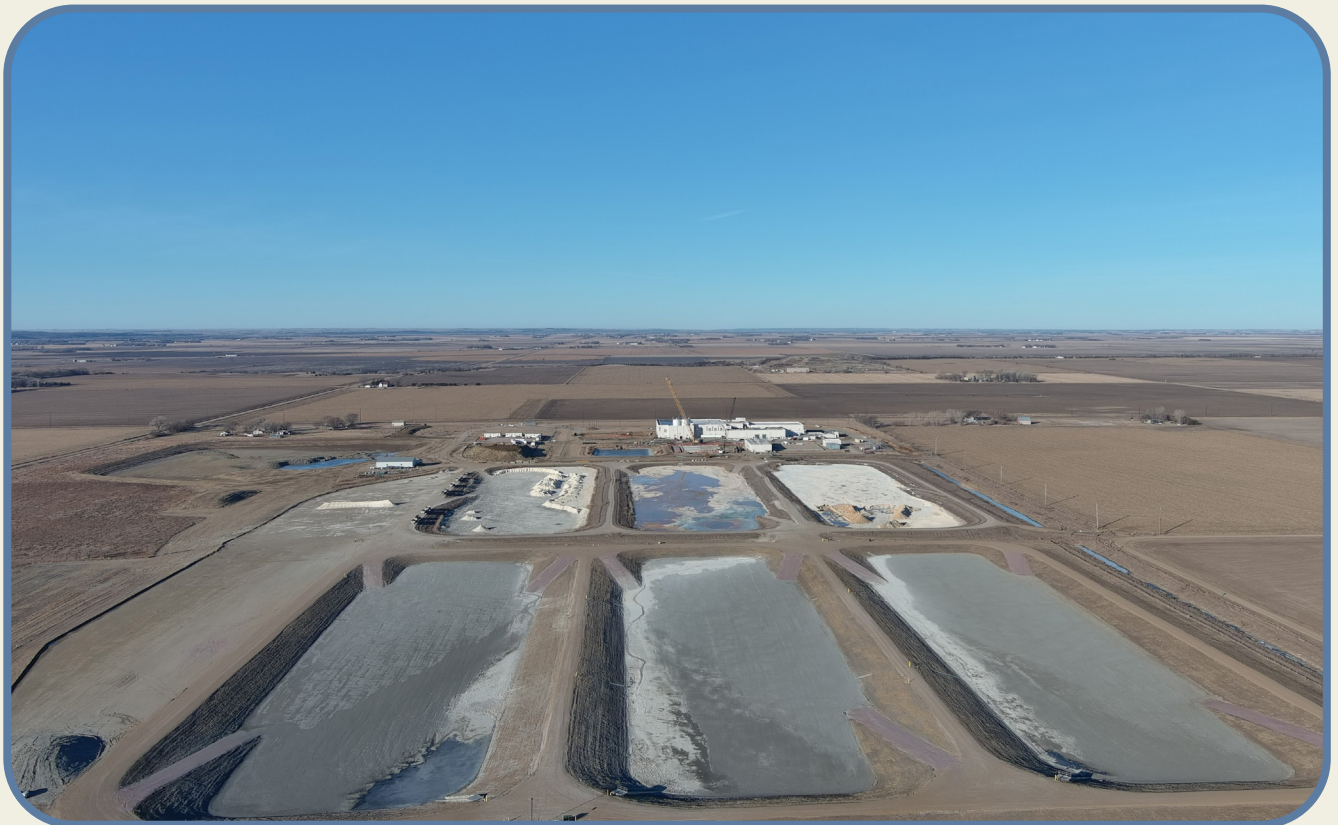
Left to right: Chairman Murray Hulstein, Director Ryan Hegg of Madison, Lindsay, former Director Chad Comes of Madison and Larson at the Madison ribbon cutting celebration on August 21

## Hull Reservoir & Lime Drying Beds Meet Deadlines

It was close, but the contractors for the Hull reservoir and lime drying beds met their substantial completion deadlines. DN Tanks reached substantial completion on the 1.5 million gallon ground storage reservoir south of Hull on November 25, a few days before the November 29 deadline. This project is part of the expansion to 60 million gallons a day. Iowa ARPA funding is being used to cover the cost. DN Tanks will return this spring to complete site restoration and seeding.

Lidel Construction reached substantial completion on the three lime drying beds and stockpile area on December 6, which was the deadline. Two of the beds are part of the Base System construction. The third bed is part of the expansion to 60 MGD. South Dakota ARPA funding is being used to cover the cost of the expansion bed. This project doubles L&C's drying capacity. L&C now has six drying beds and two stockpile areas. "Lime sludge is a byproduct of the

treatment process. The beds and stockpile areas are part of the process to dry the sludge so it can be removed and hauled away for agricultural applications. We are currently generating roughly 29,000 tons of lime sludge per year, which will increase as we produce more water," said Operations Manager Jim Auen.



## Larson Attends National Rural Water Rally

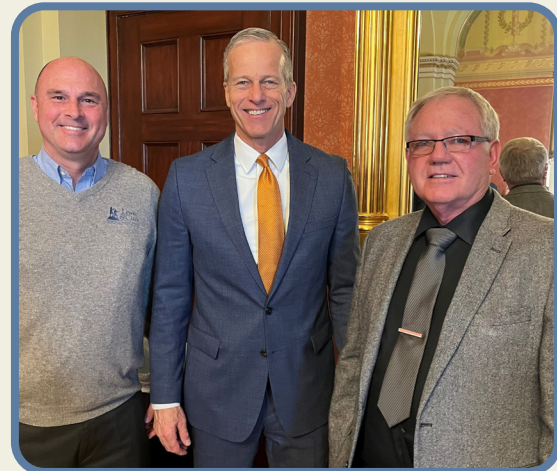
L&C Executive Director Troy Larson joined rural water officials from SD, IA, MN and the 47 other states for the National Rural Water Rally in Washington, D.C. on February 4 and 5. He met with Senators John Thune, Chuck Grassley, Mike Rounds and Joni Ernst, as well as the staffs of Congressmen Dusty Johnson and Brad Finstad. Scheduling conflicts prevented him from meeting with the other four members of the tristate delegation. Larson also met with Bureau of Reclamation (BoR) officials, as well as the Majority and Minority staffs for the House Committee on Natural Resources; the latter has jurisdiction over feasibility studies.

A feasibility study for a possible second expansion of L&C was the main topic of discussion in all the meetings (see Chairman's Report on page 3). "There is across-the-board strong support for BoR participating in this feasibility study. We are hopeful that one way or another we'll get congressional approval for the feasibility study by this fall," said Larson.

The timing was perfect for Larson to also discuss the broad sweeping executive orders in late January that have temporarily frozen L&C's previously approved funding. "These are funds that have been obligated to construction projects and bills need to be paid. This is a temporary inconvenience since nothing involving rural water falls into the areas of concern for the new administration. However, there is a process each agency is going through to free up the funds as soon as possible," said Larson. According to Acting BoR Commissioner David Palumbo, it should take "weeks rather than months" to unfreeze the funds for L&C and the other impacted rural water projects.



Larson joined SD rural water officials in meeting with Senator Rounds



Larson, Senator Thune and Chairman Lloyd Poppens (chairs South Lincoln RWS and the SD Association of Rural Water Systems)



Larson joined IA rural water officials in meeting with Senator Grassley



Larson and Senator Ernst



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## Operations Update

Winter is the best time to perform plant maintenance. The softening basins are cleaned annually and are the most labor intensive. The lime softening process leads to lime scale formation, which reduces efficiency and can damage the softening mechanisms. Some scale can be removed with fire hoses and pressure washers, but the thicker deposits need to be removed with air chisels. It takes about two weeks to clean each of the four basins.

The reclaim basins are also cleaned and inspected annually. They hold the filter backwash water until it can be reclaimed at the head of the plant. These have lime sludge buildup that can be waist high, so to preserve the volume the sludge needs to be removed with firehoses and pumping.



Every two years the recarbonation basins and the gravity thickener are cleaned. The former adjusts the pH of the water and the latter removes some of the water from the lime sludge before it is pumped to the drying beds. The staff every two years also drains and inspects the clearwell, wetwell and pump wells that are beneath the high service pump station. “None of this maintenance work is fun, but is very necessary. Shout out to our operations team for going above and beyond to get the job done,” said Operations Manager Jim Auen.

