

Reclamation's boss retires after 49 years

By Mary Manning

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Robert Towles, director of the Lower Colorado Region for the Bureau of Reclamation, is retiring April 1 after 49 years of federal service.

Towles, 68, who has spent most of his career in the Southwest, has been in his current job since 1991.

"Bob's retirement leaves a void in the bureau that will be impossible to fill," said Dan Beard, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, which operates Hoover Dam and other hydroelectric facilities and water projects for the federal government.

Assistant Regional Director Robert W. Johnson will become acting regional director until further notice, Beard said.

Towles, who directs 1,400

employees out of his office in Boulder City, said he and his wife, Gladys, will continue to live in Southern Nevada.

Towles began his Reclamation career in 1944 as a surveyor at the Friant Dam Project in California.

A World War II combat veteran, Towles graduated in 1953 from the University of Arizona in Tucson with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

After working on several water management projects in California, he was selected construction engineer for the Palmetto Bend water supply project in Texas.

From 1981 to 1983, Towles was assistant director for the Southwest Region of the bureau in Amarillo, Texas, before moving to Denver to become deputy assistant commissioner for engineering and research.

Returning to the field in 1986, he was named manager for the Arizona Projects Office in Phoenix.



Towles