

October 3, 2020: Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, Senator Michael Bennet and Senator Cory Gardner were among dignitaries who gathered at Pueblo Dam for the groundbreaking of the Arkansas Valley Conduit. Several state lawmakers, Department of Natural Resources Director Dan Gibbs and Colorado Water Conservation Board Executive Director Becky Mitchell attended. Southeastern Board members and AVC participants came as well.

“For nearly 60 years, Colorado’s leaders of both political parties have been working to move the Arkansas Valley Conduit forward. This project will provide reliable clean water for 50,000 people living in 40 rural communities across southern Colorado.”

■ Secretary of Interior David Bernhardt

“We have an important decision to make in this country, and that’s if we’re going to have a rural America or not. And you can’t have a rural America without having rural hospitals, you can’t have a rural America without schools, you can’t have rural America if you don’t have clean water or agriculture and that’s what this project is all about. And it makes possible that rural America can thrive and not just survive.”

■ Senator Michael Bennet

“The communities of the Lower Arkansas Valley deserve clean drinking water, which the Arkansas Valley Conduit will supply for generations to come. It’s exciting to see dirt moving on this project for the first time since Congress authorized it and President Kennedy promised completion nearly six decades ago.”

■ Senator Cory Gardner

“The Arkansas Valley Conduit is a lifeline for folks in the Lower Arkansas Valley. It is extremely satisfying to see the level of support we have witnessed from both political parties in the state and federal government. I cannot tell you how happy I am to finally see this become a reality. I’d like to thank all the members of our Congressional delegation and the Colorado General Assembly for their continued support of the AVC.”

■ Bill Long, SECVCD President

“As chairman of the Arkansas Valley Conduit committee for the Southeastern District, I would like to stress the importance of this project to the participants. So many communities are overwhelmed by the regulatory requirements of running a water system, and also of disposal of by-products from treating that water. The AVC has long been seen as the most cost-effective, sustainable way to meet the drinking water needs of the Lower Arkansas Valley.”

■ Kevin Karney, AVC Committee Chair

“We have had a wonderful partnership with the federal government in breathing new life back into a project that some said would never happen. In the past few months, we have begun to roll up our sleeves and begin the real work of completing the Arkansas Valley Conduit. The Bureau of Reclamation has shown a new level of energy toward getting this project done and the District is more than ready to do its part.”

■ Jim Broderick, Executive Director