

Setting the Record Straight on SDS: *The Pueblo Chieftain* has recently run two editorials that present their viewpoint as it relates to the [Southern Delivery System](#) (SDS) project and Fountain Creek. There is another side of the story they fail to share with their readers. Colorado Springs Utilities CEO Jerry Forte submitted a guest editorial to the *Chieftain* following their editorial, titled *The Pig*, yet Forte's letter was never published. Following is a copy of the Forte's editorial submitted to the *Chieftain*.

Comments From Public Will Make Southern Delivery System Better

Guest Editorial

By Jerry Forte

Chief Executive Officer, Colorado Springs Utilities

The *Chieftain's* run several stories and editorials about "problems" with the Southern Delivery System (SDS) based on comments submitted to the Bureau of Reclamation in response to its [Draft Environmental Impact Statement](#) (EIS) for the project. I have a different view.

A number of the comments voiced support and pointed to the need for the SDS. I'm grateful for that. I also appreciate the comments expressing concerns and criticism. The SDS will be better as a result. As expected, [Fountain Creek](#) received considerable attention. The Draft EIS considered Fountain Creek in detail and found that although SDS will have some impact on the creek due to increased flows from the discharge of treated water, SDS won't create significant impacts to the creek, including water quality, flooding or channel stability. And we're committed to addressing those that do occur. In fact, the Bureau of Reclamation will outline mitigation requirements in its final EIS.

Our community has already made substantial investments to improve Fountain Creek, and we're participating in a number of [Fountain Creek initiatives](#) separate from the SDS. There's an overview at www.sdswater.org.

We've been taking a hard look at potential improvements to Fountain Creek for some time. Jay Winner, general manager of the Lower Arkansas Valley Water Conservancy District, and Carol Baker of our staff recently updated the Pueblo City Council on a two-year \$600,000 master plan, sponsored and funded by our two organizations, for improving Fountain Creek. "People are starting to line up to help on Fountain Creek," Winner reported. The plan is designed to have projects waiting when funding becomes available through an authority being contemplated by the Fountain Vision Task Force, which we're a member of.

We'll soon be applying to the Army Corps of Engineers for a 404 Permit, required by the Clean Water Act. The Corps will prepare its own environmental analysis.

One recent story suggested this analysis would be required because the Draft EIS didn't measure up to standards acceptable to the Corps. In fact, Reclamation and the Corps agreed in advance there would be a separate environmental analysis.

Reclamation received nearly 400 comments, not an exceptionally large number for a project of this size and type. And the comments weren't out of the ordinary. The process is designed to

solicit comments for improving a project. The fact that concerns about specific aspects of the SDS were submitted was expected – and desired. That doesn't mean the project is "bad." It means it can be made better – and it will. Which brings me to the question: Where do we stand?

We're exactly where we expected to be. Reclamation prepared a scientifically robust Draft EIS and the public responded with excellent, thoughtful comments that are being reviewed. We believe this process will result in a project that meets the needs of the four communities participating in the SDS without harming our neighbors in Pueblo. And, with Pueblo's support, I'm confident that together we can continue transforming Fountain Creek into an amenity for both our communities to enjoy.

For information about how Colorado Springs is working in partnership with others to improve Fountain Creek, please see our [fact sheet on Fountain Creek](#).

For more information the SDS, go to www.sdswater.org, call 668-7582 or send an email to sdsinfo@csu.org.

Southern Delivery System / eNews is an electronic newsletter designed to keep interested public officials and members of the public up to date on developments associated with the Southern Delivery System. Please forward it to anyone you think would be interested. Contact us at sdsinfo@csu.org to subscribe or unsubscribe.

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For more information, please contact us:

Southern Delivery System
P.O. Box 1103, MC 940
Colorado springs, CO 80947
719-668-7582
866-719-4SDS (4737) toll free
sdsinfo@csu.org

Media contact: 719-668-3848