

Stimulus Funds Aid North Dakota Water Projects

By Kimberly Cook

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) is an economic stimulus plan signed by President Barack Obama to jumpstart the economy, create or save jobs, and help American families and their communities prosper again. The United States Department of the Interior was allocated \$3 billion in the ARRA, and a Recovery Act Task Force was implemented by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar to determine which proposed projects should be funded. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) received \$1 billion to help fund water projects and construct rural water projects.

The Great Plains Region of Reclamation, which includes North Dakota, received \$234.5 million of Reclamation's allocation. Of those funds, the Garrison Diversion Unit is to receive \$59 million for the construction of water treatment plants, an intake structure, and storage facilities serving three Indian reservations and two projects under the state's MR&I water program, jointly administered by the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District and the State Water Commission.

Several water systems in North Dakota received economic stimulus funds to assist in the construction of their water supply projects. The two projects receiving stimulus funds under the state's MR&I water program are the Southwest Pipeline Project and the South Central Regional Water District. Both projects have been under construction for several years and have made significant strides with the stimulus aid.

South Central Regional Water District

The \$20 million in stimulus funds designated for the South Central Regional Water District enabled tremendous progress on the project. Though wet conditions and flooding caused hardships in 2011, construction crews forged ahead and continued to progress.

The stimulus funds assisted with the completion of the northern Burleigh County phase II project, with the new water treatment plant providing service to 650 additional homes in Burleigh, McLean, Kidder, and Emmons counties. Upon completion, the water treatment plant was threatened by rising floodwaters that were wreaking havoc throughout Burleigh County. As the water rose, it was necessary to construct a dike around the plant to protect it from floodwaters. Once the water receded, the dike was removed



This photo shows equipment placing the pre-cast panels for the Emmons County water treatment plant, which will provide service to 650 homes in Burleigh, McLean, Kidder, and Emmons counties.

and the water treatment plant managed to escape harm.

The wet spring provided obstacles for the Emmons County water treatment plant as well, making it difficult to pour the 480 yards of concrete required for the plant. Nonetheless, construction continued and the Emmons County water treatment plant is being closed in this fall, while filtration equipment is being delivered and installed. The water treatment plant will have a direct intake from Lake Oahe. A new external water storage tank is also being constructed with the stimulus money and was completed in November.

Pipeline construction is also completed in Emmons County. The pipeline is filled and ready for service upon completion of the water treatment plant, slated for April 2012.

Emmons County will be a new service area within the South Central Regional Water District, benefiting many small communities in need of clean, reliable water. Communities served will include Linton, Strasburg, Hague, and the State Line Rural Water Cooperative.

“ARRA funds were uplifting to the South Central Regional Water District,” says Doug Neibauer, executive director for the South Central Regional Water District. “We have completed a large amount of work in a short period of time due to the stimulus funds available for our project. It’s really remarkable that we’ve come so far in this short time.”



An off-site water storage tank for South Central Regional Water District was constructed with stimulus money.

Southwest Pipeline Project

In order to complete the Oliver, Mercer, North Dunn (OMND) Regional Service Area, the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP) is relying heavily on \$12 million in ARRA funding to help construct a new water treatment plant. Construction began on the \$15.7 million plant in November. Currently, the building’s walls are up and it is enclosed, with work proceeding on the interior. Membrane procurement for the treatment plant will also be completed with these funds. The membranes are being built at an offsite location and are currently arriving onsite. Project completion is anticipated for early spring.

ARRA funding has allowed the SWPP to continue construction and for a major cornerstone of the OMND Regional Service Area to be constructed. “Due to ARRA funding, the SWPP construction for OMND is light years ahead of where we anticipated being in project development. We are truly grateful for the funding and the support,” says Mary Massad, CEO/manager for the



This photo shows the filtration equipment at the new SWPP water treatment plant.



This aerial photo shows the new SWPP water treatment plant.

Southwest Water Authority, which operates and maintains the SWPP. “On behalf of the citizens of southwest North Dakota, thank you!”

The OMND Regional Service Area will serve some 8,000 people. Three communities (Hazen, Stanton, and Center) will be added in the OMND service area, while Zap, Dodge, Halliday, Dunn Center, and Golden Valley are currently served by the SWPP. These communities will all be served through the new water treatment plant being completed with ARRA funds. Service will also be provided to the area north of New Salem served by the Missouri West Water System, which is also in need of additional water. More than 1,000 rural users and eight contract users are signed up for service from the SWPP.

The SWPP was established to bring a reliable source of quality water to the people living and working in southwest North Dakota. Raw water is transported from Lake Sakakawea to Dickinson where it is treated and delivered to customers within southwest North Dakota and Perkins County, South Dakota. The SWPP is operated

and maintained by the Southwest Water Authority (SWA). The project began construction 25 years ago and currently serves a population of around 40,000. Included are 15 small businesses, 18 raw water customers, Perkins County Rural Water System in South Dakota, and more than 4,000 farms and ranches in southwest North Dakota. There are 28 communities that benefit from the SWPP and, upon completion, approximately 48,000 total people will be served.

As western North Dakota continues to grow with the current oil boom, the SWPP will try to meet the growth in the region and the oil industry’s needs for water, as well. It’s projected that more than 50,000 people will be served from the SWPP in the very near future.

The allocated stimulus funds will tremendously benefit North Dakota’s water infrastructure and will create a positive impact on the state, allowing many residents to experience clean, reliable, and high-quality water for the first time in their homes and businesses.