



# THE BOUNDARY MARKER

Summer 2011

## COMMISSION CELEBRATES TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADE

Officials from the United States and Mexico held a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 13 at the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, California to mark the upgrade of the plant to secondary treatment standards. The SBIWTP, owned and operated by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC), treats wastewater originating in Tijuana, Mexico.

Construction of the upgrade began in January 2009 by contractor PCL Construction of Tempe, Arizona. The contract, totaling \$92.7 million, covered construction of an activated sludge secondary treatment process at the SBIWTP to improve effluent quality. The plant had been providing advanced primary treatment since that phase of the construction was completed in 1997. The treated effluent is discharged 3.5 miles offshore into the Pacific Ocean.

The wastewater treatment plant upgrade, which doubles the original plant footprint, was constructed in accordance with agreements with Mexico that call for activated sludge secondary treatment facilities in the United States to treat up to 25 million gallons per day of sewage from

Tijuana. In accordance with those agreements, Mexico paid for a portion of the plant's original construction cost and contributes to ongoing operation and maintenance costs.

"The plant we are celebrating today provides a higher level of treatment than the original plant. For those of us who care about the environment and the quality of our coastal waters, we have reason to celebrate this milestone," said

U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

The secondary treatment facilities became operational in November 2010 although other aspects of plant construction, such as landscaping, sidewalks, and punch list items, were not completed until several months later.

Participants in the ribbon-cutting ceremony included the two IBWC Commissioners; Guadalupe Osuna

Millan, Governor of Baja California; Linda Adams, Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency; Doug Liden with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which provided funding for the advanced primary plant; and representatives from the government contractors involved in the project.



**Gov. Osuna, Com. Salmon, Sec. Adams, and Com. Drusina (l to r) cut the ribbon on May 13.**



# WORK CONTINUES TO ENHANCE COLORADO RIVER COOPERATION

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC) met with federal and state officials and members of nongovernmental organizations from both countries on June 1 in Tijuana, Baja California to discuss progress on Colorado River Joint Cooperative Actions. The Joint Cooperative Actions are being undertaken within the framework of Minute 317, a 2010 IBWC agreement that formally established various work groups to enhance U.S.-Mexico cooperation related to the Colorado River.

In accordance with Minute 317, the Commission is coordinating the exploration and evaluation of potential areas of cooperation and the consideration of projects or initiatives of interest to both countries, which focus on the initial topics of water conservation, identifying new water sources, improving hydraulic and hydrologic system operations, and identifying water for environmental purposes.

The Commission has identified various issues and projects of interest and has directed work groups to perform technical analysis and undertake planning related to these topics in 2011. The topics include:

- Pilot water conservation project
- Fallowing
- Environmental restoration project at the Miguel Aleman site in Mexico
- Conveyance of Mexican water through the All-American Canal
- Feasibility study of a binational desalination plant at Rosarito, Baja California
- Hydrology, including shortage and surplus management

- Salinity
- Intentionally Created Mexican Allocation – a means by which Mexico could store water in the United States for delivery at a later time
- Water for the environment

“The Commission has been hard at work this year identifying priorities and issues for our work groups to focus on. We are looking forward to achieving significant advances in 2011,” said U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina.



**Reclamation Commissioner Mike Connor (l) with Principal Engineer Carlos Peña and Commissioner Edward Drusina of USIBWC**

The work groups will continue to meet as they perform the research, technical analysis, and planning for the various topics. The Commission will consider the material prepared by the work groups in developing future Minutes on the issues being addressed.



## RECOVERY ACT PROJECTS NEAR COMPLETION

In 2009, Congress appropriated \$220 million to the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) for Rio Grande levee rehabilitation through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. USIBWC procurement officials went into high gear to assure that contracts accounting for 100% of the Recovery Act funds were awarded by the 2010 deadline. Most of those projects are now in their final stages of construction.

The purpose of the Recovery Act is to create and save jobs, promote economic recovery, and invest in infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits. Funds appropriated to the USIBWC have already created or preserved more than 2000 jobs while providing enhanced protection from floods. With the funding, the USIBWC is raising and rehabilitating the aging Rio Grande levees to meet current standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The USIBWC has already completed

embankment work, the earthwork that comprises the levees, on more than 200 miles of levees. Final contract elements such as installing protection structures at bridges and revegetation of levee slopes is all that remains in many areas and should be completed in 2011, with a few projects rolling over to 2012.



Levee construction is underway in Las Cruces, NM.

## MEXICO ADJUSTS SCHEDULE FOR COLORADO RIVER DELIVERIES

The Mexican Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission has requested a change in its water delivery schedule in accordance with Minute No. 318, "Adjustment of Delivery Schedules for Water Allotted to Mexico for the Years 2010 through 2013 as a Result of Infrastructure Damage in Irrigation District 014, Rio Colorado, Caused by the April 2010 Earthquake in the Mexicali Valley, Baja California," signed in December 2010. The agreement allows Mexico to delay delivery of a portion of its Colorado River allotment until repairs are completed to portions of its water delivery system damaged during last year's quake.

In August 2011, the Mexican Section of the Commission advised that it will adjust its delivery

schedule for the months of October, November, and December, postponing delivery of a total of 50,000 acre-feet until a subsequent year. The Mexican Section will notify the U.S. Section in the future when it is prepared to take delivery of the water. The remainder of this year's treaty allotment, a volume of 1.45 million acre-feet, will be delivered in accordance with the regular schedule.

When Minute No. 318 was signed, U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina noted that the Minute "responds to the humanitarian aspect of the significant damage that was experienced in the Mexicali Valley." Some 400 miles of canals were damaged during the earthquake, affecting 148,000 acres of Mexican farmland.

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