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Mobile District Corps of Engineers and local utility districts sign agreement to start regional water assessment study

Mobile, Ala. -- This morning the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile, hosted a signing ceremony in the district office with 14 water utility districts in neighboring Mobile and Baldwin counties. The newly signed cooperative agreement is the first step in the regional water assessment study.

For the last four months, representatives from the Bayou La Batre Utilities Board; Grand Bay Water Works Board; Kushla Water District; LeMoyne Water System, Inc.; Mobile Area Water and Sewer System; Mobile County Water, Sewer and Fire Protection Authority; Prichard Waterworks and Sewer Board; Satsuma Water and Sewer Board; South Alabama Utilities; St. Elmo-Irvington Water Authority; Turnerville Water and Fire Protection District; Utility Board of Chickasaw; Utility Board of Foley; and Utility Board of Gulf Shores have been meeting with district employees to prepare the study agreement. Today the group met to discuss management and coordination, finalize the scope of work, meet the corps team members and sign the agreement. District Engineer, Colonel Robert Keyser, explained to the group that this was “the second time we have been able to develop a coalition to look at regional versus local needs.”

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Keyser proudly exclaimed that the Mobile is the biggest and the best district in the corps. “We have the most capable and talented personnel in the Corps.”

The study will be done under the scope of Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974 known as “Planning Assistance to States.” This public law provides for the federal government to pay 50 percent of the estimated \$200,000 cost and the 14 utilities or non-government sponsors will pay the remainder.

The plan is to identify and prioritize immediate water and wastewater infrastructure project needs. The study will identify future municipal and industrial water needs, capability of existing sources to satisfy those needs and treat future wastewater volumes.

“This group will categorize regional water needs and develop a unified voice regarding the water supply and waste water needs of the area,” said Pat Robbins, Corps spokesperson.

“This is the way of the future to look at water and wastewater needs on a regional versus individual basis.”

The study is scheduled to be completed in February 2005.

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