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LEA COUNTY WATER USERS ASSOCIATION

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The Lea County Water Users Association (LCWUA) has recently completed their regional water plan which will be presented to the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) in December 2000. The plan will have been completed in two and a half years with minimal funding from the ISC and the unanimous support of the municipalities. The LCWUA is the only water planning region in New Mexico that is strictly defined by political boundaries. As such we may have it easier when it comes to implementation of the various programs and projects outlined in the water plan. All of the municipalities involved have already adopted the plan, they paid for the plan and understand that their continued financial support is needed.

A major component of any water plan is the proposed alternatives to help meet future demands. The LCWUA water plan focuses on alternatives that

will do one of the following:

- conserve water
- develop additional supplies
- improve water infrastructure
- increase or preserve water quality

All types of users of water were considered when listing what alternatives could have the most impact. As an example, under the alternative of water conservation, the following suggestions would affect irrigated agriculture:

- use LEPA attachments or center pivots
- monitor soil moisture so that water is applied only when needed
- use tillage methods which promote soil water retention
- use crop types compatible with the climate and soil type

- encourage dry land farming

Over the next three years, we will continue the process of reviewing the various alternatives available to us and develop prioritizations and timetables for implementation.

While we proceed to work on the implementation of the water plan, our group will continue our efforts in Santa Fe to promote water legislation that will protect our water supply for future generations. Our legislative issues for this coming session are:

- Memorial directing basin closure
- Funding to continue and expand monitoring program and developing groundwater flow model
- Legislative support of efforts to work with Texas
- Commitment to financial support for legal effort if necessary
- Grants for effluent reuse projects
- Funding of pilot program for treatment of produced water
- Funding for investigation of deep aquifer potential