

WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY

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It is a pleasure for me to be here with you and to welcome you to this 23rd Annual New Mexico Water Conference. I would like also to welcome the distinguished speakers and participants here to this conference. The conference has been running one year less than I have been with New Mexico State University. I hadn't realized that this conference had been held so many times. It is nice to see Dr. Stucky in the audience, he was the first Director of the Water Resources Research Institute. I'd like to also acknowledge the fine leadership of Professor Clark who succeeded him and we appreciate the service rendered this past year by Dr. Garrey Carruthers. We are now looking forward to working with Dr. Thomas Bahr who you will hear from as the program continues.

The Water Resources Research Institute is located here on campus at New Mexico State University, but it functions statewide with all aspects of the water community. We count this activity an important part of our mission and so we work hard to see that we do not neglect any of the areas in the state.

We have moved through a number of ages in the past. I don't know all of them, but we started with the Stone Age and moved through the Bronze Age, the Iron Age and some others. You can fill in the blanks. Each one of these in a sense has occurred at a time in which there was new expansion, new things, new futures opening up. Whenever there is a change coming in, preceding new categories of plenty, there appears to be an age of scarcity. We are now in this time of scarcity in a number of areas. We see this in relation to energy. We are concerned very much about whether we will have fuel to burn and if we do, can we burn anything or use anything because of pollution effect? We are concerned about the scarcity of water. And I think that's a part of the natural transition. I happen to be optimistic about the future. I don't believe that we're going to be faced with problems of serious consequence in the long run. But we should find a solution to those problems--at the moment, with shortages. Of course, in this area where water is already short, further shortages can become really disastrous.

I read the other day in the paper about someone with a solution to the water problems in Lebanon which did not happen to be an iceberg towed from the Antarctic, but rather water tankers. Some Canadians are negotiating to use water tankers to haul water from the west coast of Canada to Lebanon. It is interesting to think that maybe we will get a whole new economy in water in this way. I wonder if we could get ships from a Gulf of Mexico river, one that has lots of water, and sail them up the Rio Grande. Mark Twain once said, "I never realized what beauty water added to a river until I saw the Rio Grande."

President Thomas, I'm sure, would have liked to have been here to welcome you. He is in Taiwan and is therefore not available. He also missed the accreditation visit by the North Central Accrediting Association. This team finished yesterday. They were most laudatory of President Thomas and NMSU and work going on here.

I am optimistic about the future. We will pay the price. I trust you will have a great water conference and look deeply into the water problems in New Mexico.