Western Summit Constructors Inc. - Buckman Direct Diversion Project

By Kristen Hetland

Western Summit Constructors Inc. constructs water treatment facilities like this one in cities across the country.

Ensuring future generations have a sustainable, reliab
be easy for freshwater cities like Chicago or Buffalo, N
locked cities of the Southwest, it requires a little help

One of the top private contractors in the water and w
Denver-based **Western Summit Constructors Inc.**
the past 28 years providing cities across the country w
water through the construction of high-end water trea
Specializing in municipal and industrial water and was
facilities and water storage facilities, WSCI says it has
plant projects ranging from $100,000 to $250 million
include everything from facility upgrades to the const
on vacant land sites.

Major projects for WSCI in the past few years include
expanding San Diego's Miramar Water Treatment Plan
new earthen reservoir and enlarging two existing reservoirs at Scott
Candler Reservoirs in Dekalb County, Ga., and building new
washing/compacting structures, grit basins, a pump station and a
masonry electrical building at the Clark County Bar Screen Facility in Las
Vegas.

Now, teaming up with contractor CH2M Hill Ltd. of Eng
WSCI is taking on the largest water project in New Me
$229 million Buckman Direct Diversion (BDD) project.

Thirsty For A Solution

According to the BDD board, Santa Fe currently has o
sources for drinking water: regional groundwater wells
reservoirs. Despite aggressive efforts by Santa Fe resi
their limited water resources, the city's increasing pop
the wells' supply, and officials worry the next severe d
Santa Fe's water reserves as dry as the desert that su

"We're over-pumping and potentially damaging the un
that supplies our groundwater wells, and potentially re
Rio Tesuque, Rio Pojoaque and La Cienega Springs," B
Santa Fe City Councilor and Mayor Pro Tem Rebecca W
statement. "And, even in the best of years, our Santa
only supply about half of our region's water needs."

To prevent groundwater wells from drying up from overuse, the city of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County – along with Las Campanas, Santa Fe, N.M., as a limited partner – have joined together to design and construct the BDD project. According to the BDD board, the project will diversify the region's drinking water supply so the regional aquifer can rest and refill and reliance on Santa Fe River reservoirs is reduced. The BDD board says the project is the best option for providing for Santa Fe's future generations.

Premier Business Partners:
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AGS Separators & Filtration Systems
Santa Fe Concrete/SW Landscaping Material
KWS Manufacturing Company, Ltd.

"Our groundwater wells are not sustainable at our current pumping levels, and our Santa Fe River reservoirs cannot always meet our needs, particularly during a dry year," the BDD board said in a recent statement.

"BDD will provide a new source of water in addition to our existing sources, and will also help our aquifer rest and recharge so that it will be here for our children and their children," it added.

The BDD project includes the construction of a diversion structure on the Rio Grande River, a raw water lift station, a sand-removal facility, 11 miles of 30-inch diameter pipeline, three raw water pumps, two booster stations to pump/lift the water approximately 1,100 vertical feet, a 15-million-gallon water treatment plant and related facilities, two treated water pump stations and 15 miles of finished water pipelines connected to the city and county water distribution systems.

Diversion facilities will be built on the Rio Grande about 15 miles northwest of Santa Fe. During peak production, the project will deliver a maximum of 15 million gallons a day to Santa Fe customers, about 8,730 acre-feet of water a year, according to City Water Projects Manager Rick Carpenter.
The joint venture design/build team of Western Summit and CH2M Hill Ltd. signed a $180.9 million contract with the BDD board in March 2008 and began construction on the project in September of that year. The companies plan to have the project online by March 2011.

Long-Awaited Relief

Through the construction of the BDD project, the city of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County will finally be able to access shares of water that, according to U.S. Water News, the city has been vying for since the 1970s.

In 2006, Santa Fe was able to secure its portion of the San Juan-Chama water by signing the permanent contract needed to ensure future river water supplies, U.S. Water News reported. Now, with this contract, the BDD Board says it is able to build the infrastructure needed to divert Santa Fe's share of the San Juan-Chama water supply along with native Rio Grande water from the basin, pipe it underground to city/county water treatment plants, treat it and deliver it to residents of Santa Fe.

The BDD board says water supplied by the new infrastructure will supplement the water supply received by the Santa Fe River reservoirs and will ensure the city and county have a reliable supply of drinking water, regardless of the weather in the region.

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