

Jean Hanfelt
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A Brief History of the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project

Studies by the U.S. Bureau of reclamation on a transmountain diversion project began as early as 1936. However it was not until 1953 that a planning report under the name of Fryinpan-Arkansas Project led to Congressional approval. This project was to be a multiple purpose transmountain development. Its principal features included construction of the Ruedi Dam and Reservoir near Aspen, Colorado, the North and South Side Collection System, Charles H. Boustead Tunnel, Sugar Loaf Dam and Turquoise Lake, Mt. Elbert Pumped-Storage Powerplant, Pueblo Dam and Reservoir, the Fountain Valley Conduit near Colorado Springs, transmission lines and substations and permanent operating and maintenance facilities.

From notes
Dam &
Reservoir

On August 6, 1962, the bill to authorize the \$170 million Fryinpan-Arkansas Project received final approval and was formally enacted into Public Law with the signing of the measure by President John F. Kennedy on August 16, 1962. On August 17, 1962, President Kennedy made a two-hour visit to Pueblo, Colorado, where he addressed an estimated crowd of 17,000 persons at the Pueblo Public School Stadium. His address lauded the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project and the efforts of all who made the Project possible.

In October 1962 the Department of Interior announced that the Bureau of Reclamation would establish headquarters for the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project in Pueblo, Colorado, under James L. Ogilvie as Project Manager. Salida was one of the first towns to actively support Mr. Ogilvie for Project Manager because he was a native Coloradoan and conversant with the irrigation problems of the eastern Colorado farmers. As a career government employee, he was familiar with ideas and aims of the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project. Separate field offices were established at Basalt, Glenwood Springs, and Buena Vista and a laboratory was opened in Salida to accelerate construction and advanced planning on the Project.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for Ruedi Dam, ^{near Aspen} the first major feature of the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project, were held in July 1964. Howard E. McInnis was appointed Construction Engineer to head the construction office in Glenwood Springs. The Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District headquartered in Pueblo assumed responsibility for partial repayment of project costs and entered into a repayment contract in January 1965.

Two years later, in February 1966, the Fryinpan-Arkansas Project Construction Office was relocated to Salida where government personnel moved into its new construction building on Highway 50 just west of Salida. An open house to welcome the Bureau of Reclamation employees was held on March 11, 1966, culminating several years of an intensive effort on the part of Salida to have the Fryinpan Arkansas construction office located here. The Chamber of Commerce's Industrial Committee did

Jean
Aspen Contact

the first contact work with the Bureau and succeeded in getting the construction office moved here. They went insofar as to make a trip to Glenwood Springs in 1965 to meet with Bureau staff about the problem of housing in Salida. Forty families were being "mass-transferred" here and there was a shortage of available housing. The large government payroll made a positive impact in this small community who welcomed the government employees with open arms.

The Fryingpan-Arkansas Project Construction Office operated in Salida a total of eighteen years from February 1966 through May 1984 when its office doors closed. The remainder of the construction work was transferred to the Project Office in Pueblo. During eighteen years of operation, approximately 260 government employees worked under the direction of the Project Construction Engineer including field office personnel. Several employees and their families chose to stay in Salida after their retirement.

Who?