

# Agency chief: No Boulder City layoffs

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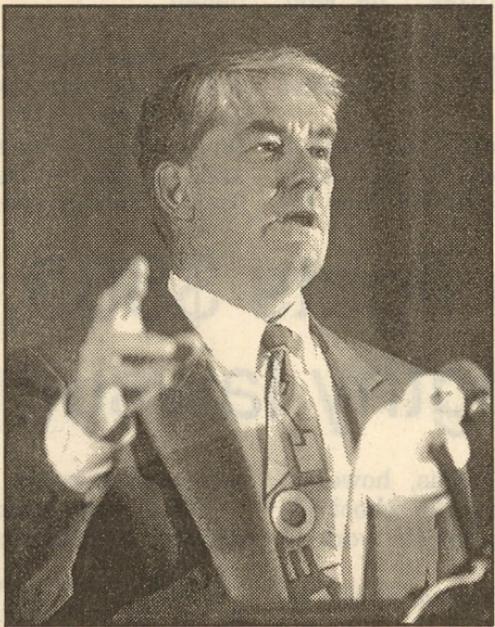
□ The new head of the Bureau of Reclamation foresees a bright future but one with fewer employees.

By Keith Rogers  
Review-Journal

Declaring that "the great dam-building era for the Bureau of Reclamation is over," new Commissioner Daniel Beard said Friday he doesn't anticipate layoffs at the agency's Boulder City office as downsizing occurs in the 17 Western states that have bureau facilities.

"We are going to have to go through a process of belt tightening," Beard told many of the nearly 600 bureau employees in Southern Nevada who had gathered at the Boulder Theatre to meet him.

Beard was nominated for the bureau's top post in April and was confirmed by the Senate May 24. Of the bureau's 7,500 employees, some 300 work at the regional office in Boulder City and another 288 are involved in the operation of Hoover, Davis, Parker and Headgate Rock dams.



Gary Thompson/Review-Journal

Dan Beard, the new Bureau of Reclamation commissioner, tells about 600 Bureau employees Friday that the agency is downsizing but their jobs are probably safe.

The bureau's role has shifted over the years from one of constructing

dams to managing water supplies that were created from building them, Beard said.

Although bureau officials "have danced around a lot of tough issues for the past five years," including reducing the size of the agency, Beard said he views the bureau's future as bright because he believes retirements and transfers will make the downsizing manageable.

"I didn't want to be here to be a grim reaper. I came here to be an enthusiastic cheerleader. The future of the Bureau of Reclamation is bright," he said.

One of his main objectives, he said, will be to provide solutions to water supply problems on the Lower Colorado River.

The bureau is the largest water supplier in the West and the 11th-largest electric utility in the nation.

"The needs of urban areas are becoming much more important. Environmental issues have become much more important. We have a role in helping Las Vegas and Southern Nevada solve those (water supply) problems," Beard said.

The bureau's headquarters in Wash-

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ington, D.C., which employs 250 people, will probably go through a reduction in size, he said.

“My preference is to do it with a smaller number than a larger number,” he said about managing the agency.

Overall, he said, the number of employees throughout the bureau will remain about the same, “but the composition will be different.”

Beard, 50, is the former staff director for the House Committee on Natural Resources.