



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release
January 8, 2009

U.S. COMMISSIONER TO SPEAK AT JANUARY 21 PUBLIC MEETING IN WESLACO

C.W. "Bill" Ruth, United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, will be the featured speaker at the next public meeting of the Lower Rio Grande Citizens' Forum (LRGCF). The LRGCF was established by the U.S. Section of the Commission (USIBWC) to facilitate the exchange of information between the USIBWC and members of the public about Commission activities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The meeting will be held Wednesday, January 21, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. at the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, 322 S. Missouri Avenue in Weslaco, Texas.

Commissioner Ruth was appointed to his post in November 2008. He had previously worked for the Commission in various engineering and management positions, including 13 years at the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project office.

Commissioner Ruth will discuss some of the preliminary recommendations in a draft consensus report from a panel of experts evaluating safety issues at the Commission's Amistad Dam. Located on the Rio Grande at Del Rio, TX-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, Amistad is a large international storage reservoir that, along with Falcon Dam, provides a key water supply for the Valley and other users. An earlier 5-Year Safety of Dams Inspection by technical advisors from the United States and Mexico rated the dam Potentially Unsafe primarily due to the potential effects of naturally-occurring sinkholes and the high risk in terms of potential loss of life and economic damages. The most recent study includes an analysis of potential future dam failure modes although additional study is needed to determine the probability for any of these scenarios to occur.

In other business, Dr. Joe Coulter, former long-time President of the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, will give a presentation about El Morillo Drain. This project, developed and operated cooperatively by Mexico, the United States, and the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, improves water quality in the Lower Rio Grande by bypassing saline irrigation return flows through a diversion canal in Mexico. Late last year, the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee transferred its responsibilities for El Morillo Drain to the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority.

A complete meeting agenda follows. Members of the public who would like more information may contact the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Project Office at 956-565-3150 or the Public Affairs Office at sallyspener@ibwc.gov.

For more information:

Sally Spener
915-832-4175
sallyspener@ibwc.gov

LOWER RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

4:00 - 6:00 P.M.

Rio Grande Valley Partnership

322 S. Missouri Avenue*

Weslaco, TX

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions – Patrick Daize, USIBWC Area Operations Manager and Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- El Morillo Drain – Dr. Joe Coulter, former President and Board Member, Lower Rio Grande Water Committee
- Safety of Dams – C.W. “Bill” Ruth, Commissioner, USIBWC
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion
- Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 956-565-3150.