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Iraqi villagers anticipate clean water for first time

By Norris Jones
Gulf Region South District



Students at the Al Qitab school will reap the benefits of a new water treatment facility under construction in their community, which will offer the area clean water for the first time ever. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

Thi Qar Province, Iraq— Families in a small village north of Nasiriyah are anxiously awaiting the completion of a water treatment facility that will provide them a local source of clean drinking water for the first time ever.

Approximately 1500 residents live in the Al Shofa neighborhood, which will be

served by the new 50-cubic-meter-per-hour facility. Dozens of Iraqis have been involved on the construction crew for the nearly \$350,000 project that includes 4 kilometers of a water distribution network. Among those getting access to the treated water is the local Al Qitab primary school and the 120 students attending classes there.



Al Shofa's 50-cubic-meter-per-hour water treatment facility is nearing completion in a rural area north of Nasiriyah in Thi Qar Province. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)

"Our community was pumping raw water out of a canal for household use. It was not good water," explained headmaster Farage Jabbar Ali. "We are all very happy to see this project nearing completion." USACE has completed more than 830 other water projects in Iraq and nearly 80 more ongoing.

The work is being overseen by Navy Cdr. Terry Hart with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "Everyone we talk to there has been very supportive," he noted.

The project began a year ago and should be finished next month. It includes an intake structure, 50-cubic-meter elevated storage tank, operations building, chemical and storage building, back-up

electrical generator, and a perimeter wall. Cdr. Hart's staff is overseeing the construction of 15 water treatment plants in Thi Qar Province.

"This is what it's all about – helping people. I'm pleased to be part of this effort providing Iraqi families access to a fundamental necessity. They're delighted to see it taking shape and grateful for what we're doing," said Hart, a Naval Reservist from Frankenmuth, MI.

"We're making a difference. This project lets them know their government is working and things are getting better," she said.

Note: Norris Jones is the public affairs officer for the Gulf Region South district, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Iraq. For more information, contact public affairs by phone at 540 665-1233, by e-mail to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil, or visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.