



For immediate release:

December 14, 2005

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State Engineer Mails Out Brochures to Prepare Water Right Owners for Metering Deadline in the Lower Rio Grande Region

(LAS CRUCES, New Mexico) – The Office of the State Engineer will be mailing out metering brochures this month to help the more than 6,000 water right owners in the Lower Rio Grande region prepare for the State Engineer's metering requirements before the March 1, 2006 deadline.

The brochure includes information regarding the Lower Rio Grande Metering Order issued by the State Engineer in December 2004, state and local metering guidelines, meter installation information, and meter vendors.

"We have produced this brochure to provide water right owners with all the information they will need to have a meter installed on their well. We are trying to provide as much notice as possible before the deadline in hopes to make the transition a smooth process for water right owners," said Water Resource Allocation Program Director John Romero. "In addition, we want community members to understand how beneficial this metering program is going to be for protecting water rights."

"It is important for water right owners to begin installing meters immediately because the procedure can be time consuming," said Lower Rio Grande Water Master Sheldon Dorman. "We encourage water right owners to use the resources we have made available to avoid any unnecessary hold-ups."

The new metering requirements apply to groundwater wells other than stock wells and wells serving only a single household. The metering program is part of the Active Water Resource Management initiative, which was launched by the State Engineer in January 2004. The metering order will help the Office of the State Engineer manage and administer the waters of the Lower Rio Grande stream system; promote the expedited and leasing and marketing of water; conserve water; and prevent the over-appropriation of water.

(MORE)

The metering order affects the Lower Rio Grande Water Master District, which extends from Elephant Butte Reservoir to the Texas border and includes the Lower Rio Grande, the Hot Springs and the Las Animas Creek underground water basins. The State Engineer declared the Lower Rio Grande Water Master District on December 3, 2005, to actively manage and administer the diversions and use of water from the Lower Rio Grande on a day-to-day basis.

For more information on the groundwater metering brochure and the metering order contact:

Sheldon Dorman, Lower Rio Grande Water Master
Office of the State Engineer
Las Cruces District Office
(505) 524-6161 or (505) 649-1480

The brochure can also be obtained from the Office of the State Engineer website at:
www.ose.state.nm.us/water_info_awrm_basins_lrg_metering_info.html

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

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