



OKLAHOMA

Water Resources Board

Immediate Release:

March 21, 2023

Lugert-Altus Irrigation District receives \$25,000,000 grant for system improvements

OKLAHOMA CITY –The Lugert-Altus Irrigation District (District) received approval for \$25,000,000 in funding Tuesday from the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) to improve the District’s water infrastructure. Construction of upgrades and improvements to the water system will be financed by the Oklahoma American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant program.

The District operates and maintains what is known as the W. C. Austin Project comprised of four primary canals known as the Main, Altus, Ozark, and West which feed multiple laterals delivering water through system turnouts. There are 52 miles of canals, 221 miles of laterals, and 26 miles of drains.

The Lugert-Altus Reservoir has experienced a decline due to drought conditions over the last several years. This has affected the District’s ability to provide water to its members due to evaporation, seepage, percolation, and runoff. These proceeds will be used to modernize the canal system beginning with the Ozark Canal since this section has no turnouts and experiences a high loss from seepage due to the permeable soils.

Joe Freeman, chief of the OWRB’s Financial Assistance Division, calculated that the District’s customers will save an estimated \$38,824,200 compared to traditional financing. District Manager, Tom Buchanan, stated, “The District covers 50,000 acres and drought has been terrible for western Oklahoma. From the Bureau of Reclamation estimate (regarding this project), every mile of improvement will result in one acre foot of water saved each day. This is necessary and will result in a significant amount of water savings.”

The ARPA grant program is administered by the OWRB with funding from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and appropriated through Senate Bill 429 for the Water and Wastewater American Rescue Plan Act grants program. This OWRB program has been structured to provide communities and other eligible entities financial resources necessary to address water and wastewater infrastructure needs within their systems. Since 1983 the Water Resources Board has approved over \$6.2 billion in loans and grants for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements throughout Oklahoma.



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“We are grateful to State Legislators in Kiowa, Jackson, and Greer counties for their continued support of our financial assistance programs,” said Julie Cunningham, Executive Director of the OWRB.

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