



THE BOUNDARY MARKER

Summer/Fall 2008

TRAGIC PLANE CRASH CLAIMS LIVES OF COMMISSIONERS

The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico, lost its two leaders in a tragic plane crash on September 15. U.S. Commissioner Carlos Marin and Mexican Commissioner Arturo Herrera died after the 4-passenger chartered plane they were in crashed in the Sierra Madre mountains of Mexico 23 miles northwest of Presidio, Texas-Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Jake Brisbin, Jr., Executive Director of the Rio Grande Council of Governments, and pilot Matthew Peter Juneau were also killed. The plane was travelling from El Paso to Presidio so the Commissioners could view Rio Grande flood conditions. Their flight plan included a flyover of the Conchos River in Mexico, which was also in flood. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

President George W. Bush released a statement following the tragedy: "I am deeply saddened by the tragic death of Carlos Marin, a dedicated public servant who died while fulfilling his responsibilities as United States Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico. Carlos Marin was an accomplished engineer and capable leader who achieved the American dream while serving at the Commission for over two decades. He quickly rose through the ranks as he worked hard to effectively apply the boundary and water treaties between our country and Mexico. I appreciate his efforts to protect our Nation's interests, raise agency morale, and establish solid and transparent relationships with his Mexican counterparts. I am honored that he served in my Administration."



Arturo Herrera (l) and Carlos Marin

Commissioner Marin was appointed to his position by President Bush in 2006 after 27 years of service to the Commission. As U.S. Commissioner, he oversaw employees and projects in 12 offices along the U.S.-Mexico border. He also served previously as Deputy Commissioner and Principal Engineer of the Operations Department, among other positions. He played a lead role in Commission projects related to flood control, sanitation, boundary demarcation, and mapping.

Mr. Marin began his 33-year federal career at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, where he worked from 1975 to 1979 at offices in El Paso, Texas; Denver Colorado; and Las Vegas, Nevada, as a civil engineer trainee and as an engineer. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1978. He is survived by his wife, Rosa, and two adult children. Marin was 54 years old.

Arturo Herrera had served as Mexican Commissioner since 1989. A Commission employee since 1982, he also held posts as the head of the Tijuana, Baja California office, Secretary, and Principal Engineer of the Mexican Section of the Commission. He is survived by his wife, April, and two children.

Commissioner Marin and Commissioner Herrera devoted their lives to a common goal of furthering cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico. It is a measure of their dedication and service that they were working together to develop a binational solution to Rio Grande flooding when their lives were tragically cut short.



HURRICANE DOLLY HITS LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

On July 23, Hurricane Dolly, a category two storm, made landfall just north of Brownsville, Texas. For five days, the storm crossed the Lone Star State, bringing heavy rainfall and causing flooding as far inland as El Paso. The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) closely monitored the storm and its potential impact on the Commission's Rio Grande flood control infrastructure, which ably handled the resulting flow.

As the storm approached land, the USIBWC's Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project staff in Mercedes, Texas went on alert and began round-the-clock operations. Key Headquarters staff in the Operations Department also moved to a 24-hour schedule to respond quickly to changing conditions.

As the storm churned upstream, the USIBWC coordinated extensively with local, state, and federal emergency managers, the Mexican Section of the Commission, the National Weather Service, and the news media. At no time did the storm threaten to breach USIBWC river levees. Likewise, Amistad and Falcon Dams, the Commission's two international storage dams on the Rio Grande, handled all in-flows with no flood control releases.

Although the Rio Grande experienced above-normal flow from the storm, the volume of water was below the level that would have compromised the USIBWC's extensive levee system. Still, the storm posed a concern to the community because of USIBWC studies showing deficient levee segments in South Texas, the El Paso area, and Southern New Mexico. The USIBWC has begun work

to raise and rehabilitate the levees, especially in areas where they are at greatest risk of being overtopped, but repairs have not been completed. Rehabilitation of the entire levee system is viewed as a multi-year effort subject to the availability of federal funds.

Although the Rio Grande did not cause flooding in South Texas, locally heavy rainfall from the hurricane of up to 18 inches caused widespread local flooding in Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. USIBWC crews assisted residents by installing and operating pumps in flooded neighborhoods.

In many respects, South Texas dodged a bullet in that Hurricane Dolly did not bring the widespread devastation that some had feared. At press time, another hurricane was strengthening in the Gulf of Mexico. Should it hit South Texas, the USIBWC will be prepared to respond.



USIBWC set up pumps to assist communities affected by floodwaters.



BORDER SANITATION PROJECTS MOVE FORWARD

The United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) has made significant advances on two border sanitation projects -- upgrades of the international wastewater treatment plants in Nogales, Arizona and San Diego, California.

Construction of the Nogales International Wastewater Treatment Plant (NIWTP) upgrade is proceeding slightly ahead of schedule with a projected completion date of October 2009. The NIWTP is jointly owned by the City of Nogales, Arizona and the USIBWC. Located in the United States, the NIWTP treats sewage from the sister cities of Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora and a small amount from the community of Rio Rico, Arizona. The cost of the upgrade is more than \$65 million.



Aeriation basin construction at the NIWTP

A major overhaul of the plant is necessary to meet updated water quality standards. Complying with the standards is a significant concern given that effluent from the NIWTP is discharged into the Santa Cruz River in the United States, an important riparian corridor in the region.

At press time, construction was approximately 60% complete and substantial progress could

be observed on the aeration basins and clarifiers, large structural elements of the upgrade. The design-build contract was awarded to PCL Construction of Tempe, in association with Stantec Consulting Engineers in late 2006 and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in May 2007. When completed, the plant will have the capacity to treat 14.74 million gallons per day of sewage.

For the South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant (SBIWTP) in San Diego, California, the USIBWC is currently in the procurement phase. In July, the USIBWC issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for construction of a secondary treatment process at the existing SBIWTP, and a site visit was held with prospective contractors on August 21. Bid documents are due in October and a contract is expected to be awarded in 2008.

The SBIWTP currently provides advanced primary treatment of 25 million gallons per day of wastewater emanating from Tijuana, Mexico. The RFP seeks bids for construction of facilities to provide secondary treatment for effluent from the existing advanced primary plant. The secondary plant will be constructed adjacent to the existing SBIWTP. The RFP calls for a construction period of two years and with no interruption in operations of the SBIWTP.

Drawings and specifications for the project were completed in July 2008. According to the RFP for the construction contract, major project elements include site preparation as well as construction of aeration basins, secondary clarifiers, air blower buildings, facilities associated with the activated sludge treatment process, an administration/lab control building, operations and maintenance building, and emergency power generation.

Once completed, the project will provide a higher level of treatment for effluent from the SBIWTP in compliance with Clean Water Act standards. SBIWTP effluent is discharged into the Pacific Ocean 3.5 miles offshore through the South Bay Ocean Outfall.

International Boundary and Water Commission United States and Mexico

United States Section

4171 N. Mesa Street
Suite C-100
El Paso, TX 79902-1441
Phone: (915) 832-4100
Fax: (915) 832-4190
<http://www.ibwc.gov>

Acting Commissioner.....Al Riera

Principal EngineerAl Riera

Principal Engineer....Vacant (Al Riera Acting)

Secretary.....Adolfo Mata

Mexican Section

Av. Universidad No. 2180
Zona de El Chamizal
A.P. 1612-D C.P. 32310
Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua
Phone: (011-52-656) 613-7363
Fax: (011-52-656) 613-9943
<http://www.sre.gob.mx/cila/>

Commissioner.....Vacant

Principal Engineer.....Gilberto Elizalde

Principal Engineer.....L. Antonio Rascón

Secretary/Person in Charge.....Jesús
Luévano



International Boundary and Water Commission
United States Section
4171 N. Mesa Street, Suite C-100
El Paso, TX 79902-1441