



# 2025 RRVWSP Construction Progress

Crews started the 2025 construction season early thanks to a mild spring. Now they are hoping the weather will hold out this fall so they can continue pipe installation as long as possible. In 2024, construction wrapped up in November. If conditions cooperate again this year, the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) could enjoy an almost unheard of seven-month construction season. As of mid-October, 28 miles of the 125-mile buried pipeline are in the ground.

“We are making good progress,” says Kip Kovar, deputy program manager for RRVWSP Engineering and Garrison Diversion Conservancy District engineer. “We currently have 33 miles of pipeline under contract to construct, plus more than 40 miles of shovel-ready pipeline installation.

Carstensen Contracting Inc. focused on contracts 5D and 6A this year. Contract 5D includes 10 miles of pipeline and a trenchless crossing of Pipestem Creek

in western Foster County and eastern Wells County while Contract 6A involves the installation of a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County. So far, 9.2 miles are installed on 5D and 2.0 miles are in on 6A.

Meanwhile, Garney Construction worked on land restoration, structure build out, hydrostatic testing, and soil haul off for Contract 5B, east of Carrington, where the entire nine-mile stretch of pipeline is in the ground. Oscar Renda Contracting installed 6.3 miles on the eight-mile Contract 5C pipeline thus far.

When the RRVWSP transmission pipeline is complete, it will span from the McClusky Canal to the discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River, about six miles south of Cooperstown. The Missouri River intake pumping station wet well, intake screen structure, and tunnel are complete. The outfall discharge structure on the Sheyenne River is also already constructed.

*Aerial view of Contract 6A in Foster County, where Carstensen Contracting is installing a 7.1-mile transmission pipeline from the James River to Eastman Township in Foster County.*





# Garrison Diversion General Manager Looks Back on 10 Years of Progress

The past 10 years have flown by according to Duane DeKrey. This year marks a decade since his promotion to general manager of Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion). Over the past decade, Garrison Diversion has seen a lot of success, especially with the beginning of construction on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) and a drought mitigation project co-sponsored by Garrison Diversion and the Lake Agassiz Water Authority.

“I feel extremely lucky to be sitting in the general manager chair currently. I think back to some of the previous managers, who became North Dakota Water Hall of Fame awardees, who had the same dreams and goals of fulfilling the promise of water to central and eastern North Dakota,” DeKrey says. “They worked just as hard and, in many ways, laid the foundation that I have been able to capitalize on to get the Red River Valley Water Supply Project started.”

Prior to working for Garrison Diversion, DeKrey served in the North Dakota House and Senate for 20 years and served on the Natural Resources Committee where he became more familiar with Garrison Diversion. “When members of the Garrison Diversion board of directors asked me to put in an application for the general manager position, I thought it would be a very good fit. I was a project engineer in the North Dakota National Guard for many years, which I believed would be valuable for the management of the Red River Valley Water Supply Project,” DeKrey says.

Garrison Diversion’s mission to provide a reliable, high-quality and affordable water supply to benefit the people of North Dakota resonated with DeKrey because he grew up on a farm without an adequate supply of water. The work of Garrison Diversion was well known in North Dakota at that time due to the high-profile Garrison Diversion Unit (GDU) effort that was underway. The GDU included plans to provide municipal and industrial water, fish and wildlife development, recreation opportunities, flood control, and irrigation of 250,000 acres.

“As a young boy, Garrison Diversion was in the news just about every day – from the all-out effort of North Dakota lawmakers at home and in DC trying to get the full promise of the project out of the federal government and environmental struggles with Canada to low commodity prices and over-production at the time which made all the irrigation seem irresponsible. I always felt any project that relieves a water shortage should be pursued,” DeKrey explains.

Though the GDU concept was not fully realized, the RRVWSP began to take shape around the turn of the century. Five years into DeKrey’s tenure as general manager, construction on the state portion of the RRVWSP began.

“The biggest accomplishment of the last 10 years is getting the federal government to approve a record of decision (ROD) on the Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply (ENDAWS), which made the project eligible for federal funds,” DeKrey says. “This enabled us to use the McClusky Canal for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project. It will save the taxpayers and project users a minimum of \$280 million in construction costs. That is in addition to federal funding for the project.”

Federal approval of the McClusky Canal as an alternate bulk water supply for the RRVWSP allows the long-underutilized federal asset to be developed for municipal and industrial water supply, which is an authorized purpose of the original GDU feature. When construction is completed on the RRVWSP, a buried transmission pipeline will span from the McClusky Canal to the



*Duane DeKrey*



discharge structure, which empties into the Sheyenne River. Ultimately, the RRVWSP is projected to provide an emergency and supplemental water supply to nearly half of North Dakota’s population, from the central part of the state to the Red River Valley. It is projected to be completed in 2032.

“Beyond the Red River Valley Water Supply, Garrison Diversion continues to benefit the state of North Dakota. We facilitate 8,000 acres of irrigation and our staff operates and maintains Garrison Diversion Unit facilities. We’re just finishing up a six-year \$16 million repair of the McClusky Canal,” DeKrey says. “Garrison Diversion has provided more than \$300 million over the last 25 years to water projects in North Dakota with our partner, the North Dakota Department of Water Resources.” Garrison Diversion has

also provided \$9.2 million via matching recreation grants throughout the 28-county conservancy district. It also provides grants for residents to hook up to rural water and assists cities with emergency water system repairs.

Though he doesn’t have a retirement date in sight, DeKrey does have a few goals he would like to reach before he wraps up his career. “My goals for the end of my tenure are to see the Red River Valley Water Supply Project progress as far as possible and fully investigate the potential title transfer of the rest of the Garrison Diversion Unit facilities from the Bureau of Reclamation to Garrison Diversion. Ultimately, I want to leave Garrison Diversion with a cohesive group of people who will have no problem continuing the organization’s mission.”