

PROGRESS REPORT

Managing for Excellence

Office of Public Affairs – August 2006

HERE'S THE ISSUE

The Managing for Excellence (M4E) plan will identify and address the specific 21st century challenges the Bureau of Reclamation must meet to fulfill its mission “to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.” This effort will examine the agency’s core capabilities and abilities to respond to both expected and unforeseeable future needs in an innovative and timely manner. The challenge will be increased by the fact that many Reclamation employees with the most technical expertise and the best institutional memory are nearing retirement age.



BACKGROUND

To help Reclamation prepare for the future, the National Research Council (NRC) was asked to advise the agency on “the appropriate organizational, management, and resource configurations to meet its construction, maintenance, and infrastructure requirements for its missions of the 21st century.” The NRC convened a committee of experts from the public and private sectors and academia. After visiting Reclamation offices and projects and talking with employees, customers, and stakeholders, the committee examined several facets of Reclamation’s organization, practices, and culture and published a report in early 2006 entitled *Managing Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century, Bureau of Reclamation* (NRC Report). In response to the NRC Report and other studies, Reclamation developed the M4E action plan.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The M4E action plan examines everything that Reclamation does to carry out our mission to deliver water and generate hydropower for the people of the West. The plan represents a cultural change in how Reclamation will conduct business. Each of the recommendations made from the NRC Report will be addressed in the M4E action plan, consisting of 41 action items focusing on managing issues and challenges, existing infrastructure, and future construction. Reclamation employees and stakeholders are encouraged to access the M4E website at <http://www.usbr.gov/excellence/index.html>. The website is updated weekly to provide employees and stakeholders with current information.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Employee teams have been formed to address the 41 action items. These teams have begun to analyze the issues and will be obtaining input from stakeholders and employees, collecting data, conducting in-depth studies, and developing options and recommendations.



All but 12 of the action items will be completed in 2006, and all action items will be completed by December 2007. As teams complete their action items, Reclamation leadership will make decisions for implementing recommended changes and improvements. Reclamation's statutory (legal) requirements are not among the potential changes in M4E. The action items have been grouped into eight broad functional areas:

- relationships with customers and other stakeholders
- policies and organization
- engineering and design services
- major repair challenges
- project management
- asset sustainment
- research and laboratory services
- human resources/work force.

There are key principles and measures of success that Reclamation will strive to achieve through implementation of the action items by:

- analyzing the issues/problems
- defining the task
- assigning the task to the appropriate person/entity
- developing alternatives and recommendations
- decision making.

The action items may be viewed at <http://www.usbr.gov/excellence/overview/actions.html>.

What does all of this mean? Reclamation is looking at what we do well and what we can do better. The factors emerging from this bring us back to the basics on paying attention to costs, paying attention to schedules, and paying attention to true involvement with stakeholder and customer groups. Reclamation is aiming for closer relationships with both our stakeholders and employees by seeking their involvement in the decision making process.

OUTREACH PLAN

Reclamation is proactively seeking customer and stakeholder input through a comprehensive outreach plan. The process includes meetings, conference calls, and the M4E website that allows Reclamation to explain process developments and obtain employee and stakeholder input.

The outreach plan includes discussion of the appropriate level and scope of communication, consultation, and collaboration with customers and other stakeholders throughout the entire process. That process will consist of defining the tasks, analyzing the issues, developing alternatives, and making decisions, with detailed plans regarding how this will be accomplished.

Responses to comments previously made will be available soon on the website. If you would like to make suggestions or comments, please go to <http://www.usbr.gov/excellence/comment/index.html>.

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