

STAFF

EDITORIAL

wemeditorial@sgcmail.com.

Bill Swichtenberg, Editorial Director.

bswichtenberg@sgcmail.com.

Dan Soltis, Production Editor. dsoltis@sgcmail.com.

Natalie Ferguson, Copy Editor. nferguson@sgcmail.com.

ADVERTISING SALES

Don Heidkamp, National Sales Manager.

(847) 391-1047. dheidkamp@sgcmail.com.

Sharon Cordina, Western Sales Representative.

(847) 391-1051. scordina@sgcmail.com.

Donna Aly, Classified Sales.

(480) 941-0510 ext.13. daly@sgcmail.com.

Adrienne Miller, Sales/Marketing Associate.

amiller@sgcmail.com.

ADVERTISING ORDERS

ads@sgcmail.com.

Shirley Marcinko, Advertising Manager.

smarcinko@sgcmail.com.

INTERACTIVE MEDIA GROUP —INTERNET

Halbert Gillette, Group Publisher. hgillette@sgcmail.com.

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION

sgcproduction@sgcmail.com.

Scott Figi, Production Manager. sfigi@sgcmail.com.

CORPORATE

H. S. Gillette, Chairman of the Board/CEO.

S. G. Schultz, President.

E. S. Gillette, Vice President Sales.

K. S. Gillette, Secretary.

C. Peterson, Director of Human Resources.

B. Clarke, Controller.

L. L. Lambdin, CCP, Director of Circulation.

380 E. Northwest Highway, Suite 200

Des Plaines, Illinois 60016-2282

(847) 298-6622. FAX (847) 390-0408

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

Robert Gray

Locust Grove, VA. (540) 972-3161

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Daniel J. Kucera

Chapman & Cutler, Chicago, IL. (312) 845-3000

PUBLISHER'S ADVISORY BOARD

Jim Force, Vice President Communications,

USFilter, Rothschild, WI

Don Renner, Equipment Maintenance Consultant,

Huntley, IL

John O'Connor, CEO,

H2O°C Engineering

Sudhir V. Desai, Senior Environmental Engineer,

U.S. EPA, Region 5, Water Division

Richard Turner, Local Revenue and Fiscal Advisor,

IL Department of Commerce and Community Affairs

EDITORIAL

By Bill Swichtenberg



Border Water

A 1944 water treaty between the United States and Mexico is prompting some people in Texas to call for sanctions against Mexico for non-compliance.

Under the treaty, the United States is supposed to receive one-third of the flow from six Mexican tributaries to the Rio Grande. This is an average of approximately 350,000 acre-feet of water per year, mostly from the Rio Conchos Basin in Chihuahua. In return, the United States must deliver 1.5 million acre-feet of water per year to Mexico from the Colorado River.

While the U.S. has complied with the treaty, Mexico has sighted an extraordinary drought for non-compliance and has fallen behind in its payments since 1992. Mexico currently owes the United States more than 1.3 million acre-feet of water.

These same drought conditions have taken its toll on Texas farmers, especially without this treaty water. In April, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs and U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Jim Butler announced that South Texas farmers would be eligible for \$10 million in federal funds as compensation for drought conditions and losses suffered from Mexico's water debt.

Producers in the Texas counties of Cameron, Hidalgo, Kinney, Maverick, Starr, Val Verde, Webb, Willacy and Zapata will be eligible for the grants. However, farmers can receive only about \$21.78 per acre whereas losses had been estimated in 2002 at \$259 per acre.

Commissioner Combs has expressed her frustrations over deadlocked U.S.-Mexico negotiations. She wants to block the transfer of water from the Colorado

River to Mexico if there is no breakthrough in the dispute.

"I expect that if this can't be pushed in about six months, I am going to urge the administration to take the Colorado River off the disbursement list and stop giving Mexico water," Combs said.

Back in February, Secretary of State Colin Powell stated he wanted to avoid economic sanctions or blocking the Colorado disbursement in retaliation of non-compliance. He hoped that diplomatic negotiations would pay off.

Since that time, the International Boundary and Water Commission announced that Mexico has made a transfer of 55,128 acre-feet from its account at the Amistad International Reservoir. However, Combs as well as Texas Valley farmers and water stakeholders were angry the water transfer did not come from Chihuahua, as Mexico had promised.

"The long term outlook, I would say for the Valley, is not that promising," Combs said. "While the \$10 million is fantastic, I know that these farmers would really prefer water."

Editor's Note

WEM is pleased to offer a new bi-monthly column starting this month (see page 7). Written by ASFE, the column will touch on issues that are of concern to consultants and project engineers. The first column is written by John Bachner, executive vice president of ASFE, and deals with contracts.

Bill Swichtenberg
Editorial Director
bswichtenberg@sgcmail.com