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Office of the State Engineer Benefits from New W.A.T.E.R.S. Well Location Coordinate System

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – Obtaining and maintaining good water-well location information has been a long-standing challenge within the Office of the State Engineer, but this is now being addressed in a series of initiatives combining the efforts of the agency's Information Technology Bureau, the Water Rights Division and the Water Administration Technical Engineering Resource System (WATERS) Abstract Bureau.

A significant portion of the effort, converting the location of water-wells contained in the WATERS database to a common coordinate system, and the instant conversion of all location information as it is entered into the WATERS database, is substantially complete.

The major benefits of this are the ability to easily extract this data for water right impairment analyses, mapping into the e-GIS or for other needs.

In-progress is a WATERS query and report system to allow anyone in the agency or the public to obtain instant water-well location information easily from the Office of the State Engineer website. WATERS, is a web-based system that makes extensive water right records more readily accessible to staff and the public. Using WATERS, anyone can gain access to information concerning water use, including comprehensive data about domestic, irrigation, commercial and other water rights, location of rights, and owners of rights, as well as details of well construction, through a queryable database and imaging system.

"Completion of the Query and Report System is estimated to be within a few months," said ITSB Project Manager Mercedes Ortega. "Requirements gathering is soon to begin for an additional WATERS enhancement which will provide a method for Office of the State Engineer employees to update the WATERS database as agency personnel use GPS equipment to obtain more accurate well locations in the field."

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WATERS system users can find out details of individual water rights, how much water use is permitted in a water basin, track changes in water use patterns, bring together regional data on water use, and compile and analyze data to build water-use models. WATERS data is capable of downloading and linking to a geographic information system (GIS) to create intricate maps of water rights and resources. WATERS is fulfilling one of Governor Richardson's initiatives to fully automate the agency and help implement the vision of Active Water Resource Management. It helps enable the state to manage its water both in times of plenty and in times of drought.

The principal architects of this conversion project, Randy Johnson and Mercedes Ortega, combined with large efforts from Michael Mackenzie, Diana Hardy, Jina Lindsay, Sylvia Lucero, Gar Clarke, and Steve Hayes have overseen the conversion of the data and the necessary re-programming of the WATERS database.

If you are interested in more details of this project, please contact one of the above project members by calling 505-827-6120.

The attached map shows the areas of the State where WATERS data is complete and in progress.

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 under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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