



BIG MESA FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER



It's hard to believe it's already fall. Conchas Lake's elevation is currently at 4,192.4 feet — more than 20 feet higher than at this time last year, and just 8.6 feet below the top of the spillway. This is the highest the lake has been since 2018.

Water Treatment Plant Construction Updates

Construction of the new water treatment plant is progressing steadily. Over 120 cubic yards of concrete have already been poured. The building structure has been erected, and some of the new facility's equipment has been delivered.



We conduct weekly coordination meetings with the contractor and our owner's engineer to closely monitor progress and promptly address any issues. A time-lapse photo series documenting the construction is available on the Big Mesa main webpage.

The project remains on schedule for completion by July 2026. We will continue to keep you updated as the work advances.

New Maintenance Pontoon Boat



As mentioned in our previous newsletter, Big Mesa recently acquired a used pontoon boat with a trailer to replace the old, non-operational barge previously used for water pump maintenance and for adjusting or replacing cables on the pump platform and anchors.



This solution was selected for its long-term cost-effectiveness and practical benefits. Unlike the old barge, the pontoon boat can be easily removed from the lake when not in use, simplifying maintenance and reducing wear. The photos show current progress on the pontoon boat, including the installation of the A-frame structure, as well as a view of the outdated barge it is replacing.

Rediscovered History: Artesian Well at Community Collection Center

While reviewing archived documents and organizing old files, Big Mesa staff uncovered the history of an artesian well located at the Community Collection Center (formerly known as the Transfer Station).

In 1985, Big Mesa acquired an artesian well and 32 acre-feet of water rights from Arch Hurley through United New Mexico Bank. The well, drilled to a depth of 1,800 feet, had once supplied water to the Mesa Rica area but was rendered unusable due to its high saltwater content.

By 1991, the wellhead had deteriorated significantly, leaking more than 50,000 gallons of water per day a rate that could escalate to 326,000 gallons daily, equivalent to the full capacity of Big Mesa's water storage

tank. Attempts to temporarily plug the well at depths of 750 and 500 feet were unsuccessful, as the casing was found to be severely corroded and unstable.



Engineers determined that the only effective solution was complete casing removal and cement sealing. The estimated cost for this permanent fix ranged between \$25,000 and \$100,000 an expense Big Mesa could not afford without risking bankruptcy. The utility applied for state and federal funding, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state environmental officials began monitoring the site due to the urgency.

However, the state denied disaster relief funding, categorizing the leak as a gradual issue rather than a sudden disaster. Ultimately, the State Engineer's Office completed the well-plugging operation in March 1992 at a cost of \$59,000.

Sanitary Survey Update

The New Mexico Environment Department Water Protection Compliance and Enforcement Bureau conducted a sanitary survey of Big Mesa's water facilities this September. This is a comprehensive review assessing the operating condition and adequacy of the water system. The last survey was conducted in 2019.

As a result of the 2019 survey, Big Mesa was required to install a new direct 4-inch line from the water treatment plant to the storage tank. In this year's inspection, only one item was identified: the need to install a screen on an air vent, which has already been resolved.

Join Us for Our Monthly Meeting

Please join us for our next monthly meeting on Saturday, November 8th at 9:00 AM. We meet on the second Saturday of each month, and your participation is always welcome.

We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Your Big Mesa Board and Staff