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State Engineer Hires New Water Master in the Middle Rio Grande

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio announced that a water master has been hired for the Middle Rio Grande.

Gary Stansifer began working for the Office of the State Engineer in December of 2003 as a Water Resource Technician in the Water Rights Division of the District I office in Albuquerque, and was promoted to Water Resource Specialist in April of 2005. Before working for the Office of the State Engineer, Stansifer was employed in the City of Albuquerque’s Water Quality Lab as a Water Quality Analyst. Previously, he worked as an Environmental Scientist for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates in Albuquerque.

Stansifer began his duties as Water Master in the Middle Rio Grande on December 29, 2007. His duties include maintaining an inventory of all irrigation wells within the Middle Rio Grande Water Master District, and conducting field investigations to determine the status of lands with severed water rights, as well as declared lands. He will also identify illegal diversions and enforce remedies for illegal diversions to establish compliance with existing statutes, regulations, permits and orders issued by the State Engineer.

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"Water Masters serve an important function for the Office of the State Engineer because they work in the field and make sure that water is equitably distributed to water users in a particular area," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "Stansifer's work experience as a Water Resource Specialist in the Middle Rio Grande has helped familiarize him with the entire basin and get acquainted with local water right owners. His experience will be an asset to our agency in the Water Master capacity."

Water Masters throughout the State of New Mexico actively administer the distribution of water from stream systems on a daily basis. The State Engineer has the authority to create special water districts and hire Water Masters as he determines is necessary for the administration of water rights.

Stansifer earned a Bachelor of Science degree in biology in 1977 from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. In 2005, he earned a Master of Water Resources degree from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Stansifer's interests include bicycling, skiing, running, and playing tennis. He was named, along with his two daughters, the Southwest Tennis Association Family of the year for 2006. He is an annual participant in the Mt Taylor Winter Quadrathon.

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.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico's right to water associated with eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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