

# RiverWatch

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Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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Tremendous accomplishment

## ***District awards last ARRA contracts for \$43 million***

**by Jim Pogue**  
Chief, Public Affairs Office

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One hundred sixteen days. Just about three and one half months. Not much time when it comes to the government doing business. But that's how long it took for the Memphis District to go from zero to award on two major contracts for the Bayou Meto Project. The contracts for two pumping stations and a connecting canal totaled slightly more than \$43 million.

"With the exception of funds needed to oversee construction activities, we've obligated all American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds reprogrammed into the Bayou Meto Basin Element of the Grand Prairie Region and Bayou Meto Basin, Arkansas Project," Project Manager Tracy James said.

Officials here awarded the Bayou Meto Pumping Station No. 1 contract to Harry Pepper and Associates of Jacksonville, Fla., on Aug. 27. Their bid was \$31,156,643 for this work. The contract for the Little Bayou Meto Flood Control Pump Station, valued at \$11,862,000, went to TL Enterprises of Garnett, Kan., on Aug. 30.

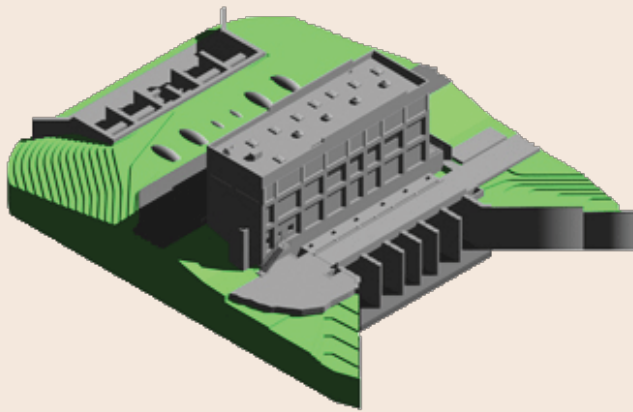
Deputy for Project Management Jim Bodron recounted the rapid-fire sequence of events that was required to meet the funding obligation deadline.

- We received approval for the ARRA for Bayou Meto on May 6.
- From that point, the team completed the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) with the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission (ANRC) acting as the non-Federal Sponsor.
- They worked with the sponsor who was not anticipating funding to get about \$30



million in non-Federal funding.

- They also worked with the sponsor to get the real estate, finalized the plans and specs, completed environmental compliance activities, went through the complete contracting process, and got both major pumping stations awarded with a contract amounts adding up to about \$43 million.



**A 3D rendering of the Northwest view Bayou Meto pumping station.**

“This was a tremendous accomplishment for the region to take these projects to award in about four months and represents contributions from many directly on the team and many more who supported the team during the process at different, critical points,” Bodron said. “This would not have been possible without everyone pulling together to address each obstacle as it was identified and is a major step to addressing the aquifer depletion, flooding, and ecosystem restoration issues for our sponsors.

“Congratulations on your accomplishments and to those who

played a role in moving the project forward from initiation of studies to award of two major contracts!” he said.

Water levels in the underground alluvial aquifer, source of irrigation water in the region, have been dropping at approximately a foot each year. At the current rate, researchers have said it could be depleted and completely lost by 2015.

The Bayou Meto Project offers a cooperative solution to this enormous problem. It calls for the diversion of excess water from the Arkansas River with delivery through a system of new canals, existing ditches, and pipelines to the water depleted areas. Also included in the project are channel improvements and control structures that will reduce flooding and provide for water management; waterfowl management and restoration features.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the project is scheduled for later this fall with construction to begin immediately thereafter.

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