

La Feria Irrigation District Cameron County #3

Mr. Rick Smith, General Manager

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Step I date: September 24, 2002

Project Type: Water Conservation Improvements for La Feria Irrigation District
Cameron County No. 3 “La Feria”

Project Description: The proposed project will include the installation of irrigation pipelines. Specifically, the proposed project consists of the installation of approximately 3,700 linear feet of 24-inch pipeline from the Main Canal to the existing 0.6 pipeline and 24,816 linear feet of 30-inch pipeline from the 6.0 lateral north to the northern end of the district. This project will save water by eliminating seepage, which has been estimated at 215 acre feet per mile per year by an ongoing Texas A&M study as a part of the Region M regional water planning work. The State of Texas’s regional water planning process involved defining the regional water planning areas, establishing the Planning Groups, and developing the regional water plans. Region M includes eight counties along the Rio Grande from Maverick County to Cameron and Willacy. Eliminating seepage will result in an increase of water delivered to individual fields and/or will allow a greater number of fields to be simultaneously irrigated. The District’s overall water delivery efficiency will also be improved.

Estimated Cost: \$4,186,200

Project Sponsor: The project sponsor is the Texas Water Development Board and the La Feria Irrigation District Cameron County No. 3. The District is an irrigation district that operates under the provisions of Chapter 58, Title 4, of the Texas Water Code and under Article XVI, Section 59 of the Texas Constitution. The District is located in Cameron County and extends north and south of the City of La Feria, Texas. The southern border of the District is the Rio Grande and extends north for about 17 miles and is mostly about 3.5 miles in width. A map is provided for your information.

The water rights of the District are devoted primarily to the irrigation of agricultural lands within the boundaries of the District.

The District also delivers untreated water for other uses. The District has authority to divert raw water from the Rio Grande for domestic use by landowners, and for municipal treatment for the cities of La Feria, Santa Rosa and Sebastian. The District also diverts, transports and delivers water for the irrigation lands outside the District boundaries by contract.

Five directors elected from the District as a whole govern the District. The Board of Directors appoints a General Manager and additional managers and supervisors as necessary, for the administration, operation and maintenance of the District's properties, and for the supervision of the employees and staff of the District. It is not anticipated that the project will require additional personnel to implement the operation of the improvements. The improvements should allow the existing employees to operate more efficiently. The O&M cost for the pipeline installations are estimated to be minimal.

Project Consultant: Al Blair, P. E.; Axiom/Blair Engineering; 3922 Steck Ave. Suite B119 Austin, Texas 78759; Tel # (512) 349-0117 Fax: (512) 349-0385; a.w.blair@worldnet.att.net

Population Benefited: The population of Cameron County is 335,227.

International Treaties: The United States is in compliance with the 1944 Treaty relating to the Utilization of the Waters of the Rio Grande between Mexico and the United States.

Available Studies: The District has contracted with Blair/Axiom Engineers as their consultant to prepare the Project Plan and Project Report and are being funded by the TWDB/SECO funds. This documentation will follow US Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR) guidelines. The consultant anticipates completing the Project Plan by the first or second week in October 2002. After completion and approval of the Project Plan, the consultant will begin preparation of the Project Report, which will include technical alternative analysis, defined construction costs, O&M costs, and water and energy savings. The Project Report will also include a monitoring plan to determine the actual amount of water and energy savings realized once the project is implemented. An environmental summary along with appropriate agency consultation will be prepared during the Project Report phase of the project. The USBOR has done some preliminary coordination with several key agencies in the project area regarding environmental issues. The consultant estimates that the Project Report will be complete within 60 days after approval of the Project Plan. The district has received a commitment for

funding through the TWDB for the preparation of the supporting documentation.

Environmental and Human Health:

The proposed project will help alleviate one of the most pressing problems facing the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, meeting the water needs for a fast growing population without detrimental effect to the social and economic fabric of the area. The project should help accomplish this by allowing the more efficient delivery of water to both agricultural and municipal users. Potential cultural and social impacts of the project will be addressed in the environmental summary as well as coordination with the required agencies.

Technical Feasibility: The Project Report will include an analysis of alternative methodologies and reasons for selection of the final process of rehabilitation. Design standards will meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

Financial Criteria: The district has received funding assistance from the TWDB to complete the Project Plan, Project Report, and feasibility level costs as per USBOR guidelines. These requirements would enable the district to apply for federal funds should they become available through the USBOR. Those funds are not currently appropriated.

Loan funding is available through the TWDB to match grant funds available from the North American Development Bank's Water Conservation Investment Fund (WCIF). As a part of its project and financial analysis, the district will investigate and implement where necessary, adequate user fees and other measures to ensure that the district is financially able to meet all debt and operational obligations.

Public Participation: Board meetings are conducted regularly and can be formatted to meet public meeting requirements of the Border Environmental Cooperation Commission (BECC). A steering committee of user representatives could include Board members as well as additional members, which represent a cross-section of affected users of the District facilities. Potential outreach to the community could include education through the existing billing systems as well as open meetings of the Board.

La Feria Irrigation District

<i>Do you want the TWDB to proceed on your behalf in submitting a Step 1 application to the BECC?</i>	If yes, need information to complete summary. Yes	<i>If no, are they going to apply on their own?</i>	
<i>Is the project you are seeking funding for the same as that being studied under SECO?</i>	If yes, is it all or a portion? Specifics Yes	<i>If no, need a description.</i>	
<i>Does your district have access to matching funds for the NADB grant?</i>	<i>Cash? How much?</i>	<i>Loan? How much?</i>	Amount of funds available for matching would be a factor of grant percentage and total available funds. Any loan amount would require a bond election whose passing would be predicated on the above factors.
<i>What is the status of the project?</i>	<i>Project Plan?</i> Project Plan not complete, not submitted	<i>Project Report?</i> <i>Projected completion in 60 days</i>	Plans and specs when? By August 31, 2002