

# The Red River Floodway Expansion Project

– A publication by the Manitoba Floodway Authority

*More Protection. More Opportunities.* - MARCH 2006

## CEO's Message - Floodway Construction Well Underway

**H**appy New Year and welcome to the fourth edition of the Manitoba Floodway Authority's (MFA) community newsletter. As the floodway expansion project proceeds, this newsletter will bring you up-to-date on this important and historic flood protection project.

Construction on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project was officially kicked off at a groundbreaking ceremony near Grande Pointe, Manitoba on September 23, 2005. Federal and provincial representatives along with former Manitoba Premier, Duff Roblin, Winnipeg councillor Gord Steeves, and Canadian Chair of the International Joint Commission, Herb Gray, attended the event which marked the start of construction.

Work on four major components - excavation of the east embankment and the floodway channel and construction of the PTH 59 South Bridge and the Trans-Canada #1 Highway East Bridge - is moving full speed ahead. Plans and preparations are already underway for other aspects of the project, including other construction works, environmental protection measures, employment, ongoing public consultation, recreation, and public access to excavated earth. More information on all of MFA's recent activities is in this issue and on MFA's website ([www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca](http://www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca)).

As the project moves forward, the MFA will continue to work with you and your neighbours to make this important flood protection project a success for the benefit of future generations.

Yours sincerely,



Ernie Gilroy  
Chief Executive Officer



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## Construction Officially Begins with Groundbreaking

On September 23, 2005 former Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin and representatives from the Governments of Canada and Manitoba officially kicked off construction on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project. The event was held near Grande Pointe, Manitoba at a site overlooking the first excavation work and beside the site of the PTH 59 South Bridge construction project. Winnipeg councillor Gord Steeves, Canadian Chair of the International Joint Commission, Herb Gray, local officials and many members of the public attended the event.

In addition to marking the official start of construction, the groundbreaking ceremony also included a tribute to all those who worked on the first floodway in the 1960s. The original project, which excavated 100 million cubic yards (76 million cubic metres) of earth, was an international accomplishment, second only to the excavation of the Panama Canal.

“The Red River Floodway has protected the residents of Winnipeg from major flooding on many occasions since its construction,” Premier Doer said. “Since its construction, the floodway has saved Manitobans more than \$8 billion in flood damages. Today we are building on the benefits and legacy of the original floodway to ensure Winnipeg is protected for generations to come.”

Former premier Roblin, who pushed for the construction of the original floodway, in the face of significant opposition said, “Canada’s and Manitoba’s decision to expand the floodway is a tribute to all of those who provided their hard work and dedication

to the construction of the original floodway. Over the years, their work has proved its worth on many occasions and today’s announcement means that the floodway will continue to protect the residents of Winnipeg long into the future.”

By improving protection to the one-in-700 year level, floodway expansion will provide increased security for more than 450,000 Manitobans, 140,000 homes, and 8,000 businesses and prevent more than \$12 billion in damages to the provincial economy. Estimates show that over the next 100 years, there is a 63 per cent chance Winnipeg will be flooded if the expansion isn’t completed.

The expansion will provide a one-in-700 year level of flood protection by the spring of 2009 with associated bridge and related work being completed in 2010.



*Premier Gary Doer speaks at groundbreaking as former Manitoba Premier Duff Roblin looks on*



*Dignitaries participate in sod turning at groundbreaking ceremony*

## Floodway Construction Well Underway

This past summer, construction began on the Red River Floodway Expansion. As a critical flood protection project and one of the largest public infrastructure projects in Manitoba's history, the expansion will provide important economic opportunities for Manitoba workers, contractors and the construction industry.

Several components of the floodway expansion project have already begun:

- **Excavation of the Floodway Embankment East of Grande Pointe** - The first work on the project, which began in September, 2005, was the excavation of an opening in the floodway embankment which will improve flood protection in the surrounding area.
- **Excavation of Floodway Channel** – The first channel excavation contract focuses on four kilometres of the floodway channel and building seven kilometres of east dike south of Winnipeg. The work will include upgrading and placement of 125,000 tonnes (125,000,000 kilograms) of rockfill riprap in the low flow channel. About 900,000 cubic metres (1.2 million cubic yards) of earth will be excavated. This work will increase and strengthen the capacity of the original channel and reinforce the low flow channel. The excavation began in fall 2005 and is scheduled to be completed in 2006.



Excavation of Floodway channel



Erosion protection measures for the low flow channel

- **Replacement and Upgrade of the PTH 59 South Bridge** – The first highway bridge construction project on the floodway expansion project will replace the two existing bridges on the north and south lanes at the PTH 59 South Bridge. This will include raising and lengthening the bridges to ensure they are above the one-in-700 year flood level. In addition, Prairie Grove Road will be relocated higher along the bank, ensuring it remains above water for longer periods during floods. Bridge construction recently began in fall 2005 and scheduled for completion by 2008.
- **Replacement and Upgrade of the Trans-Canada Highway East Bridge** – The project will replace the existing bridge with two new structures that cross the floodway. The work will include major safety improvements – the addition of an acceleration (eastbound) and deceleration (westbound) lane, both designed to increase the safety of traffic moving on and off the bridge. Work on the project began this fall and is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2007.



Demolition of southbound crossing of PTH 59 south bridge nears completion.



Driving piles at the Trans-Canada Highway #1 bridge site

## Lafarge Canada Awarded Major Bridge Supply Contract

One of the largest pre-cast concrete contracts in Manitoba history was awarded to Lafarge Canada Ltd. as part of the floodway expansion project. The \$21 million contract is for 417 precast, prestressed concrete girders that will be used to build six highway bridges over the next five years.

“This contract will be one of the largest for our firm and will allow us to better plan for the future,” said Mitch Schaufler, Lafarge’s Greater Winnipeg Region Vice-President. “The construction schedule means the company will have work during traditionally slower

periods.” The contract will guarantee more than 20 jobs for the next five years and create more than 30 new jobs at the firm’s Winnipeg Dawson Road facility. “This is good news for the firm and our workers,” Schaufler added.

The contract will also create approximately \$3 million in spinoff opportunities for other Manitoba firms. In particular, Falcon Machinery Ltd. will supply the steel form used to produce the girders and Litz Crane & Rigging will haul finished girders from the Lafarge plant to the floodway bridge sites.

## Economic Opportunities for Manitoba Companies

As one of the largest public infrastructure projects in Manitoba's history, the Red River Floodway expansion will create jobs and opportunities for Manitoba workers and companies – particularly in the construction industry. To date, a variety of Manitoba companies from various regions of the province are working on the project, including:

- Dauphin's **Strilkiwski Contracting** and **Nelson House Forest Industries** from Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation are partnering on the excavation of the Floodway embankment east of Grande Pointe.
- **Lafarge Canada** in St. Boniface will construct 417 concrete girders that will be used to build six highway bridges over the next five years - one of the largest pre-cast concrete contracts in Manitoba history.
- Winnipeg's **Falcon Machinery** will supply the steel form used to produce the bridge girders at Lafarge's

St. Boniface plant and **Litz Crane & Rigging** will haul the completed girders to the floodway bridge sites.

- **Erickson Construction** from Riverton was awarded the first large-scale channel excavation contract in November.
- Steinbach's **Barkman Concrete** will supply 500 concrete safety barriers that divide traffic traveling in different directions across highway bridges.
- **PCL Constructors Canada Ltd.** in Winnipeg received a contract to construct a new highway bridge crossing over the floodway at PTH 59 South and raise Prairie Grove Road.
- **M.D. Steele Construction** of Winnipeg will replace and upgrade the Trans-Canada Highway Bridge over the floodway – including major safety improvements and the addition of new acceleration and deceleration lanes.

## Authority Unveils Job Referral Service

The MFA has partnered with Manitoba Advanced Education and Training's Employment and Training Services (ETS) to create a Job Referral Service (JRS).

The JRS is designed to match qualified workers with contractors who are looking for additional employees to work on the project. The ETS centres manage the JRS for the floodway project.

"With construction on the expansion underway, there is a lot of public interest in the jobs that will result from the project," said Manitoba Water Stewardship Minister Steve Ashton. "We encourage individuals who want to work on this historic project to submit their applications to the Job Referral Service."

It is expected that over 1,000 workers will be on the floodway during the five-year project. Potential employment opportunities will vary in length depending on the work required.

**For more information, please contact ETS at 945-0575 (in Winnipeg); toll free at 1-866-332-5077; or visit the Floodway Job Referral Service at [www.gov.mb.ca/jobreferral](http://www.gov.mb.ca/jobreferral).**



*Provincial ministers Diane McGifford Minister of Advanced Education and Training, and Steve Ashton, Minister of Water Stewardship, announce the floodway Job Referral Service*



## Plan for Ongoing Public Consultation Unveiled

**A**fter two years of public review and an extensive public involvement process, the MFA was granted a provincial licence and federal authorization to proceed with the floodway expansion in July. In August, the MFA announced its ongoing commitment to consult with Manitobans with a plan on public consultation. The plan is a blueprint for ongoing public involvement and will facilitate public consultation and community participation in the months and years ahead as the floodway project moves forward.

A key part of the plan is the creation of a Public Liaison Committee to share information, opinions and ideas with the MFA. The committee will provide an opportunity for community and citizen representatives to learn about the project as well as provide an open forum for discussion of issues related to the project.

In addition to the Public Liaison Committee, the plan also provides other opportunities for public involvement including:

- establishment of other advisory committees including a Recreation Working Group
- ongoing discussions with Aboriginal communities

- ongoing consultations with local municipalities
- community meetings on highway bridge construction plans
- ongoing discussions on drainage and navigation matters
- workplace safety meetings with contractors and workers
- discussions with RM of Macdonald regarding the West Dike
- establishment of public information booths
- ongoing communications with the public

In addition, the MFA will be establishing technical experts committees on groundwater and fisheries.

“As the floodway project proceeds, this plan will ensure that Manitobans have input into the project over the next five years,” said MFA CEO Ernie Gilroy. “We look forward to working with Manitobans in the months and years ahead as we improve flood protection and protect the environment.”

## Groundwater Action Response Plan Announced

Groundwater protection and minimizing any potential effects to the water table has been, and continues to be a top priority for the MFA. As part of this commitment, the MFA has taken a number of steps to ensure the protection of groundwater including:

- widening rather than deepening the floodway channel;
- protecting the low flow channel;
- establishing an environmental mitigation fund;
- enhanced groundwater monitoring; and
- ongoing community liaison.

The MFA does not anticipate any permanent impact on well water over the course of the project. However, as a precautionary measure, the MFA has established a Groundwater Action Response Plan, which includes a 24-hour, seven-day-per-week, toll-free telephone line to respond to any well water problems due to floodway construction. This plan will ensure that the MFA responds in a timely manner to any unforeseen and temporary groundwater impacts.

Should you experience any problems with your water supply that may be the result of floodway construction, the number to call is:

**1-877-456-1201**

For more information on the plan, please visit the MFA website at [www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca](http://www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca).

## Remember to Ride Safe – Construction Sites are Off-Limits

Over the next five years, work on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project will create an active construction site along the length of the floodway channel. This means workers will be on site at all times and new construction hazards will arise and change throughout the year. As a result, the public, in particular snowmobilers, should avoid travel on the floodway to ensure their safety and the safety of workers on the project.

The Manitoba Floodway Authority would like to thank you for your co-operation in keeping the construction site safe.

## Open Houses Draw Local Residents

In late September, the MFA held community meetings in Lorette and Ile des Chenes to inform residents about plans for highway bridge construction. The meetings were part of MFA's ongoing public consultation plan which was announced in August 2005.

MFA officials and project engineers talked to local residents and municipal officials about the reconstruction of the PTH 59 South and Trans-Canada

Highway bridges over the floodway. The new bridges will span a wider floodway and be able to withstand a one-in-700 year flood event. The bridges will also improve traffic safety and handle increased traffic capacity – particularly the Trans-Canada Highway Bridge. Questions about traffic delays, detours, groundwater protection and the re-use of excavated earth were also addressed.

## Rivers West Conducting Recreation Study

In September, the governments of Canada and Manitoba announced a \$175,000 investment to study plans for recreational improvements for the new, expanded Red River Floodway.

In association with the MFA, Rivers West is leading a comprehensive consultation process with recreational stakeholders and municipal governments that will study possible future recreation development of the Floodway. Rivers West started their consultation process in October. The study's final results will be completed later this year.

Rivers West is a not-for-profit organization which works to develop and promote the Red River Corridor as a destination for tourists.

## Public Invited to Access Excavated Earth from Floodway

In response to interest from the public, the MFA has recently announced that Manitobans will have an opportunity to express their interest to access excavated earth from the floodway expansion project.

“Last year we invited Manitobans to give us their ideas regarding potential value-added opportunities associated with the floodway project,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the MFA. “The single largest area of public response regarded access to excavated earth from the project.”

Based on the number of expressions of interest received and amount of earth required, the MFA will develop a process that will allow the public safe and

orderly access to the earth. The earth will be made available for free while the public will be responsible for all loading and hauling costs. The MFA will also make earth available to support three other priority areas including provincial highway construction, local municipal priorities and potential recreation opportunities. In particular, the MFA will give priority to flood protection projects.

All interested individuals and organizations wanting to access the earth should submit a formal expression of interest to the MFA by April 18, 2006. **For a copy of the expression of interest, please contact the MFA at 945-4900 or toll free 1-866-356-6355 or visit the MFA website at [www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca](http://www.floodwayauthority.mb.ca).**

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