
3. STRATEGY CHOSEN TO MAXIMIZE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

3.1 USE OF THE MEDIA

During the planning process the media was invited to all meetings and forums associated with the Plan. While local radio never attended, area newspapers often did. Daniel Russell (the Business Reporter with the Hobbs News-Sun) was a regular attendee, and W. H. Graham (with the Lovington Leader) regularly covered the planning progress. Mr. Russell's and Mr. Graham's columns reported on the meetings/forums, usually the next day, and had attractive buy-lines and often photographs. There are no local television stations in Lea County.

3.2 PRESS RELEASES

At two key points in the planning process, LCWUA's Board of Directors, Leedshill-Herkenhoff, and the Office of Lea County Manager developed press releases to inform the public of upcoming meetings and events. The first such release, reprinted in Section 2.2, was made in early December 1998. It announced the Organizational Meeting held at the beginning of the project. The second release, reprinted below (except for location listings), was made in mid April 2000. It advertised a series of three Public Involvement Meetings.

PUBLIC MEETING

Lea County 40-Year Water Plan

Public meetings will be held by the Lea County Water Users Association to present the final draft report of the Lea County 40-Year Water Plan. The Plan will be finalized and submitted to the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission upon receipt of public response to the Plan. Copies of the Plan may be reviewed at: (Locations are listed in Section 3.5 of this Plan). Public meetings will be held at 6:30 PM on the following dates and locations: (Locations are listed in Section 3.5 of this Plan).

Both releases were carried by local newspapers and radio stations.

3.3 OUTREACH EFFORT TAILORED TO SPECIFIC COMMUNITIES

Because the Plan is important to all segments of Lea County, no community was targeted for special outreach. Press releases and other disseminated information were aimed at the County at-large.

3.4 PROJECT TIME TABLE

The project began with a Notice to Proceed issued on the contract date (September 24, 1998). Various intermediate milestones were set between the Steering Committee and the Consulting Team to facilitate communication. Completion was scheduled for July, 2000.

3.5 PUBLIC MEETINGS

As discussed above, a total of four public meetings were held. The first, an Organizational Meeting, was at the Lea County Cultural Center in Hobbs on December 14, 1998. The next three were Public Involvement Meetings held at the locations and times listed below.

Eunice - Eunice Community Center, April 18, 6:30 PM
Hobbs - Lea County Services Building, April 19, 6:30 PM
Lovington - Lea County Courthouse, April 20, 6:30 PM

The Orgazational Meeting, held at the beginning of the project, is discussed in Section 2.2. It was attended by an estimated 250 citizens and served as a kick-off ceremony for the project.

The Public Involvement Meetings were held after the quality and quantity of the water resources in Lea County had been determined and the demands on those resources were identified. In the month before the meeting the water resource information and alternatives for conserving water and managing its use were reported in a Final Draft Report. The Final Draft Report was made available to the public at several locations listed below.

Hobbs: Hobbs Public Library
809 N. Shipp
Hobbs, NM 88240
(5005)397-9328

Hobbs City Hall – Clerk's Office
300 N. Turner
Hobbs, NM 88240
(505)397-9200

Lovington: Lovington Public Library
115 S. Main Street
Lovington, NM 88260
(505)396-3144

Lovington City Hall – Clerk's Office
214 S. Love
Lovington, NM 88260
(505)396-2884

Eunice: Eunice Public Library
1039 10th Street
Eunice, NM 88231
(505)394-2336

Eunice City Hall – Clerk's Office
1106 Avenue J
Eunice, NM 88231
(505)394-2576

Jal: Woolworth Library
P.O. Box 1149
Jal, NM 88252
(505)395-3268

Jal City Hall – Clerk's Office
Drawer 340
Jal, NM 88252
(505)395-3340

Tatum: Tatum Library
216 E. Broadway
Tatum, NM 88267
(505)398-4822

Tatum Town Hall – Clerk's Office
20 W. Broadway
Tatum, NM 88267
(505)398-4822

The information contained in the Final Draft Report was presented at the meetings by the Consulting Team and comments were sought.

In addition to the advertised public meetings, additional meetings between the Consulting Team and the Steering Committee and/or the LCWUA Board of Directors were held to review the project and discuss the issues. The meetings were open to the public.