

Lawmakers, supporters to gather

Colorado's U.S. senators will visit the area on July 16 to discuss proposed costs of the Arkansas Valley Conduit with supporters of the project.

The meeting is tentatively set for 2 p.m. at Otero Junior College.

Sens. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., and Ken Salazar, D-Colo., are both supporters of the project and want to meet about the cost of the project. Reps. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Colo., and John Salazar, D-Colo., have also been invited.

Allard introduced a bill to authorize 80 percent federal funding of the conduit in May, which would change the 100 percent local funding authorization under the original Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, operated by the Bureau of Reclamation. Salazar is co-sponsoring the bill.

Projected at more than \$250 million, the conduit plan now calls for a 140-mile gravity-fed pipeline from Pueblo Dam to Lamar, starting at 42 inches and tapering along the way. It would serve communities along the river as well as Crowley County and Eads.

Last week, Musgrave also introduced a bill to provide \$300 million under the Water Resources and Development Act. Salazar also is supporting the conduit, and last week advocated forming a new federal trust fund for water treatment, similar to highway funding.

The WRDA bill is in the House Transportation Committee and moving quickly, according to Musgrave's staff. This funding source would involve the Army Corps of Engineers, an approach Allard tried in the last session of Congress.

— Chris Woodka