



The City of Pueblo James R DiIorio Water Reclamation Facility was awarded the EPA Performance and Innovation in the SRF Creating Environmental Success (PISCES) Award.

The PISCES Awards were created by EPA in 2005 to recognize the extraordinary successes of the States' Clean Water Revolving Fund (CWSRF) programs. The PISCES Awards highlight successfully designed projects that further the goal of clean and safe water with exceptional planning, management, and financing.

At the beginning of 2009 the City of Pueblo embarked on a project to upgrade its existing Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) to meet required effluent ammonia limits, and pre-position the City of Pueblo to comply with recently proposed nutrient quality rules. The City of Pueblo received a state revolving fund (SRF) loan for the project, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funding for Solar Power. The City of Pueblo was also able to obtain additional funding by utilizing renewable rebates from Black Hills Power and renewable energy credits allowing the City of Pueblo WRF to save the “green”.

The solar power was projected to provide 465,000 kilowatt-hours of clean, alternative power per year. Since startup the solar facility the data has produced 25% more kilowatt-hours than projected. On an annual basis, this will represent approximately 40% of the total power consumed by the current WRF. After the upgrades go on online, the solar field is expected to produce 14% of the power consumption.

Wastewater utilities consume tremendous energy in order to treat wastewater. The rising cost of energy, as well as water quality regulations that require more treatment, have forced wastewater utilities to look for innovative ways to reduce power consumption and/or the cost of power. The use of solar energy at the City of Pueblo WRF has been one way to combat rising energy costs. Additionally, the project reclaimed 2.1 acres of land on the plant site resulting from the decommissioning of an old treatment plant. This land was utilized for the solar field, which proved to be a cost effective and innovative reuse of the land. The City of Pueblo solar project provides a blueprint for other utilities to demonstrate the benefits of adding renewable energy components to any facility upgrade project.