
Larry Walkoviak's Open House



Howdy everyone. I'd like to take just a few minutes of your time to let everyone know how much I appreciate the very kind notes, cards, and calls that so many of you have sent. Down through the years, I've had many new employees and especially employees from other agencies or companies tell me that it didn't take long for them to understand the "family atmosphere" at Reclamation. The kindness and best wishes that you have shared with Jo and I are outstanding examples of just that -- that wonderful Reclamation tradition of treating each other as family. Thanks to each of you so very much.

Let me also thank everyone for the wonderful open house and reception in the Regional Office on January 29th. Jo and I were very moved at the number of folks that attended including retirees and individuals from many of Reclamation's stakeholder community. As you know, I can usually blab on and on with no



problem but I felt nearly speechless. Thanks again to everyone (and a special thanks to Commissioner López -- I know that he had plenty of things on his plate and it was a great honor to see him there).

As I mentioned earlier, I'm at a loss for words to adequately express my appreciation for the opportunity to see so many of you on the 29th. I'm equally stumped at finding a way to tell you how honored I am to have worked with you and for you these past nearly 40 years. Jo and I have lived a long way from where we were raised and nearly all of our family members are still back in Texas within about 50 miles of each other. We love them and go see them when we can. However, perhaps that distance from our "relatives" has been a factor in our deep feeling of family and friendship with Reclamation employees in all the places that we've lived and worked. Thank you for welcoming us and caring for us as we have moved around.

Jo and I offer each of you our Best Wishes in whatever you do in your work-life and in your personal endeavors as well. I hope to keep in touch and I encourage you to email if you wish. My email address is tipperoby@gmail.com.

Please keep doing the great work that each of you do. You are serving the public very well and providing important services to millions of people. When I started working for Reclamation in 1975, I had very little knowledge of what Reclamation did. Now, 40 years later, I can proudly say that I had the great privilege of working side-by-side with the best public servants in the federal government. I'm so very proud that I got to work with you, learn from you and count you as my friends. Take good care of yourselves and each other!

Cheers, cheers, cheers.....

Larry W.

Photos below





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Engineer of the Year



Scott Winterton, Chief of Design Group, Supervisory Engineer, from the Provo Area Office was awarded the Engineer of the Year Award at the Upper Colorado Region's Leadership annual meeting on January 29, 2015.

Scott has worked on a variety of projects, which include:

Safety of Dams, he prepared excavation plans and drawings for the borrow areas of Echo Dam Modification that was an \$18 million project. The work looked at limiting factors, such as groundwater and bedrock depths to develop the necessary material from within the limits of the government property. This work was critical in assuring adequate material quantities were available for the project.



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Dam Raise and Outlet Modification, he is currently the lead in the office on two projects that will raise the water level in Big Sand Wash for improved irrigation delivery and the modification of the outlet work at Newton Reservoir from an open channel discharge to a pressurized system leading to a pipeline system,

Repair of Small Dams, he designs repairs on several small U.S. Forest Service dams to correct seepage and erosion control. Over the years has packed in by horse back to evaluate the work and develop the final designs. Along with designing repairs for these small structures, coordinates the hydrology and emergency action plans required by this work. Scott is currently working on the upgrade of the outlet work of an older Reclamation dam to replace the deteriorated concrete.

Canal Enclosure, he works with several water districts on the enclosure of existing canals with pipelines to improve their efficiency and water savings.

Wetland Design, he has worked with biologists with the Utah Reclamation and Mitigation Commission, Lower Colorado Multi Species Recovery Program, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to plan, draw, and design wetland areas to meet the needs of the program. Diversions from streams and rivers have been part of the design.

Native American Support, he has worked on several water and roadway projects supporting the needs of several Native American Tribes in Utah. Projects have involved improvement of the community water system and correcting damage from flash floods.

Energy Conservation, he's worked on several recent designs for the Provo Area Office that improved the overall efficiency by upgrading the HVAC system with Digital Direct Controls and Variable Frequency Drives. In addition to work on a new 25 kW solar panel system that will provide a large portion of the building electrical needs.

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Regional Director's 2015 Silver Safety Award



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The Regional Director awarded Barry Longwell and Pat Page from the Four Corners Construction Office (FCCO) with the Regional Director's 2015 Silver Safety Medal. This achievement reflects the FCCO's consistent effort and dedication to safety improvement. Safety is integral to the Bureau of Reclamation's mission. It is getting our jobs done right; it is the mark of our professionalism, technical expertise, and demonstrated concern and care for our Reclamation family. The FCCO's team was commended on their efforts to comply with existing laws and regulations; conform to Reclamation and regional policy; and seek consistent safety improvement. Thank you for your efforts. Please take time to celebrate.

This year's assessment identified many safety management practices that will continue to enhance FCCO's safety efforts to reduce the risk of injury to fellow employees. There was a noted improvement in the FCCO efforts to increase employee participation in their program. Their monthly all-employee safety meetings reflect their commitment. In addition, their efforts to conform to hazardous energy control program requirements of Facilities, Instructions, Standards, and Techniques 1-1 were also noted. Significant improvement in this program was noted since last year's assessment.

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Albuquerque Area Offices Cyclist's Elite Record Eclipsed

Something precious that Albuquerque's Carolyn Donnelly had owned for almost the past quarter century was taken from her last month and it was only after she was informed by friends that she realized it was gone.

Since 1989, Donnelly, a 1982 Albuquerque Academy grad and former pro cyclist, was the U.S. elite women's one-hour record holder. She set the bar at 44.028 kilometers at an outdoor oval in Colorado Springs.

But on Dec. 14, at a high-banked indoor track in Carson, Calif., Donnelly's record was broken by California's Molly Shaffer Van Houweling by 0.145 kilometers – a distance that could be covered in less than 12 seconds.

Although Donnelly, 50, has long since retired from competition and isn't about to reach for her helmet to try to reclaim her title, she still had mixed emotions over the turn of events.

"Oh, it's sad that I lost the record, but there's pride in the fact that it stood for that long," she said in a phone interview Thursday. "It's good to see there's interest in it."

Originally, Donnelly attempted to break the record only on a lark after joining Albuquerque's Dave Porter and John Fry, among others, on a trip to Colorado Springs as Fry attempted to build on his 40K road record.

"I was just tagging along when I broke it in 1989," she said. "Then I reset it in 1990."



“It’s a lot about suffering and testing your limits,” she said of the 60-minute endeavor. “It certainly involved a lot of discomfort. But what I focused on was people on the side of the track giving the splits. I was focusing on that and my heart rate, not about the drool on my face.”

A wild career ride

Before cycling, soccer was Donnelly’s primary athletic passion, which she carried over from Albuquerque Academy to Colorado College. But that experience didn’t last long.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do with college, but I was having a lot of fun playing soccer,” she said. “But my parents were paying a lot of money ...”

So, after her freshman year she returned to Albuquerque and eventually enrolled at the University of New Mexico. But she said she missed the camaraderie of sports and fitness.

“So I started riding my bike around town,” she said. “I rode in local tours, did a few of those.”

It was during this stretch that she met Jane Gagne, who rode with Donnelly and encouraged her to try for other racing events. That led to Donnelly eventually winning the Tour of the Gila in Silver City four times.



Fast forward to 1991, and Donnelly was embarking on a three-year run with the Kahlua-sponsored team based in Los Angeles, competing across the nation and getting paid by the team.

One of her highlights with the Kahlua riders was competing in the women’s Tour de France in 1993 after coming back from a collarbone injury.

“Bike racing is a great way to live, but a hard way to make a living,” Donnelly said. “You

kind of scrape by.

“Racing was a full-time job, but I had a lot of support from my family. I managed an apartment complex that gave me free rent. And I did odd jobs and yard work for people that I knew.”

One thing she wasn’t thrilled about in racing was that as part of a team, riders were given precise tasks.

“When you race for a team you have a designated role, and you may be playing more of a supporting role,” she said. “I enjoyed free-lancing.”

After leaving that group, she was part of various regional and national squads, including one on Washington D.C. With that team in 1997, she finished fourth in the national championships in Altoona, Pa.



Back to school

In 1998, Donnelly returned to UNM to pursue a degree in civil engineering. She got her bachelor's in 2001 and master's in 2003.

But going to school didn't end her competitive career.

In 1998, she won the Iron Horse event in Durango, Colo. In 2001 and 2002, she raced for the Lobos in the National Collegiate Cycling Association championships and won the road race both years. In 2005 in Park City, Utah, she finished first in her age group (40-44) in masters competition.

These days Donnelly works as the water operations manager for the Albuquerque office of the Bureau of Reclamation and manages the flows for the Rio Grande and Pecos River.

She's single and said she lives with a pair of Huskies who love to go hiking.

And, for the record, Donnelly's name still has a place in U.S. Cycling annals. In addition to numerous age-group honors, she and Paula Higgins of Moriarty hold the national tandem 40-kilometer mark of 52 minutes, 50.55 seconds, which was set in 1995.

Published by the [Albuquerque Journal](#)

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Western Colorado Area Office Attends Safety Fair



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On February 5 and 6, 2015, the Western Colorado Area Office hosted a booth at the 36th Annual Mesa County Safety Fair in Grand Junction, Colo. The Safety Fair was attended by approximately 1,200 homeschoolers, second graders, and fourth graders from local elementary schools; as well as the general public. At the booth the kids learned about what Reclamation does and the dangers of irrigation canals. The kids were super excited to be at the fair and enjoyed learning about numerous safety hazards. The Western Colorado Area Office attends the fair every year to pass on the important canal safety message. Every kid who visited the booth got a copy of Otto Otter's coloring book.

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2014 Sustainability & Environmental Management System External Audit Update

In December 2014, the Upper Colorado (UC) Region underwent an independent external audit of our Sustainable and Environmental Management System (SEMS). This audit is required every 3 years.

We appreciate the support we received from the regional and area offices. We look forward to continual improvement and support.

The audit team determined that the UC Region is in conformance with Reclamation's EMS policies and procedures. However, there are some areas where we need to improve.

The following are the findings from the 22 required EMS elements audited.

Minor Non-Conformance

Determination of Significance – The Core Team should follow the procedures outlined in the Manual and clearly identify which of the highly ranked aspects were considered and/or determined to be significant. It is also recommended that all aspects above a defined threshold be identified as significant. Once identified, the region has the ability to determine which of the significant environmental aspects should or should not be recommended to management for development of objectives and targets and Sustainability Action Plans (SAPs).

Objectives and Targets – Because significant environmental aspects have not been clearly identified the environmental objectives and targets have not been aligned to address the region's significant aspects, as required. Additionally, rationale has not been provided for the environmental objectives selected and the significant aspects not addressed by an objective.

There is no evidence that a memorandum proposing objectives and targets was issued to management or that management approved the objectives and targets through this process.

Sustainability & Environmental Management System



Not all targets are specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific.

Operational Control – Operational controls are not identified on the current SAP's. Two SAP leads could not identify the relevant operational controls to address the significant environmental aspects and impacts related to the SAP's.

Monitoring and Measurement – No evidence was examined to demonstrate that quarterly SAP progress reporting is occurring, as required.

Internal Audit – No evidence was examined that demonstrated the required Audit Checklist during an internal audit. No internal audit report was compiled to summarize all regional findings.

Nonconformity Corrective and Preventative Action – There is no evidence to demonstrate that corrective actions are being tracked.

Areas for Improvement –

All Employees can contribute to achieving better performance in the following areas:

- Employees need a better understanding of the EMS policy
- Aspects and Impact Register needs to be more detailed
- Significance ranking procedure should be adjusted to allow aspects with severe environmental impacts in one area and those governed by Executive Order be considered for significance.
- Performance indicators need to be established for all SAP's
- The SAP's need to identify each area offices contribution
- Staff could not identify specific training related to SEMS
- Management reviews must be conducted yearly
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Review, what is SEMS?

Environmental Management System is a standardized management approach to address the environmental aspects of an organization's operations and activities that have potential environmental impacts.

The UC Region has added Sustainability to our EMS = SEMS.

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Black History Month



By Timmothy Coplin
Equal Employment Office

On February 10, 2015, Upper Colorado Regional Office employees attended a Black History Month event hosted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program included State Conservationist Dave Brown and two prominent keynote speakers from the Salt Lake City area. Mr. Clifton Sanders from Salt Lake Community College, Provost of Academic Affairs and Honorable Judge Shauna Graves-Robinson gave their perspective of Black History Month and the contributions made to the workforce and the nation.

Reclamation and NRCS have agreed to collaborate on future events, as appropriate, to increase the awareness and effectiveness of Special Emphasis programs in each agency.

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Thoughts from Brent Rhees – Vacancies and Gratitude



On September 3, 2014, Larry Walkoviak retired after seven years of service as the Upper Colorado (UC) Regional Director and a long fulfilling federal career. Finding a replacement with Larry's capabilities will be difficult but a competitive selection is underway with an advertisement for the Regional Director position that closed on November 10, 2014. Also on September 3, 2014, Deputy Regional Director Ann Gold retired after a distinguished federal career. With both of their retirements, it has left two vacancies in the Front Office, were we had to fill in with acting's. During that time, we have had an amazing amount of expertise step up in these positions to help out the UC Region.

During the first part of the vacancies, Jennifer Faler, Albuquerque Area Office's Deputy Area Manager, came in and acted solo as the Deputy Regional Director as I served as the Acting Regional Director. In November, I was able to go back to my position as the Deputy Regional Director and Jennifer McCloskey, Lower Colorado (LC) Regional Deputy Director, came in to act as the Regional Director and Barry Longwell, Four Corners Construction Office Manager, served as the Acting Deputy Regional Director.

Currently we have Dave Palumbo, LC Deputy Regional Director, serving as the Acting Regional Director, and Mary Halverson, UC's Finance Manager, serving as the Acting Deputy Regional Director. In February we'll have Reed Murray from the Central Utah Project Completion Act to serve as the Acting Regional Director and we'll be able to welcome our new Deputy Regional Director, Daniel Picard, on February 22nd.

It has been a wonderful opportunity to work with each of these individuals and experience each of their unique and countless leadership abilities. We have been able to learn from each of them as they bring different perspectives, questions, and insights to our regional issues. On behalf of the UC Region, I'd like to extend our gratitude for the support and willingness to step in; the support has been a tremendous relief.

Along with each of these individuals that I have mentioned, there are many others in the region that have stepped up and filled the void that was created by the retirements or reassignments. Thanks to each of you for demonstrating great leadership in your respective areas of responsibility.

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Who's New

Lesley McWhirter

Lesley McWhirter was recently hired as the Chief of the Environmental and Planning Group in the Western Colorado Area Office. Lesley is a biologist who has worked in the environmental and regulatory arenas for 20 years in Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado, and most recently worked at the Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office in Grand Junction. She is married with two cats, and enjoys travel, road and mountain biking, hiking, and dance.

Beth Reinhart

The desire to work for a land management agency and the career advancement potential with the Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation is the reason I accepted this position in the Provo Area Office.

I love the outdoors, especially stream and rivers. I have been married for 16 years and we have one dog. My hobbies include being an avid angler and hunter. I also enjoy quilting, cooking and geocaching. My favorite books are any criminal mysteries, psychological thrillers and my favorite genre of movies/TV is comedies. In addition, Murphy Brown is someone I absolutely adore. I enjoy listening to adult alternative rock.

The one word to best describe me would be friendly and with that, I am looking forward to my career with Reclamation.

My favorite quote is, "It is better to seek forgiveness than ask permission" (Rear Admiral Grace Hopper)

Lisa Vance

Lisa Vance, Contract Specialist, will probably be called Vance since there are three Lisa's in the Acquisition Management Division in the Upper Colorado Regional Office. I started working for the Defense Contract Management Agency 4 years ago as a keystone, graduated from the program and decided to leave to join Reclamation because DCMA is moving to Hill AFB and I didn't want to add the extra hours to my daily commute. I enjoy quilting, knitting, and fishing in my spare time (about every weekend) and crafts of any kind and recently decided to take up guitar lessons. My husband and I will be celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary this year, in Kauai, HI, which is one of my most favorite places in the world. I have three children, two girls at the ages of 24 and 22, both graduating from college this year and a 17 year old son that loves Jiu jitsu and anything related to computers and video games. We have two dogs, Harley and Nugget.

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In Transition

Diana Herrera Retired



Di has had a long federal career beginning in 1968. She started while still in high school at the Veteran's Administration where she worked for 2 years before spending the next five years with the Department of Energy. Her Bureau of Reclamation service began in 1984 with the Albuquerque Area Office Engineering Division (currently the Technical Services Division). She served as a Program Assistant for the Technical Services Division for roughly 19 years before moving on to work as a Program Specialist to the Collaborative Program in 2003, where she was invaluable in serving Reclamation and the Collaborative Program Stakeholders. In 2006, after office reorganization, she began supporting the Environment Division as an indispensable part of that team. Finally, in 2013, Di moved over to the Middle Rio Grande Program, where she supported program needs and was instrumental in working with newer staff to understand budget



and program needs. This final journey in her federal career became vital, as Di was able to help the program transition to new finance and budget systems. With Di's retirement, the Albuquerque Area Office will be losing an irreplaceable public servant who has dedicated herself to the Bureau of Reclamation and the Albuquerque Area Office.

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Who's Paying for Your Health Insurance



I recently had an interesting email exchange with a retired U.S. Army reservist who is also a retired federal civilian employee. He told me that during the recent health benefits open season, he decided to enroll in TRICARE, the health care program for military service members and retirees. He opted to suspend his Federal Employees Health Benefit Program plan.

His question was: “What happens to the approximately 75 percent that the government was paying into the FEHBP? Was that dropped, too?” He noticed that when he received his Feb. 1 annuity statement from the Office of Personnel Management, his premium had dropped from \$444 per month to \$0. He wondered if the government stopped paying its portion of his former FEHBP plan, which cost \$971.90 a month. “How does TRICARE cover such an amount, since they apparently take nothing out of my military annuity for health care?”

He also noted that the copays for TRICARE standard are similar to FEHBP (20 percent if in network), and the yearly family deductible to meet is actually lower than in his Blue Cross Blue Shield FEHBP plan. Expenses covered under the two plans seem fairly similar. So is it correct to assume that TRICARE must be subsidized by the government in some way, too?

The answer is yes. But it isn't simple.

First of all, there are premiums for [some forms of TRICARE coverage](#). For example, TRICARE Reserve Select has a premium of \$50.75 a month for member only and \$205.62 a month for member and family. There are also modest premiums for other versions of TRICARE such as TRICARE Prime. There are no premiums for TRICARE for Life, which is available to eligible beneficiaries who are enrolled in Medicare Parts A and B.



So, if there are low or no premiums for TRICARE, then who is paying for it? If you ask many uniformed service members and their families, they will tell you that they have paid dearly for TRICARE with their service. I agree with this, and think that those of us who have not served on active duty should be grateful to them.

So, where is the money coming from? I did a little research and here's what I found.

When TRICARE for Life was created under the fiscal 2001 Defense Authorization Act, its promise was to end the need for military retirees and their spouses to pay out-of-pocket expenses and buy supplemental insurance coverage (including coverage under FEHBP).

Fast forward to January 2014: [According to the Congressional Budget Office](#), military health care spending now claims almost 10 percent of the Defense Department's base budget. CBO reported that between 2000 and 2012, funding for military health care increased by 130 percent, over and above the effects of inflation. CBO concluded that only increased cost sharing for retirees who use TRICARE would generate significant savings for DOD.

CBO analyzed three options for doing so:

- Increase costs for beneficiaries who have already retired from the military but who are not yet eligible for Medicare (sometimes called "working-age retirees," they are generally between the ages of 40 and 65).
- Make working-age retirees and their families ineligible for TRICARE Prime, the most costly program for DOD, but allow them to continue using other TRICARE plans if they pay an annual fee.
- Introduce minimum out-of-pocket requirements for Medicare-eligible retirees and their family members (generally those over 65) to participate in TRICARE for Life.

Option two would have the largest effect, CBO found, reducing DOD's health care costs by about \$90 billion (or 17 percent) from 2015 to 2023.

In an [analysis of the fiscal 2015 Defense budget proposal](#), the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments concluded that the unfunded liability of TRICARE for Life was \$173 billion over 45 years. The annual Treasury payment to cover the liability is \$3.4 billion, down from a high of \$20 billion in fiscal 2004.

DOD has proposed achieving savings by consolidating the three largest TRICARE health plans into one plan, with modest increases to deductibles and co-pays. That would mean shifting some of the costs from taxpayers to service members and retirees.

Given this situation, I always recommend that those people with access to FEHBP keep it in their back pockets, even if they have adequate coverage through one of the TRICARE programs. For federal retirees who are covered under TRICARE or TRICARE for Life, it generally makes sense to suspend FEHBP



coverage and use a combination of a TRICARE plan and Medicare. You can always end the suspension during any open season. But don't cancel FEHBP -- that's a one-way ticket out.

I recommend that current employees who use TRICARE as their only health insurance consider enrolling in FEHBP during the open season before the year they plan to retire. Their coverage under TRICARE will be used to [meet the requirement](#) that FEHBP coverage must be maintained during the five years immediately preceding federal retirement.

Published by [Government Executive](#)

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What Is the Media Saying About Reclamation This Week?

[USGS Groundwater Toolbox: A New Way to Analyze Hydrologic Data](#)

[Water managers bracing for another dry year in NM](#)

[Water conservation a top concern in the Colorado River Basin](#)

[The Latest: Rio Grande water](#)

[Repair process for Steinaker discussed](#)

[Local Briefs](#)

[And the West is History](#)

[Weber County Commission](#)

[Earth Briefs](#)

[Snowpack low across region](#)

[Snow data points to continued drought along the Weber](#)

[Study Reveals Climate Change Impacts on Irrigation Demand and Reservoir Evaporation in the West](#)

[Lake Nighthorse construction likely this summer](#)

[Very early runoff for the San Juan-Chama project](#)

[BOR negotiating with Utes on Animas-LaPlata contract](#)

[Provo River Project Rate Order No. WAPA-165](#)

[Lake Powell and the Colorado River Basin's disappearing 2015 water](#)

[Ute water project awarded \\$700K](#)

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Utah's Colorado by Robert Stump

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Reclamation Trivia

Here's this week's set of questions:

1. Safety of Dams, Scott prepared excavation plans and drawings for the borrow areas of Echo Dam Modification that was an _____ project.
2. Since 1989, Donnelly, a 1982 Albuquerque Academy grad and former pro cyclist, was the U.S. elite women's _____ record holder. She set the bar at _____ at an outdoor oval in Colorado Springs.
3. The Safety Fair was attended by approximately 1,200 _____, _____, and _____ from local elementary schools.

Last week, We asked,

1. Quagga mussels are a small (adults reach sizes up to 4 centimeters) freshwater bivalve mollusk. They were introduced into the Great Lakes Region of the United States in the 1980s.



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2. A 9 volt battery is a fire hazard because the positive and negative posts are on top, right next to one another.
3. The acquisition will allow the District to deliver additional water to the communities of Vernal, Maeser, Naples and Jensen for municipal and industrial purposes.

Last winner was – **Shannon Woodring**

Please use this [link to send your answers](#). To be fair we will draw names from the winners and one person will receive a prize. We will reach into the prize bin for something suitable for the winner...as long as supplies last.

[Return to UC Today](#)

