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Reclamation awards construction contract for initial segment of Arkansas Valley Conduit

Boone Reach Contract 1 connects six miles of pipeline to the eastern end of Pueblo Water's system

LOVELAND, Colo. – The Bureau of Reclamation awarded the inaugural contract of the Arkansas Valley Conduit (AVC) to WCA Construction LLC, for \$42,988,099.79. This contract funds construction of the first Boone Reach trunk line section, a 6-mile stretch of pipeline that extends from the eastern end of Pueblo Water's system toward Boone, Colorado.

The AVC project will use Pueblo Water's existing infrastructure to treat and deliver AVC water from Pueblo Reservoir to a connection point east of the City of Pueblo along U.S. Highway 50. The water will be either Fryingpan-Arkansas Project water or from participants' water portfolios, not from Pueblo Water's resources. Work under this contract will begin in spring of 2023. This section is expected to be completed in 2024.

“Now more than ever, people in the Arkansas River Valley understand the immense value of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project and the Arkansas Valley Conduit,” said Jeff Rieker, Eastern Colorado Area Manager. “We look forward to the day when these residents can open the faucet and know that their drinking water is safe and healthy.”

“The Arkansas Valley Conduit is so vitally important to the health of the people who live here and to the economy of the Lower Arkansas Valley,” said Bill Long, president of the Southeastern District. “We are excited construction of the AVC is getting underway after so many years of effort by generations of people who worked to get this built.”

As the AVC project moves forward, under existing agreements, Reclamation will construct the trunkline, a treatment plant and water tanks while the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District will coordinate with communities to fund and build AVC delivery pipelines. Eventually, the AVC will connect 39 water systems along the 130-mile route to Lamar, Colorado.

The AVC is a major infrastructure project that, upon completion, will provide reliable municipal and industrial water to 39 communities in Southeastern Colorado. The pipelines will bring water from Pueblo Reservoir to Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, Prowers, and Pueblo counties. It is projected to serve up to 50,000 people in the future (equivalent to 7,500 acre-feet per year).

The AVC was authorized in the original Fryingpan-Arkansas Project legislation in 1962 (Public Law 87-590). The AVC would not increase Fry-Ark Project water diversions from the Western Slope of Colorado; rather, it was intended to improve drinking water quality.

Currently, many people in the areas that will be served by the AVC rely on groundwater supplies that may be contaminated by naturally occurring radionuclides, such as radium and uranium, or use shallow wells that contain harmful microorganisms and pollutants. Alternatives for these communities consist of expensive options such as reverse-osmosis, ion exchange, filtration, and bottled water.

This contract continues many years of hard work by Reclamation, Southeastern, Pueblo Water and other project partners to improve the lives of residents and provide opportunities for economic development and job creation.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Anna Perea, Public Affairs Specialist at the Bureau of Reclamation's Eastern Colorado Area Office, at (970) 290-1185 or aperea@usbr.gov. If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

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