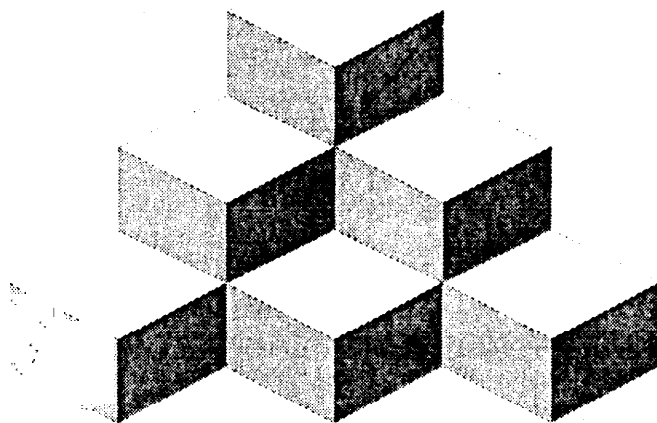


# Reinvention of the Bureau of Reclamation



*Implementation of National Performance  
Review Recommendations*



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1995

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# Reinvention of the Bureau of Reclamation

## Implementaion of the National Performance Review Recommendations

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The Bureau of Reclamation has been recognized as a leader among federal agencies for its reinvention efforts. This report documents Reclamation's reinvention efforts and accomplishments of the past 2 years and is a compendium of more than 25 submissions of accomplishments within every area of the organization. The result is a clear demonstration that Reclamation wide reinvention is becoming a reality, and that the building blocks are in place to continue this effort.

Reclamation's reinvention began with a 1987 agency-wide assessment, which concluded that its original mission was essentially complete. Five years later, Vice President Al Gore in *The National Performance Review* challenged all federal agencies to reinvent themselves by cutting red tape, putting customers first, empowering employees to get results, and cutting back to basics.

A special agency team appointed by the Commissioner reviewed Reclamation's programs and organization. The team report, augmented by comments from hundreds of employees and managers, served as the basis for a reform blueprint, adopted in November 1993. In April 1994, an order from the Secretary of the Interior authorized implementation of approved changes. The reorganization was essentially completed in October 1994.

On October 26, 1995, Reclamation was presented an Innovations in American Government Award by the Ford Foundation and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Selected from a field of 1,450 state, local, and federal applicants, Reclamation was one of fifteen awarded a \$100,000 grant. Reclamation has been identified as a model of reinvention because of employee involvement in implementing the initiatives. The grant will be used to develop an Innovations Resource Center in Denver and fund three one-day conferences in Denver, Colorado; San Antonio, Texas; and Sacramento, California. The grant makes it possible for Reclamation to disseminate information and to assist other local, state, and federal agencies in resolving tough issues addressing government reform.

## A Summary of Reinvention Initiatives

The concept of reinvention is simple: provide better service at less cost. To do so, Reclamation has redirected its policies, processes, and priorities to address fundamental changes in water resources management. Reclamation has addressed interests of diverse

constituent groups, improved its business practices, given employees authority and flexibility to innovate, and streamlined staff.

Reclamation's work force has been reduced by 20 percent since 1993, from 8,000 to 6,400, with another 800 employees slated to retire this year. The agency's annual budget of about \$1.2 billion was reduced by \$100 million over the past 2 years. In addition to staff reductions, Reclamation has reduced its internal regulations by 58 percent, thereby eliminating 6,500 pages of outmoded rules and requirements.

To help staff adjust to these difficult changes, Reclamation involved employees at all levels in defining and shaping the new roles, functions, and organization. Open forums and opportunities for comment were available to every employee at each step of the process. Employee information centers, outplacement, and counseling services were also established.

Reinvention simplified many processes and has transferred greater program management authority to the field level. Area Offices covering Reclamation's full geographic jurisdiction have been established, and Area Office managers have been delegated authority to make local program decisions. The focus on Area Office decisionmaking has been successful in:

- Allowing Regional Offices to focus on policy
- Promoting efficient operations and decisionmaking
- Bringing Reclamation operational decisionmaking closer to the public
- Controlling cost and minimizing adverse effects on employees

Customer response is improving in areas of water service and repayment contracts, water transfers, planning, recreation and land management, and overall working relationships. Also, the Regional Offices have more time to focus on broader policy, oversight, and regulatory matters and have evolved into a support role. In most offices, the supervisor to employee ratio has improved from one supervisor for each four to eight employees to about one supervisor for each 15 employees, with only one layer of management between employees and the area manager. The new organizational structure reduces barriers and is less conducive to turf problems. Reorganization efforts continue in some Area Offices.

Some of the lessons learned in implementing the change to Area Office responsibilities include:

- Delegating authority to lowest level where possible to eliminate a hierarchial organization.
- Having continuous, effective communication. People will accept and support change; people can't accept uncertainty. Repeating information and using varied methods to get the information across is important.
- Providing clear direction; be certain employees understand new roles. Provide for some continuity.



- Allowing additional time to reach team decisions by consensus, as well as keeping all affected parties informed.
- Taking sufficient time to make and implement changes. All background pieces must be in place before the change is implemented, and the change needs to be implemented slowly to allow time for adaptation and assimilation.
- Emphasizing to employees at all levels that empowerment and responsibility go hand-in-hand, and they will be held accountable for their actions.

The most important lesson learned in reorganizing is the realization that everything changes with time, and that Reclamation can survive and even thrive in a changing environment, however, it must remain flexible. The natural impediment to the new organization is the tendency to revert to old methods and to resist change.

The success of the reinvention effort is already apparent. Programs are gradually shifting their emphasis from construction activities to water conservation, wastewater reuse, river basin management, and environmental restoration. Water users are encouraged to enter into formal partnerships with Reclamation to solve resource management problems cooperatively. The following sections will describe some of the more important reinvention success stories within the Regions, Area Offices, and Denver offices.

## Putting customer service first

President Clinton has asked agencies to measure results achieved against customer service standards and report them annually to their customers. This summarizes Reclamations annual report for 1995.

The Customer Service Plan is a dynamic document to guide Reclamation's relationship with its customers. The document will be adaptable to meet a standard of service required by the customer. Although this summary provides only glimpses of Reclamation's many significant accomplishments, it is evident that the organization is developing and maintaining customer focus in everything it does and every decision it makes.

**Reclamation offices have implemented customer service plans.** Almost all offices have used a team, committee, or board to coordinate development efforts of its plan with input from customers and employees. For plans and standards to be credible, employee input is crucial. Management is creating an environment in which employees are empowered to act to address customer needs.

The reorganization, restructuring, and streamlining of several offices was accomplished with customer service improvement as the center of the plan. Viewing others as customers and partners has opened a new realm of efficient, effective cooperative efforts. Employees are listening to customers and learning what they value and how Reclamation can meet their

expectations, improve its services and activities, and obtain its customer's informed consent for its decisions.

All Reclamation offices have used some or all of a wide array of customer service information gathering techniques – survey questionnaires, comment cards, phone surveys, meetings, focus groups, and partnering. Informal and formal customer feedback and complaint systems gauge customer satisfaction.

**Offices are moving to increase satisfaction and address complaints.** Effective communication increases customer satisfaction. Offices are responding to concerns about telephone service by changing telephone systems, adding toll-free 800 phone numbers so the public can access recreational information, and ensuring that customers, where possible, have one point of contact.

Successful training programs, such as **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**, have been presented to many Reclamation employees. These programs are facilitating customer service awareness, emphasizing building relationships of trust, and producing win/win partnerships.

**Customer service standards have changed behavior and improved management.** As offices develop formal standards, they are discovering a shift in behavioral values. Major effects of this value change are manifested in increased communications, improved relationships, and redirected budget priorities, resulting in an office committed to meet or exceed internal and external customer expectations.

**Customer input produces change.** In the past, Reclamation received criticism from the public because they felt we never listened to them; we were accused of using the “DAD” approach. That is, we **Decided** what action we were going to take; we **Announced** our decision to the public; and then we spent a lot of time, money, and effort **Defending** that decision. That has changed as a result of customer input, a new mission, and reorganization.

**Reclamation shares success stories.** Although some offices feel they have no major success story, customer service values **are** becoming an integral part of each day's work. Meeting customer expectations and treating customers more courteously (even internal customers) are alleviating conflict. A few of the several success stories are summarized below.

Comments from guests in **log books at visitors centers** are providing valuable clues about how customers may better be served.

A series of monthly **breakfast club** meetings with customers is helping to resolve issues and concerns about specific projects in the Southwest.



Effective use of **feedback** immediately resulted in changes to a construction procedure that contributed to lower costs, more timely completion, and a better product.

## Reengineering increases efficiency

***Well Pumping Program Reengineered.*** The Yuma Area Office's (YAO) drainage well pumping program has been reengineered to improve customer satisfaction. Previously, when a well went down, the office had no standard process to determine the priority to fix the well. Each well was unique, making redrilling expensive and time consuming. Moreover, YAO paid for well operations and maintenance even though operating and maintaining the wells sometimes benefitted nonfederal entities. In reinventing the process, YAO established standards for well repair cycle times, standardized well design (\$70,000 savings), and is moving toward cost sharing operating and maintaining the wells with the entities who benefit from their operation.

***Team Earns Unprecedented Unanimous Union Approval.*** The Yuma Area Office reduced the number of its dredge crews from two to one. A team of YAO managers, in partnership with union representatives, decided the direction of the dredge crews and developed the plan to implement the decision. The plan cut costs by \$1 million. In addition, the team managed to convey the decision to all affected parties in a way that it was unanimously approved by union members. This had never happened before at the Yuma office on a decision of this magnitude.

## Reorganization fosters success

***Two Offices Combined.*** Within the Pacific Northwest Region, three Area Offices were established to administer, operate, and maintain Reclamation's water resource programs and facilities in the field. The Snake River Area Office was created by combining two project offices to provide first-point contact for the programs in the Snake River drainage. In September 1994, the office received the Vice President's "Heroes for Reinvention Hammer Award" for preparing and implementing its Snake River Area Office Implementation Plan that resulted in improved efficiencies, operations, and customer service throughout the Snake River drainage and within Reclamation as a whole.

***Cultural Audit Conducted.*** In 1993, a cultural audit was conducted in the Mid-Pacific Region that involved a mail survey of a sample of employees. In 1995, a new survey was conducted and the results compared. The survey results indicate many changes have occurred, such as structure, significant downsizing, and uncertainty about its future as an agency. In addition, it confirmed continuing Regional efforts to instill customer orientation into its operations, as well as training efforts in interpersonal skills and diversity to assist in transforming the organization. Results are being analyzed and additional improvements are expected.

**Division of Environmental Affairs Created.** Before July 1993, consistency in the Mid-Pacific Region was lacking in interpreting and applying environmental laws, regulations, executive orders, and court decisions. The Division of Environmental Affairs was established to:

- Improve coordination of environmental activities throughout the Region through more effective distribution of workload and better final products
- Create a focal point for customers to obtain answers
- Provide staff expertise that stays current with changes in the laws and their interpretation
- Oversee implementation to reduce mistakes and improve management support

**Management Directives Reinvented.** In fiscal year (FY) 1995, Reclamation's Management Services Office in Denver conducted a comprehensive review of its internal directives system, the Reclamation Instructions (RI), in an effort to streamline its regulations. The RI system was voluminous, outdated, and overly controlling. Processing an RI issuance had become extremely cumbersome due to the excessive levels of review required, so the RI system was often bypassed. Offices instead issued policy memorandums or program directives which were effective in getting information disseminated quickly. These documents were often difficult to locate because they were not included as part of Reclamation's official directives system. To address these problems, a totally new, streamlined directives system, the Reclamation Manual (RM), was developed and will be implemented at the beginning of FY 1996, at which time the RI system will be completely eliminated.

More than 3,300 pages (58 percent) of mandatory requirements were eliminated from the Reclamation Instructions during the FY 1995 review.

The new Reclamation Manual system reduces the signatory authority for directives to the program management level instead of requiring the Commissioner to sign all issuances. The Commissioner's approval will only be required on Reclamation-wide policy statements; the Program Directors will have approval authority for directives and standards.

**Human Resources Regulations Sunsetting and Reduced.** The Human Resources Office (HRO) has eliminated approximately 40 percent of its regulations. The effort to simplify is ongoing, and a significant number of redelegations of authorities have been granted to lower levels or outside the Human Resources Office.

This process has proven that regulatory reduction and assumption of responsibility outside the HRO can and do work. It is also necessary to be sufficiently selective in the process to ensure compliance with higher authority regulation and law and to ensure that management control principles remain in place to the extent required.





**Technical Service Center Redesigned.** The reorganized Technical Service Center (TSC) in Denver provides scientific, applied research, technical, and engineering services related to water resources management. TSC supports Reclamation and Interior programs and those of other agencies. Many of the accomplishments described throughout this report have been in partnership with one or more TSC members or groups. Other accomplishments are numerous and fall within the realm of the services provided, which are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

**Civil Engineering Services** specialize in structural and hydraulic analysis of waterways and concrete dams. They assist in selecting sites for structures as well as consulting and supplying technical advice for fish facilities, wetlands, roads, bridges, pipelines, tunnels, canals, and diversion structures. They provide consultation for managing construction and engineering services such as estimating costs, planning, and technical specifications. They also provide material engineering services that specialize in corrosion, coatings, plastics, and concrete technologies. They manage the Reclamation Service Center (RSC) Value Engineering and Value Analysis (VE/VA) program by promoting VENA as a management tool to improve and maintain the program and acquisition functions.

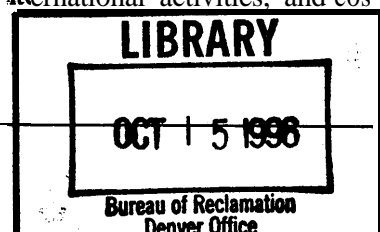
**Environmental Resources Services** provide environmental studies and examine interrelationships between the environment and regulated aquatic systems. Research includes water treatment and desalting pilot plants; water quality chemical analyses; water and land suitability; and development, design, and compilation of tabular and graphic spatial databases. They provide water resource-related economic and financial analysis in the 17 Western States. They perform social analysis and carry out public involvement activities on impacts resulting from government actions.

**Geotechnical Services** provide cost-effective geotechnical studies and analyses, including developing and interpreting exploration and lab testing programs. They provide specialized geological, seismological, and geophysical investigations of regional earthquake hazards, engineering geophysics, and paleofloods. The studies performed relate to soil, rock, and foundation materials for Reclamation projects.

**Infrastructure Services** provide engineering services for mechanical equipment and systems related to primary water delivery equipment. They provide complete electrical design, inspection, installation, and operation and maintenance (O&M) services for Reclamation project structures such as power-plants, pumping plants, dams, and water conveyance structures. They monitor operation and structural safety through water O&M, emergency management, and dam safety programs.

**Water Resources Services** conduct applied research and special studies tailored to meet Reclamation's water management needs. Research areas include water supply requirements, use, and rights; designs and reviews in flood hydrology and hydrometeorology; sedimentation and river hydraulics; and technical and policy issues related to drainage and ground-water activities.

**Client and Technical Support Services** coordinate workflow activities in the Technical Service Center as the primary point of contact for Regions, international activities, and cos



share partners to begin work within the multiple technical groups. Services include technical communications, visual presentations, technical advisory group, international affairs, and resource management.

## **Partnerships form throughout the West**

***Alpine Wetland Developed.*** The Alpine Wetlands Area developed near Reclamation's Palisades Reservoir in Wyoming was a joint venture of several federal and state agencies as well as local government and private citizens. This cooperative partnership resulted in decreased development and administration costs and improved interrelationships among several entities. The Forest Service awarded its "Taking Wings Award" to several Reclamation employees.

***Central Valley Operations Office Recreated and Relocated.*** A management study of the Mid-Pacific Region's Central Valley Operations Office (CVO) recommended reconfiguration of the organization to improve water and power operations. The study also recommended that the organization consider collocating with its federal, state, county, and city partners. CVO was reorganized in late 1993 into three branches to better service its customers. On July 31, 1995, the CVO collocated with its principal partners-State of California's Department of Water Resources, Flood Center; and Data Exchange Center; California/Nevada River Forecast Center; and the U.S. National Weather Service. By collocating, CVO will improve its day-to-day working relationships and communications to provide better and more timely decisions and coordination between technical and operating staffs.

***Bay Delta/CALFED Established.*** The San Francisco Bay/Sacramento Delta is an important element in California's water system and plays a key role in sustaining both human economies and a natural ecosystem. Water users have sought to increase diversions from the Delta while environmental interests have sought greater protection for the Bay/Delta's ecosystem.

Four federal agencies-the Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service-chartered a plan that entailed federal coordination, federal-state coordination, and federal-state-public agreement. Ultimately, a federal-state-public accord known as the "Principles for Agreement on Bay/Delta Standards between the State of California and the Federal Government" was signed by the state and federal governments and stakeholders from business, agricultural, urban, and the environmental community on December 15, 1994. This agreement established CALFED and laid the foundation of a process for dealing with the long-term Bay/Delta issue solutions.

***The Training Consortium Established.*** Representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Energy, the Internal Revenue Service, the Nellis Air Force



Base, the National Weather Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency share training resources to provide cost-effective training in the Lower Colorado Region. This group meets bi-monthly and has partnered to provide common training courses to the federal community at no cost. The benefits are cost savings to the government and relationships established across agencies.

***Reclamation and Western Area Power Administration Relationship Develops.***

Reclamation (Department of the Interior) operations personnel and Western Area Power Administration (Department of Energy) personnel created a forum to work on operational issues and problems between the two agencies. The mission is to “improve the management of the water and power resources in the Lower Colorado River for Reclamation’s Lower Colorado Region and Western’s Phoenix Area Office by improving communication, developing mutual trust, identifying problems, and implementing change.” The team has been highly successful in developing a positive relationship between the two agencies and it continuously strives to provide the best possible service for their mutual customers. Different organizational cultures provide challenges.

***The Phoenix Area Office Emphasizes Partnership Program.*** As Reclamation’s largest construction office, the Phoenix Area Office (PxAO) has enjoyed successful partnerships with construction contractors. In addition to formal partnership agreements and regular meetings between senior officials to discuss problems and resolve issues, cross functional employee teams have been formed to resolve concerns before they become issues. This customer service focus in the agreements has improved contract performance, resulted in value engineering enhancements, reduced and prevented costly litigation, and facilitated program accomplishment and job safety.

Examples of partnership initiatives follow:

- The Phoenix Area Office is a participant in the Northwest Tucson Replenishment Project. The 12 partners are contributing in-kind technical services; no funds are exchanged. Phoenix Area Office is assisting in public involvement, biology, recreation, and program management. The objective is to identify opportunities to recharge surplus Central Arizona Project (CAP) water, effluent, and storm water runoff along the Santa Cruz River north of Tucson.
- The Verde River Basin Management Study involves more than two dozen groups; including 13 federal and state agencies, 5 Natural Resource Conservation Districts, the Navajo Nation, and the cities and counties represented by the Verde Watershed Association. The study is to develop a basin-wide water management plan for the Verde River Basin that will address issues of future water supplies, conflicting water rights claims, water quality, endangered species, and other environmental issues.
- In May 1995, PxAO hosted a Reclamation-wide environmental workshop to share information and coordinate Reclamation’s compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA coordinators throughout Reclamation

met to discuss new developments in NEPA policy and their application to current water resource management activities.

- PxAO, in coordination with the National Park Service, completed a transfer and exchange of lands that will expand the Saguaro National Monument near Tucson. PxAO transferred excess lands acquired for the CAP to the National Park Service, which then exchanged these lands to acquire the necessary tracts for the monument expansion. This transaction had a value of some \$4.8 million but was accomplished at no cost to the federal government.
- PxAO is continuing its coordination with the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) for the recovery, mitigation, and curation of artifacts that would be recovered from planned future development on the reservation. The development of a water delivery system on the reservation will necessitate extensive cultural resources surveys of up to 146,000 acres of land. PxAO is assisting GRIC in developing its own cultural resource program, which will also train community members in performing archaeological surveys and planning research and management goals.
- PxAO's relationship with the Small Business Administration (SBA) has greatly improved recently. Support for the quarterly meetings and an aggressive approach in identifying 8(a) set asides have significantly increased PxAO's use of the 8(a) program. As a result, the SBA Regional Officer in San Francisco presented PxAO with a special award for 8(a) Program Support. PxAO is the first Reclamation Office to be so honored. Reclamation also presented the SBA staff in Phoenix with the Commissioner's "Partnership Award" for their support and help.

**Wastewater Reclaimed and Reused.** The Southern California Area Office (SCAO) has successfully implemented a comprehensive program for reclamation and reuse of wastewater. Construction of wastewater reuse facilities in Southern California is being supported through federal grants for up to 25 percent of the project costs. To date, nine grant agreements totaling more than \$100 million have been executed with municipal water agencies, and more than \$23 million actually has been provided for local water reclamation projects.

These grant agreements on such a large scale are a first within Reclamation, and the SCAO has developed a streamlined process that meets all the internal review requirements; yet once a draft agreement is complete, the final grant agreement can be executed within 2 months provided NEPA compliance is complete; and grantees can receive wire transfers within 3 weeks of submitting a request for payment.

Eight local water agencies are participating and providing half of the funds for the long-range planning for wastewater reclamation and reuse. An eight-partner and Reclamation committee provides oversight and guidance, which, when complete, will match wastewater supplies to reclaimed water demands, resulting in maximizing reclaimed water use while minimizing cost.



The Phoenix/Tucson Water Conservation and Exchange Study is analyzing recharge and reuse of a portion of the effluent in a constructed wetland to improve effluent quality, so that some water can remain in the Salt River to support the riparian habitat that has been recreated below the plant. In the Tucson portion of the study, PxAO worked with Pima County Wastewater to determine a viable use for effluent.

Reclamation and the city of Phoenix will build a Tres Rios demonstration wetland to identify the treatment capability of a wetland and to establish design parameters for a full scale wetland. The Phoenix Area Office is also participating in the development of a small demonstration wetland at Sahuarita School District in Tucson. This site will provide for both research and educational programs within the school district.

Another similar partnership is with the city of Nogales to construct a wetland to improve effluent quality coming from the International Wastewater Treatment Plant to determine if a full-scale wetland will improve both water and habitat quality.

**Wetlands Constructed.** The State of New Mexico asked Reclamation to assist the city of Albuquerque in preparing a project feasibility assessment and preliminary design for a pilot constructed wetlands facility. Constructed wetland design expertise from Reclamation's Denver Technical Service Center and the National Biological Survey was used to prepare the final assessment.

The city may need to spend \$65 million to make technical upgrades to its sewage treatment plant to meet stricter water quality standards. As an alternative, city officials considered constructed wetlands to provide the additional wastewater treatment. About \$500,000 was spent to design and construct the pilot project. If the pilot project proves successful, a \$10 million, 500-acre wetland site could be constructed. The uniqueness of this project is that the constructed wetlands are built in abandoned sludge drying beds at the city of Albuquerque's Southside Water Reclamation Plant.

**Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhanced.** Reclamation has been working with the Pima County Department of Transportation and Flood Control District, the Metropolitan Water Improvement District, and other interested agencies to explore the opportunities for fish and wildlife and recreation enhancement in conjunction with a multipurpose project in the Tucson area. The main objectives would be to recharge CAP water and provide flood control in conjunction with the Lower Santa Cruz River, the Big Wash, and the Canada del Oro Wash 100-year flood plain in northwest Tucson. Other goals are to examine the potential to create and/or restore the riparian habitat along these streams.

If the results of the study indicate that riparian habitats can be successfully and economically created or restored, Reclamation may provide funding through its CAP *Fish and Wildlife Enhancement* authority in partnership with several other state, federal, and local agencies.

**Yuma Area Office Partnerships Exchange Services.** The Yuma Area Office has formed an agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service whereby the Service provides services on several Yuma Area Office upstream facilities in exchange for office space for Service staff located in Yuma, similar to a program in the Pacific Northwest Region.

The Area Office also has a cooperative agreement with a wildlife club to maintain watering holes near the Coachella Canal in California. Reclamation supplies -materials and the wildlife club provides labor, travel, and inspection.

**Partnerships in Remote Areas Built.** The Socorro Field Division in New Mexico helped organize and participate in the Save Our Bosque Task Force of area federal, state, and local governmental agencies. The task force concentrates on such problems as trash dumping on federal lands, education of the public about agency activities, changing access to landfills, and design and construction of a nature education area. The agencies have developed a good working relationship to loan various types of construction equipment to one another, thereby saving procurement and maintenance costs.

**An Energy Efficient Facility Showcased.** In October 1994, the Carl Hayden Visitor Center was selected by the Department of Energy as an "Energy Efficient Showcase Facility." The Center is located at the south end of Lake Powell overlooking Glen Canyon Dam and Power-plant near Page, Arizona. Because the Center was built in 1966, many opportunities existed to conserve significant amounts of energy through the retrofit of inefficient systems with energy efficient ones. The retrofit of the Center has been and continues to be highly successful because of the cooperation and hard work of the staff at the Glen Canyon Field Division and the National Park Service.

Shortly after the completion of an energy audit, incandescent bulbs were replaced with compact fluorescent bulbs. Since their installation, the average energy requirement has been reduced by approximately 13,000 kilowatthours every month. A simple cost payback analysis of the compact fluorescent retrofit indicated a 3.3-month payback. It is projected that the fluorescent load will be reduced by 33 percent using these and other new lamps and sensors. Water conservation is also an integral part of the showcase project. With the installation of new toilets, about 2,040,000 gallons of water will be saved each year.

Tours of the facility are provided by the National Park Service and have been updated to include information about the energy and water conservation efforts within the Center. The Center offers great potential to showcase energy efficient technology and to educate the public on the latest energy efficient products and systems. Once the energy and water conservation measures are fully implemented, the annual electricity use for the Center is estimated to drop by 38 percent and the annual water use is estimated to drop by 60 percent.

**San Luis Valley Project Saves Habitat.** During the summers of 1994 and 1995, conditions were such in the Upper Rio Grande watershed that Colorado's commitment to deliver water downstream under the Rio Grande Compact were met early in the year. As a



result, water salvage production from the Closed Basin Division was reduced to minimum maintenance levels.

In 1994, even with sufficient water in the river system, much of the San Luis Valley in Colorado was extremely dry, including the Blanco Wildlife Management Area (WMA) operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Blanco WMA lies adjacent to the Closed Basin Conveyance Channel and is normally a recipient of project water for wildlife mitigation. Due to the drought and the fact that some of the Closed Basin water flowing past Blanco was not needed downstream, BLM requested additional water to ensure survival of waterfowl and shorebirds. The Closed Basin Operating Committee, with local, state, and federal representatives, agreed to provide water to BLM.

In early 1995, excessive snowmelt had satisfied Rio Grande Compact requirements as well as created flooding conditions throughout much of the project area. In addition to minimum maintenance flows, the project was pumping water out of San Luis Lake into the conveyance channel to minimize flooding of recreation facilities. The runoff water was also ponding against the conveyance channel embankment and causing damage from saturation and erosion. The project was pumping some of this water into the channel to minimize damage, and in the process was increasing the amount of water available in the channel that was not needed in the Rio Grande. Again, the Operating Committee gave Reclamation permission to deliver water to BLM's wildlife management area.

**National Audubon Society Cooperative Agreement Signed.** On September 16, 1994, Reclamation's Great Plains Region and the National Audubon Society (NAS) entered into a cooperative agreement for wildlife/avian research management activities. This agreement provides for cost-sharing activities designed to protect, conserve, enhance, and manage wildlife populations to meet public demands for wildlife viewing and related recreational opportunities.

Since its initiation, the Reclamation staff in the Great Plains Region have coordinated their efforts with the National Audubon Society to (1) introduce and outline the initial program, (2) establish a list of potential projects, and (3) work closely with NAS volunteers at the local level to encourage their input. Of particular significance was the identification of potential projects in the Narrows Unit (Colorado), Lonetree Wildlife Management Area (North Dakota), and Rincon Bayou (Texas) that include opportunities for planting native grass, managing and controlling fires, developing educational areas, providing handicap accessible facilities, creating nature trails, establishing wildlife food plots and wetlands, and creating habitat for neotropical migrant birds.

In fiscal year 1995, the Great Plains Region contributed \$15,300 toward this effort. To continue, Reclamation staff met with NAS on August 7, 1995, to continue discussion of implementing on-the-ground projects, identifying a funding mechanism for outyears (through FY 1997), and enhancing the use of public and NAS volunteers to create a "stakehold" in the projects they work on.

**Cooperative Administrative Support Unit Partnership Grows.** Planning for a Cooperative Administrative Support Unit (CASU) began about 3 years ago by the Billings Federal Executive Association. Originally composed of about 20 agencies, this cooperative exchange now numbers more than 40 agencies for some services and continues to grow.

Reclamation is the financial and moral support that enables CASU to research, coordinate, negotiate, communicate, and market services and determine needs as they are expressed by participating agencies with offices nationwide. CASU provides whatever support and assistance each participating agency requires and it monitors services and contracts to ensure adherence to CASU tenets. Reclamation provides the Service Facilitator, administrative support, and office space.

The CASU Property Management and Warehousing Team was recognized September 21, 1994, by Vice President Gore's Reinvention Team for sharing warehouse space, personnel, and equipment that saved taxpayers \$68,000. The Hammer Award was given to the 12 federal employees, representing 11 agencies, for their participation on a team that cut red tape, improved customer service, and reduced costs.

This team also contributed surplus property to Billings area schools on October 7, 1994. The equipment included computers, monitors, modems, terminals, mainframes, and printers. Eight school districts, representing 15 to 20 elementary, junior highs, and high schools, participated. Even the most antiquated machines were to be used by students in technology classes to take apart and learn how they work and are repaired.

**Partnerships in the Dakotas Area Office Enhanced.** The Dakotas Area Office in Bismarck, North Dakota, has entered into many partnerships with tribal entities and organizations and continues to look for new partners to help deliver services at reduced cost. Through working with various tribal governments in North and South Dakota, Reclamation has gained their trust and respect. Area Office personnel are helping the tribes construct many facilities on six Indian reservations to provide safe, dependable water supplies to municipalities and rural residents.

The Dakotas Area Office has entered into agreements with the Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants Forever, and they are participating in many joint projects to develop and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

One impediment to working with tribal entities is the cultural barrier. Employees must learn to recognize cultural differences and must adapt to tribal business practices to be successful. Red tape hinders working with nonfederal entities when federal dollars are involved.

**DASC Client Base Expands.** The Denver Administrative Service Center (DASC) has demonstrated significant success through competitive cross-servicing of an expanding client base. Additional agencies have committed to become clients in the near future, further enhancing the efficiency by which administrative services are provided. For example, the Social Security Administration (SSA) recently chose the DASC to provide personnel and





payroll services after an extensive, in-depth analysis of available alternatives. SSA will become a DASC customer in FY 1997, using the Federal Personnel Payroll System (FPPS). FPPS is a state-of-the-art, on-line personnel and payroll system designed to meet administrative and regulatory requirements today and in the future.

Increased consolidated administrative services have a direct correlation to reduced costs to all clients. Economies-of-scale savings have been effectively demonstrated. As the DASC adds additional clients, the unit cost will be further reduced. Personnel constraints continue to be an impediment. Flexibility to manage the budget would be more desirable.

**OTIA Supports IRM activity in American Samoa.** The DASC provided technical and analytical support to DOI's Office of Territorial and International Affairs (OTIA) for a special project to develop an Information Resource Management (IRM) Strategic Plan that would assist the United States territories in achieving greater independence. Based on the success of the initial effort, the project was expanded to assist American Samoa in developing a new financial system for their government. This partnership has been recognized as a key success in working with the territories.

**Dolores Project Controversies Solved.** Dolores Project major construction began winding down in 1994; however, controversial issues remained, including minor construction, design and construction deficiencies, and water acquisition for downstream fish and wildlife purposes. Reclamation developed a unique Basis of Negotiations (BON) in early 1995 that outlined work and expenditures of no more than \$21 million to complete the project. Project completion depended on obtaining low-cost water.

The BON established a framework for completing the project at the least federal cost and as quickly as possible. After the BON was developed, a completion team began negotiations with the Dolores Water Conservancy District (DWCD), Montezuma Valley Irrigation Company (MVIC), and the Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe (Tribe). The best approach was to give DWCD, MVIC, and the Tribe the funds to complete their portions of the project, minimizing Reclamation involvement. This approach has saved sufficient funds so that all components remaining can be completed, and water acquisition from DWCD is possible. Agreements to complete work and acquire water have been approved by DWCD and MVIC, and negotiations continue on agreement details with the Tribe.

This partnership with three stakeholders has allowed a controversial situation to be turned into success. A means for completing all remaining project obligations quickly and at the least federal cost was achieved. The maximum completion cost of \$21 million represents a minimum savings of approximately \$6 million, based upon the estimated project completion costs before the BON was developed.

Several lessons were learned from this process. The controversial issues and Reclamation's inaction for more than a year created strained relations with DWCD, MVIC, the Tribe, and other interested parties, which made negotiations much more difficult and lengthy. A team using the basic guidelines agreed upon in the BON was able to proceed with authority. In the

future, Reclamation should empower a team to follow through with project completion early in the project development process.

**Salinity Control Partnerships Enhanced.** The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 authorized Reclamation to perform certain activities to help control high salinity levels in the Colorado River, which cause about \$750 million in damage per year. Over the past 20 years, Reclamation has identified some innovative opportunities to control salinity that were not authorized under the Salinity Control Act. To gain authority to implement the most cost-effective improvements, Reclamation conducted a thorough public reexamination and reassessment of the salinity control program and gathered many new ideas to combine with past experiences.

As a result, legislation was drafted and the President signed Public Law 104-20 on July 28, 1995. The law allows Reclamation to provide financial assistance to the most cost-effective salinity reduction projects in the Colorado River Basin as opposed to continuing with costly federal projects. This allowance will reduce the cost of keeping salt out of the Colorado River from an average of \$73 per ton to about \$50 per ton.

The states of Utah and New Mexico are already working with their water users to develop proposals for state and local cost-share partners to submit to Reclamation.

## **Labor-management partnerships created**

A Labor-Management Partnership was created in the Lower Colorado Dams Facilities Office (and a Memorandum of Understanding was formalized in the Phoenix Area Office) when the offices realized that labor and management could not operate efficiently in the confrontational environment at the time. This environment resulted in costly arbitrations, increased grievances, increased litigation, mediation at the federal level, low productivity, and low morale. A period of cooperation between the union and management began that in the last 2 years has developed into an equal partnership.

In the last 2 years, wage negotiations have been settled on time and no arbitrations or litigation have arisen. Grievances have been minimal. The loss of productivity and increased costs associated with a confrontational approach have been eliminated. The partnership has received national recognition in receiving the FMCS National Directors Award. They have been asked to speak throughout the country about successful Labor-Management Partnerships.

The **Snake River Area Office** also has developed a Labor-Management Partnership Council to improve operations and efficiencies in facility operations, employee satisfaction, and labor-management relationships within the office. The council is developing its agreement and will soon implement its goals.

Reclamation has formed a **Reclamation-wide Partnership Council** consisting of management representatives from each region and the Reclamation Service Center in Denver. Each of the



six unions holding exclusive representation in Reclamation have members on the council. The Commissioner has endorsed an active role for the council. Its members have drafted a charter and met on several occasions to determine the role of the council using a “value added” approach. A meeting with the Regional Directors will allow the council and top Reclamation managers to exchange views and formulate a role for the council.

Area Office councils have proven successful, and formation of a Reclamation-Wide Council has already enabled management and union to substantially improve communication; uncover matters of concern and discuss those concerns candidly in a non-threatening environment; and develop a relationship based on trust rather than adversity.

## Teams produce creative approaches

**Team Building Expands.** Most offices have been forming teams and finding ways to make them efficient and effective. The following are just a few of many rewarding experiences throughout Reclamation.

The **Dakotas Area Office** has many work groups and interdisciplinary/cross functional teams and has delegated authority to them to conduct day-to-day activities without constant management guidance. A training program was developed for work groups, cross-functional teams, and team building to improve employees’ knowledge of how teams work, the team roles, and team skills. Initially, many teams need skilled facilitators to work them through the complete team problem-solving process.

An in-house cadre of facilitators was essential to successfully launching teams in the **Lower Colorado Regional Office**, building on the accomplishments of the Lower Colorado Dams Office team **pilot program**. The pilot program worked between December 1992 and January 1994 to determine the needs and methods to develop high performing teams. The result of the pilot program was the official formation of the Quality Office and the move to an entirely team-based organization. To support this move, team startup workshops were developed and a facilitator cadre trained.

The cadre of facilitators in the Regional Office was reactivated and enlarged in May 1994. They now teach teams how to function in a team environment and to help teams in their development and internal team management, as well as provide a readily available resource for the organization. Managers and employees use the skills of the facilitators an average of 250 hours a month for facilitation, recording meetings, and training. The facilitators meet regularly with the Quality Office in a support-group type of session.

The **Socorro Field Office, New Mexico**, has instituted the team concept for both its field and office operations. In river maintenance field operations, employees rotate through the Team Leader position by project. Mechanics have been integrated into the larger workforce; for example, they now operate dozers, graders, and trucks when not actually repairing equipment. Cross-training on all pieces of equipment has enabled this more effective employee use.

The Socorro office staff also works as a team. They rotate leaders and support varied work tasks as a team, rather than individuals working only on such specialized items as new employee orientation, quarterly reports, setting up in-house training sessions, and paperwork to support reorganization efforts. They also undergo cross-training to support field activities. For example, the receptionist has picked up rental equipment and delivered it to the jobsite, and the civil engineer will routinely run a forklift to unload supply deliveries.

**Quality Service Boards Formed.** In mid-1993, the Dakotas Area Office formed a Quality Service Board, **the first in the Great Plains Region.** The board is to foster grass roots involvement in moving toward self-directed work teams, improved quality service, customer satisfaction, and a quality work environment. Many teams have been chartered to develop improved processes, such as improving office telephone coverage (internal and external), workplace diversity, employee/customer parking, records management, awards and recognition, and Area Office team training. Employees now recognize the board as a means to interact and converse with management.

The Great Plains Regional Office has established a **Quality Service and Workforce Diversity Board (QSDB)** to provide leadership and support for both initiatives in the Regional Office. The QSDB is the focal point to establish teams for specific projects and for facilitating a working environment where all employees have equal opportunity to develop, advance, and contribute to Reclamation's mission.

The board has developed a combined charter and is in the process of chartering two teams—one team will identify diversity education and awareness needs in the Regional Office and will identify and implement a process for meeting those needs, with the ultimate goal of increasing employee and management awareness of diversity and its relation to quality service. A second team was set up to improve the process by which employees submit ideas for process improvement and are rewarded/recognized accordingly. The board replaces a few previously existing functional area boards and establishes an agent to address work force diversity issues in conjunction with quality service.

**Other Teams Succeed.** **Changing Times** is the Lower Colorado Regional Office Leadership Council's monthly one-page information bulletin, initiated in March 1995. It highlights the successes of the team effort, discusses various organizational change concepts, presents tools that can be used in improving work processes, and identifies new projects and programs in the Regional Office.

The **Correspondence Information Analysis** Team of the Lower Colorado Regional Communications Resources Group prepared a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedural manual, designed and published an Information Sheet for Overnight Express Mail Delivery, designed and published a brochure reflecting available mail services, and arranged for ongoing employee cross-familiarization training with other group employees and Area Office employees. The results have been improved customer service and employees well-versed in all aspects of each team member's job.



When the **Structural Maintenance Team's** foreman in the Yuma Area Office retired, the group asked to become self-managing. For the last year, they have planned and accomplished their own work, which is dictated by customers who need river or office structures repaired. They are overcoming various obstacles: team members with varying degrees of commitment, self-evaluation, and disciplinary problems. To date, the group functions much better than before and productivity and morale have vastly improved.

**Environmental Compliance Teams Respond.** During Reclamation's reorganization, the authority to approve environmental assessment/finding of no significant impacts (EA/FONSI's) was delegated to Area Managers. This delegation facilitates the most efficient use of resources and ensures that our environmental responsibilities are carefully considered and completely addressed. The Regional Office continues to provide technical guidance, consultation, and staff support during the development of these documents.

An integral part of this delegation is an appeal process by which decisions documented through the EA/FONSI can be appealed to the Regional Director. The public is informed of the appeal process and its requirements to file an appeal through public involvement and through notification in the draft EA and final EA/FONSI.

For each study and/or project, an Area Office establishes an interdisciplinary team, including identification of a team leader, generally from the Area Office. The Area Manager is responsible for complying with all environmental requirements including NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and cultural resource protection laws.

The team investigates, develops, and/or formulates the entire environmental assessment and draft FONSI in compliance with applicable NEPA procedures and policies. This process results in either an EA/FONSI signed by the Area Manager, a determination that an environmental impact statement (EIS) should be prepared, or a decision to take no further action. After the completion of an EA, if it is necessary to prepare a draft and final EIS, a subsequent record of decision is signed by the Regional Director.

**Design Acquisition Process improved.** The Great Plains Region produced a manual, "The Design Acquisition Process, " to explain a specific part of the process for acquiring construction contractor services-specifically for contracts in excess of \$25,000. The manual is intended to serve only as a guide or information for those served by the process. As a result, the format and content of documents are consistent and complete. Miscommunications are somewhat eliminated, saving considerable time and effort.

Not only was the process improved, but team members benefited from interaction with others involved. One issue that continually surfaced was the need to have the designer meet with a review team to assist in resolving many of the design, scheduling, and management issues **early** in the design process.

The team addressed one specific process among many; all team members were focused on the same problem, possessed expertise, and had a personal desire to make an improvement. The task, therefore, was accomplished quickly and professionally.

***Team Selects Area Manager.*** An Area Manager was chosen for the Nebraska-Kansas Area Office by a pilot teamwork process. The team members shared equally in the process and half the team members were regular employees from the office where the vacancy was. In addition, the selection team initially requested employees and Reclamation customers to provide them feedback on the qualities they felt were important for a new area manager to possess.

In the past, all important issues and subsequent decisions were automatically deferred to higher management levels, which are often out of touch with the issues they decide. The team's input and direct involvement early in the process established a feeling of ownership in the final decision. Even people who might not have been satisfied with the selection felt more involved. A similar team has subsequently been formed to select a new Dakotas Area Manager.

***Republican River Contract Renewal Team Assembled.*** Water service contract renewals and declining surface water supplies required an analysis of future demands in the Republican River Basin. A resource team was assembled from the Nebraska-Kansas Area Office, Denver Technical Service Center, and the Great Plains Regional Office. Because of the complexity of the resource management issues and the interrelationships within the basin, the team is preparing a Resource Management Assessment before the environmental impact statement. The assessment will be used to take inventory, evaluate resources, and establish basinwide goals and objectives for future Reclamation actions and decisions. The process established by this team will become a model for future water contract renewal efforts in the Region.

The team became too large to be functional at team meetings as the process expanded. This issue was addressed by breaking off core members into subteams. The rest of the team was kept informed by updates and progress reports at regularly scheduled conference calls and periodic meetings.

## **Human resources management improves relationships**

***Human Resources Center Established.*** The Human Resources Office in Denver reorganized with several major goals in mind. These goals included combining the Equal Employment Opportunity and Personnel into a single office, achieving NPR and Interior goals to reach a servicing ratio of 1: 100, incorporating the self-managed team concept through the Human Resources Office, and improving Human Resources services coupled with a one-stop



shopping concept by establishing a Human Resources Center for initial contacts with the Human Resources Office.

Productivity has increased, and employees have been empowered to act and to take responsibility for their actions. Going through this process has proven that these goals do not happen overnight. An initial productivity loss will occur, and a great deal of training on team concepts is required. Over the long-term, the outcome will be worth the effort. The reorganization could have been improved by more training before the start of the process and specific preidentification of issues that might have contributed to supervisory and employee resistance earlier in the process.

**Agreement with Office of Aircraft Services Signed.** An agreement was signed between the Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region, and the Director of Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) to provide human resources services to employees of OAS. Under the agreement, Reclamation provides office space, computer support, and technical support for one Reclamation employee to provide human resource support to OAS.

The human resources staff is better used and the ratio of human resources specialists to employee population is reduced. Combining human resources services with other agencies in a geographical area has great potential but is hindered by continued reluctance by other organizations to consider operating benefits.

**Pilot Program Administers Staffing.** The Snake River Area Office initiated a pilot program to administer staffing activities within the Area Office rather than through the Regional Office. This change has resulted in improved service in quantity, quality, and timeliness. Several initiatives are underway to establish teams, improve communications, and foster and recognize the qualities of excellence, client service, and trust in employees.

**Human Resources Forum Created.** The Human Resources Forum was created in the Mid-Pacific Region to facilitate completion of human resources projects and programs, particularly those with regionwide impact. The Forum identifies employee and organizational needs and concerns; develops solutions; and promotes teamwork, pride, and job satisfaction within a quality work environment. Also, the Forum serves to focus participation, critical thinking, and problem solving by all employees by working together to eliminate boundaries created by organizational structure, individual occupation, and grade level among coworkers and our customers. Their efforts have resulted in the creation of the Flexiplace and Family Friendly Programs and policies that have provided more options to accomplish work assignments. In addition, Time-off Awards, Wellness Program, Regional Director's Human Resources Award to recognize outstanding employees, Quality Co-Worker Awards to recognize fellow employees for their assistance to each other, and the Dumb Rules Program to eliminate or improve policy/rule/regulation barriers have been initiated.

**Employee Assistance Program Expanded.** The expanded on-site **Employee Assistance Program** was established in the Lower Colorado Region to assist employees in developing healthy coping mechanisms in their personal lives and for dealing with change in the work place. Statistics indicate that 44 employees have benefited since December 1994.

A strong emphasis is placed on valuing **human resources** at the Phoenix Area Office. Employee empowerment and participative, team-focused management is a goal of this office. Complementing this philosophy is a human resources action plan that provides for employee values and needs, morale, diversity, training, family friendly work environment, and sensitivity to employee needs during downsizing.

Eleven training sessions were held on the reduction in force (RIF), interviewing techniques, stress management, SF- 171's and resume preparation. The Arizona Department of Economic Security was contacted to provide free training in some of these areas. Additional sessions will be scheduled as the office continues to reduce staff. As other offices have done, the Phoenix office contracted with a placement assistance firm to help separating employees in their job search activities. The placement assistance program was well received and employees expressed appreciation for all of the assistance they were given. The reorganization and RIF were conducted with no appeals or complaints.

**Technical Service Center objectives set.** The Technical Service Center developed a set of human resources objectives and initial action items and a timeline to get started before the fiscal year 1995 ended. A few of the objectives are described below:

- **Interact with and understand clients-**All TSC employees should understand and demonstrate a partnership attitude in their relationships with clients and continually seek to develop a rapport with clients that nurtures commitment and trust.
- **Resolve problems-Problem** areas should be dealt with rapidly and effectively, based upon the perspective of the individuals or clients who perceive that a problem exists. All TSC employees view problems as opportunities to learn, understand, and practice the concept of "Effective Problem Solving," (i.e., by concentrating on the desired outcome, determining actions necessary to achieve that outcome, and implementing those actions).

## **Information technology explores and expands**

In February 1995, the Lower Colorado Region Public Affairs Office initiated a weekly electronic employee newsletter to replace a monthly printed newsletter. The change resulted in reduced direct and indirect (salary) costs, more efficient information dissemination, and greater customer satisfaction. The printed newsletter was produced at a monthly cost of about \$1,000. The newsletter took from 2 to 4 days to print, and 2 to 3 days to distribute. By the time the newsletter was in the employee's hands, the information was often outdated. The electronic newsletter takes about 12 hours per month to produce at a cost of about \$168. The





local area network (LAN) distribution eliminates printing or other costs. The electronic newsletter enables distribution of more information that is timely and useful to employees, as evidenced by the positive feedback, at a reduced cost.

The Yuma Area Office also automated its **newsletter production** process. The old paper newsletter was distributed every month and a half; one person filled the traditional writer/editor/designer role. Now, electronic newsletters are produced two to three times a week and take less than half a staff day. News is more timely, and often the Area Office has access to news from the press wires before it arrives through official channels. The newsletter is posted to an electronic bulletin board accessible to all employees, cutting reproduction costs and reducing paper waste.

In March 1995, the Lower Colorado Region Training Office, in conjunction with Information Resources Office, implemented the **Automated Regional Training System (ARTS)**, a state-of-the-art program that maintains historical training data. The benefit has been improved service to both management and employees when asked for information and training histories.

A new **financial information report system (FIRS)** has been developed and implemented in the Phoenix Area Office. The automated FIRS details all activity in a multi-million dollar budget and makes the information available to employees by the local computer network. Previously, the information was available to only a few managers and division chiefs.

The Phoenix Area Office administers the Department of the Interior **communications hub**, which provides wide area network communications services for DOI and other federal and nonfederal agencies. This network has been expanded to include other customers, such as local Indian communities, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the city of Phoenix, the city of Scottsdale, and the Arizona Department of Water Resources. The Information Resources Management team designed the local area network and acquired the hardware and software for the Gila River Indian Community.

IRM has completed extensive work on the automated version of the **Commissioner's Comment Card**. This system provides an automated process for employees and the Commissioner to have an on-going dialogue on Reclamation issues. Later, the system was modified to promote employee feedback for the Denver Technical Service Center. The PxAO continues to provide support and maintenance of the operating software and maintains the integrity and security of the two comment databases.

Yuma Area Office is marketing high quality water produced by the Yuma Desalting Plant and the state-of-the-art research facilities at its Water Quality Improvement Center to private industry. In addition to plying traditional promotional venues, YAO is advertising the facilities on the **Internet** using an electronic document called a **home page**. Anyone with an Internet account-anywhere in the world-can view YAO's home page and read about the Yuma Desalting Plant, Water Quality Improvement Center.

**Rio Grande Basin Water Accounting Keeps Pace.** Reclamation's Albuquerque Area Office has been responsible for Rio Grande basin water accounting since the early 1970s.

Accounting methods have changed and grown more complex through the years. In the late 1970's, computer programs were written to handle repetitive calculations and have been modified several times to keep pace with water accounting changes dictated by the Rio Grande Compact Commission. In 1994, Reclamation and the Corps of Engineers agreed to restructure Reclamation's water accounting system. The thrust behind the change was that the hardware platform was obsolete and slated to go off-line in September 1995.

Reclamation also saw an opportunity to enhance current water accounting methodologies. The conversion process included numerous enhancements and database integrations to improve performance. The Corps also benefited by timely receipt of water accounting information for its reservoirs. In addition, Reclamation took advantage of the Corps' "real-time" water management system to obtain river and reservoir data for operations and accounting. The entire effort will decrease staff time needed to do accounting and prepare reports, and will improve how information is disseminated to others. More time will be available to focus on critical water and resource management needs and initiatives.

**LAN Access Expands.** The Nebraska-Kansas Area Office has provided LAN access for all employees, including facilities managers at remote locations. Up-to-date PC's and "PC Anywhere" software were acquired for several locations in the McCook and Grand Island offices, as well as all remote locations. It also required upgrading the LAN server and router, adding PC's and phone lines to the 800 LAN connection, and training for all personnel at locations remote from the McCook and Grand Island offices.

A CADD/GIS team was also formed to acquire these capabilities for land management activities. Hardware and software upgrades to the stations where CADD will be used are planned. The Area Office is investigating possible cooperative efforts with other state and federal agencies on GIS. An information technology committee has been formed to ensure coordinated and equitable upgrades of computer technology.

The major impediment is the rapid change in Reclamation computer systems at all levels. It is difficult to make purchases that will be compatible with current systems and accommodate the user into the future. The major lesson learned is that all people affected by the purchases and upgrades need to be consulted in the planning stage.

**Employee Express Pilot Developed.** The Denver Administrative Service Center provided technical support on the team that acquired the Employee Express software and developed the DO1 application to provide employees with the ability to make certain changes to their own personnel/payroll information. The pilot allows for employees to use a kiosk or a touch-tone telephone to access and change their own information. Additional support was provided in developing products used for employee orientation and training in using the pilot application.

**Classification, Recruitment, and Staffing System Automated .** The Reclamation Human Resources function is supporting the Department of the Interior effort to delegate

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more classification, recruitment, and staffing authority to supervisors and managers by purchasing an Interior-specific automated system.

This new system will give supervisors and managers much greater human resources authority than they currently have, and the role of the Human Resources Office will change to that of becoming advisors to management.

***Time and Attendance System Automated.*** The Bureau of Reclamation developed, programmed, and implemented a new automated Reclamation Time and Attendance system (RTA). The RTA system will soon allow all Reclamation organizations to track time and attendance (T&A) electronically. The system provides enhanced capabilities for users and more accurate data for payroll and finance processing. The system was designed to take advantage of existing computer technology in Reclamation so that it would be available to all without added costs.

The system provides for supervisory approval of employee time and attendance data through an electronic signature process. With the automated system, it is now possible to track and keep on computer file the T&A record; the paper form previously required is being eliminated. An enhancement is also currently underway to automate the total T&A process to include a front end employee input that eliminates hard copy daily timesheets and also provides for electronic signatures by employees as well as supervisors.

The procedures necessary to make this project successful have now been documented, which will smooth the process of completing similar projects. One problem noted is that the written overtime approval process should have been included to eliminate the current manual process; that capability has been planned if resources permit.

## **Financial management creates innovative solutions**

***Business Resources Center Created.*** The Business Resources Center in the Mid-Pacific Region encompasses various administrative services, including procurement, contracting, property management, space management, fiscal management, consulting service, general services, records management, alternative dispute resolution, employee and organizational development, and computer service. The center was created to reduce costs, reduce supervisory layering, eliminate organizational fragmentation, and improve customer service. Currently, only two levels of management exist between center employees and the Regional Director. Supervisor to employee ratio is at an all-time low-from 1:5 to 1: 11.

***Automatic Teller Machine Installed.*** Reclamation's Management Services Office has implemented automatic teller machine (ATM) access for Denver employees to obtain travel advances. Travelers can now use their corporate American Express cards to withdraw cash from ATM's for official travel.

ATM access has nearly eliminated the need for cash advances from the imprest fund, which has significantly reduced the imprest cashier's workload. In addition, the workload of the clerical staff who were preparing travel advance forms has been reduced. The travel payments section can now focus on processing payments rather than on bill collection. Most importantly, employees benefit from the convenience of being able to obtain cash at countless locations any time of the day. The system is working as planned with only minor problems.

## **Procurement processes cut red tape**

**Bankcard Use Expands.** The Management Services Office of Reclamation has greatly expanded use of the purchase card or bankcard. In recognition of this initiative, Reclamation received an award from the Department of the Interior for its contribution to reinvention. The Denver Administrative Service Center also has aggressively expanded the use of purchase cards for acquisitions. This has improved the procurement process, reduced costs, and improved timeliness.

The purchase card allows nonacquisition personnel to acquire goods and services up to \$2,500 with a minimum of red tape. It also allows acquisition offices to devote their staffs to more complex procurement needs.

The need to reconcile monthly purchase card statements has required that more resources be devoted to the overall administration of the program than anticipated. Nonetheless, the benefits continue to far outweigh the costs of the purchase card program.

### **Reclamation's Mission**

To manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.