

## FOUR CORNERS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WATER AND PEOPLE

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The prospector who roamed the West in search of valuable metals was a lone wolf. He neither expected nor needed anyone's help in finding the water he required to sustain himself and his burro and to wash the sand and gravel from the gold in his pan.

Neither were the early stockmen of the Southwest concerned about cooperative efforts to develop water supplies. They took the water where they found it and based their cattle or sheep operations on the available sources.

But from the time men began to use the land and water of this region for crop production on a scale more extensive than the family garden, cooperation of a progressively higher level has been demanded. Diversion of water from even a small stream and construction of canals to get the water to the fields must have required the participation of every able-bodied person in the community in earlier days - from prehistoric Indian dwellers of the region through the Indians who were here at the time of European settlement, the Spanish and Mexican periods and, finally, to the coming of the Anglos, Mormon settlers along the Gila and San Juan rivers and their tributaries and those of other faiths along the Rio Grande, Pecos and Canadian.

Earlier, the settlers in a valley tried to do the job they had to do alone. And history of every river basin is spotted with stories of washed-out brush and earthen dams followed inevitably by summer drought and ruined crops. The wonder is that there was not more despair and out-migration.

With the enactment of the Reclamation Act more than 60 years ago, the federal government became a partner in development of the West, and the circle of cooperation expanded. Elephant Butte Dam which brought stability to agriculture in this valley is an early monument to that program. But the planning effort still related only to segments of river basins. There was plenty of land and, if it could be stored and regulated, there was sufficient water for the existent population. The larger look, the regional, full river basin, or national planning for water development and use, could and would come later.

We have now reached that point, and on behalf of the Four Corners Regional Commission and the relatively new concept of regional planning for economic development, it is a privilege for me to be here today to discuss what the Commission can contribute to that development. Further economic growth will be limited by the amount of water available, so the Commission must be every

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bit as concerned about water for New Mexico, to the year 2000 and beyond, as are you and the various federal and state water agencies represented at this conference.

Among other things, we will play a coordinating role - our primary responsibility does not concern water directly. But if in coordinating federal and state programs which affect this region we succeed in proving that regional cooperation of this type can work, I believe we will be providing a vehicle for assisting more sophisticated and successful large-scale water development planning.

Certainly large-scale planning is already being talked about. The speaker who preceded me covered some of these plans, Reclamation Commissioner Floyd Dominy who follows no doubt will discuss others. When parts of the arid Southwest look to the Missouri and Mississippi for increased water supplies other parts look to the Pacific Northwest and Canada, and everyone looks hopefully to desalination and weather modification, we are reaching the highest scale of thinking and planning.

Our hopes are becoming truly continental in scope. I don't have to tell you that this involves political and economic considerations - and complications - equally continental in scope. Solving them is not the problem of a small federal-state agency such as the Four Corners Regional Commission. At the top, it will require the best efforts of national governments. At the state and river basin level, it may well require the assistance - just as did construction of pioneer irrigation works - of every able-bodied citizen.

Your concern is evident, in that this is the thirteenth time that New Mexico State University has made its facilities and services available for such a conference. The response each time and the quality of speakers indicates that the concern is shared by all those in public and private life, in government and in the universities, who are responsible in one way or another for meeting the water needs of tomorrow.

Last year's conference was devoted to water quality, and the problems of pollution remain unsolved despite the intense efforts made so far. Both the United States and Canada seek ways to abate and reduce pollution of the Great Lakes, and a lowering of the water levels there has inspired some of the continental thinking I mentioned earlier. Mexico is as interested as we are in finding new water supplies for this dry region - participation by a water expert from that nation in this conference is most appropriate.

Of course, water problems are not confined to this continent. You may have read recently of a plan by Russian scientists to build a canal up to 1,300 feet wide and 2,000 miles long from the Ob River of Siberia to the Aral Sea

in Kazakhstan to restore the level of the lake, to salvage a diminishing irrigated agriculture, and preserve fish and wildlife values.

The magnitude of the Russians' problems and project may rival our own more ambitious proposals, but they have the advantage of already having full authority over the entire area. No international agreements must be painstakingly worked out. Not only must we work with at least two other nations to develop continental water plans, we must work with a number of different states and river basins, all understandably jealous of their own water rights. West Texas and eastern New Mexico, for example, will not get any water from the Missouri or Mississippi until the people now served by those rivers are satisfied that their interests have an iron-clad protection.

This - and similar situations elsewhere well known to all of us - will serve to emphasize my point that regional cooperation, encouraged by success of such experiments as the Four Corners Regional Commission, must be obtained if New Mexico and the rest of the Southwest are to meet the water needs of the future.

Under the leadership of President Johnson and Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, many new federal-state programs related to water needs and water development have been instituted. Comprehensive river basin planning under the Water Resources Planning Act is one. The state water institutes which were strongly supported by such western members of congress as Senators Clinton P. Anderson of this state and Carl Hayden of Arizona - part of the Water Resources Research Act - is another. You have heard - or will hear - from all of these, and I trust I have not infringed on their territory. And now, before any of them gets into my area, I'll discuss the organization and hopes of the Four Corners Regional Commission.

There is a trend toward more and more regional efforts for planning and action, and if the hopes of the planners are realized, joint action by federal and state governments and private enterprise will in time produce some remarkable results - but not before the passage of several years. As you well know, the time between conception of a water project, for example, and the first flow of water through new canals can often be measured in decades.

If our long-term planning brings results, a high level of economic activity can replace the present uncertain condition in many of our counties.

The Four Corners Regional Commission is charged with coordinating the planning of our four states for resource development and coordinating the many federal

programs which have an impact on the states and their political subdivisions. Along with this, I believe we can find ways to eliminate duplication and overlap and, I hope, ways to resolve conflicts. At the same time, I think we can serve as innovators and expeditors.

Economic development regions, such as the Four Corners, were authorized by Congress to provide assistance to parts of the country which were not fully sharing the nation's prosperity. Appalachia was the prime example. A lower level of income, a higher level of unemployment, loss of population and changes in basic industries or defense establishments which helped cause the other problems were the criteria for designation of such a region.

Those basic industries for this region were mining and agriculture. Changing markets, changing technology, depletion of ore bodies and other factors have adversely affected employment in both industries, but both remain important to the region and must figure prominently in plans for future economic development. The thriving agricultural economy of Dona Ana County is evidence that properly planned, properly operated and adequately watered farms can bring stable prosperity to an area. Unfortunately, most of the other agricultural counties are not faring so well.

The region's widely-varied resource base includes tourist and recreation attractions which are far from being fully exploited. There is an unparalleled assortment of scenic wonders, recreational attractions, Indian reservations and archaeological treasures. But the potential won't be fully realized until there are more improved highways, more usable airports, improved commercial air service, and greatly expanded tourist facilities. Obviously, tourism and transportation are two of the closely related areas in which the Four Corners Regional Commission expects to be working. Agriculture, mining, and industrial development are three others, and all require water.

A moment ago I mentioned some of the criteria for establishing an economic development region. The governors of the states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah met with the Secretary of Commerce in Washington about 15 months ago to attend to the formalities for designating this region because, among other reasons:

At the time of the 1960 census the unemployment rate for the region was six percent while the national rate was only 5.1.

Only 31 percent of the adults of the region were gainfully employed, compared with 39 percent nationally.

More than 25 percent of the families had an annual income below the \$3,000 poverty line, while nationally the figure was only 21 percent.

While the nation's population was rapidly increasing, and while that increase was shared by places like Denver, Albuquerque, Salt Lake City and Phoenix, 83 of the counties in this region either remained about the same or lost people. Actually, about 160,000 persons moved away, but growth in the other nine counties made up for all but 10,595 of this loss.

Let me mention one other problem. Seven percent of the population of the region is Indian, another eighteen percent is Mexican-American. Many of these people have a language problem at the time they start to school. Some overcome it, but others never quite catch up, and have difficulty in competing for jobs. We intend to give some attention to vocational training to help correct this situation until the regular schools can fill this deficiency.

I have listed some of our resources and some of our problems. Now let me discuss our organization. The Region's affairs are handled by a commission made up of the four governors and the federal co-chairman. One of the governors is the state co-chairman - at the moment it is Governor Love of Colorado, but that position will be rotated.

We have a small staff of planners, economists and project specialists, a little money for planning and technical assistance, and great opportunities for constructive action if we do our planning right and if, when we are ready to move, the national budgetary situation is favorable.

At the beginning, we will find ourselves engaged in a lot of studies and surveys. We soon will have an inventory prepared by the Denver Research Institute of existing studies with an appraisal of their value to the Commission. This will enable us to avoid duplicating some studies which already exist, to avoid wasting time examining studies which have no value to us, and to discover the areas where additional current information must be obtained.

Wherever possible we expect to turn to other federal agencies for this information, or to cooperate with them in obtaining it. We must make full use of available manpower and capabilities in the states and in those federal agencies with important programs in the region.

We need this help because the region covers 288,460 square miles - that's a bit larger than the state of Texas and larger than any of the other five economic development regions, including Appalachia, which covers parts of 13 states. We have 91 full counties and part of another; 40 out of 63 counties in Colorado; 21 out of 29 in Utah, nine out of 14 in Arizona, and 21 full counties, part of another, out of New Mexico's 32. We have about eight percent of the land area of the nation, but less than one percent of the population.

What we are involved in is an experiment with a relatively new form of government - the limited regional government. It is neither a federal agency nor a state agency, but is federal-state. There is a full federal-state collaboration in as near an equal partnership as congress has been able to devise. And we have to think about the region, not about the individual states. A man elected governor of one state will find himself making decisions which affect the other three. Each governor will have to be officially concerned with some of the problems of his neighboring states - and, by so doing, he may find solutions to long-standing problems in his own state.

Our job - to put it briefly - is to inventory the resources of the region, analyze its problems, establish economic goals, and come up with a plan for achieving these goals. With federal and state governments working together with localities and private enterprise, we expect, through what President Johnson calls "creative federalism" to achieve improved economic development throughout the region.

As I noted earlier, if we succeed, I believe this will also show the way to cooperative, regional efforts to get the water on which future growth of New Mexico and the rest of the Pacific Southwest must be based.