



SANTA FE COUNTY 40-YEAR WATER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Santa Fe County Water Utility (“SFC Water Utility”) is to deliver safe, dependable water to support existing demands and to allow orderly development in Santa Fe County (“County”) consistent with the “Santa Fe County Growth Management Plan.” Water utility service shall be provided at a fair and reasonable price and in a manner that makes efficient, responsible use of the region’s water resources while preserving the traditional uses of water in our community. To that end, the County will work to continually improve its water management practices and periodically review and update this 40-Year Water Plan.

The SFC Water Utility was formed in 1994 and began providing water service in 1996. Since then it has acquired the Valle Vista water system and now serves about 690 customers. The SFC Water Utility continues to grow rapidly adding about 10 customers per month. To further the County’s overall water management objectives, the County also started the Santa Fe County Sewer Utility (“SFC Sewer Utility”) in 1998.

Except for the newly acquired Valle Vista system, the SFC Water Utility is otherwise entirely dependent on the City of Santa Fe to deliver its supply under a 1994 Wheeling Agreement that expires in 2004. The Wheeling Agreement provides for 500 acre-feet of water to be delivered to the County by the City of Santa Fe. The SFC Water Utility is working on a number of fronts to acquire additional water rights, transfer those rights to useable points of diversion and develop diversion options. Water right alternatives being pursued include: additional allocation of San Juan-Chama leased rights; transferring County owned rights from La Cienega and Socorro; purchasing and transferring the Hagerman and Top of the World Rights; and leasing rights from the State of New Mexico at the State Penitentiary. The water rights that might be available if all efforts are successful are expected to total 1,607.1 acre-feet/year (“afy”).

In addition to the Valle Vista wells, which were recently acquired, a number of other diversion options are also being pursued. These include: the Hagerman well, the State Pen wells, and surface water diversions at Buckman, San Ildefonso, Cochiti, and/or Santo Domingo.

Water demand comprising current commitments (including Valle Vista), the State Penitentiary, La Cienega, Eldorado, and growth within the Community College and



Airport Development Districts are projected to increase from about 1,370 afy in 2004 to 4,691 afy in 2040.

A variety of conservation initiatives (including water and land use ordinances, rate structures and public outreach) are expected to help curb overall demand and prevent waste. Aquifer storage and recovery and aquifer recharge options will also be evaluated as possible water management methods to reduce the overall water rights that must be acquired to meet future water supply requirements. Nevertheless, the SFC Water Utility's service commitments will be constrained until specific water rights transactions are completed and the actual availability of the water rights is assured.

Given the finite availability of water resources, priorities for service are defined. Top priority is given to existing commitments, followed by existing demands where there is as yet no service commitment, then additional demand required by new development, and finally, indirect assistance to remote (relative to the existing County service areas) communities within the County.

The SFC Water Utility must continue to deliberately and energetically pursue all water rights, diversion options and reuse of reclaimed water that are technically and economically feasible.