



## **International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section**

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### **OFFICIALS CELEBRATE AMISTAD DAM'S 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Officials from the United States and Mexico commemorated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Amistad Dam with a ceremony at the middle of the dam, which straddles the U.S.-Mexico border. The International Boundary and Water Commission, United States and Mexico (IBWC), which owns and operates the dam on behalf of the two governments, organized the event. Scheduled speakers included USIBWC Commissioner Jayne Harkins, Del Rio Mayor Bruno “Ralphy” Lozano, Consul General Kate Flachsbart of the U.S. Department of State, Lake Amistad National Park Supervisor Christopher Ryan, and Fred Bowers, a supervisor during dam construction in the 1960s. For Mexico, scheduled speakers included Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon Castelo, Ciudad Acuña Mayor Roberto de los Santos Vazquez, Consul Carlos Gustavo Obrador Garrido of the Mexican Consulate in Del Rio, and Ciudad Acuña Historian José Juan Medina Zapata.

The 1944 Water Treaty between the United States and Mexico authorized construction of international dams and reservoirs on the Rio Grande. Amistad Dam, near Del Rio, Texas-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, was dedicated on September 8, 1969 at a ceremony attended by U.S. President Richard M. Nixon and Mexican President Gustavo Diaz Ordaz. Two hydroelectric power plants, one for each country, were constructed in the 1980s. The dam’s purposes are water storage, flood control, hydroelectric power, and recreation. Water stored at Amistad Dam is vital for irrigated agriculture and municipal use in both countries. The dam protected downstream communities from Rio Grande floods in 1971, 1974, 2008, and 2010.

“Amistad Dam is a symbol of friendship and cooperation between the United States and Mexico. For 50 years it has been a key part of the region’s water supply infrastructure. I’m proud of the International Boundary and Water Commission’s role in developing and operating the dam,” said Commissioner Jayne Harkins.

Mexican Commissioner Roberto Salmon said, “This dam has been important not only for the communities of Acuña and Del Rio but for all the towns located along the border downstream to the Gulf of Mexico. I am pleased with the IBWC’s operation and maintenance of the dam in its first 50 years of existence.”

Various community leaders from both Del Rio and Ciudad Acuña attended the ceremony, which included the participation of the Del Rio Middle School Symphonic Band under the direction of Jesse Brijalba, the Customs and Border Protection Honor Guard, Municipal Music Band under the direction of Juan Lombraña Rodriguez, and the Honor Guard and Military Band of the Instituto Tecnológico Superior de Ciudad Acuña.

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