

the basis for millions of jobs directly, and in secondary impact in industry and services.

At the same time, make-ready must be undertaken, to start the needed largescale projects, in particular the North American Water and Power Alliance and its related projects for the North American Desert. In 2002, LaRouche called for a “Su-

per-TVA” approach, and for a national priority to be the “Great American Desert” program—for water, power and transportation in the southwestern United States and Northern Mexico. In the long term, this kind of approach means that through man-made interventions, the “natural” resource base itself can be transformed.

Fight To Keep Dams Open

Shown here is the Columbia Lock and Dam on the Ouachita River, located in the Vicksburg District of the Army Corps of Engineers’ Lower Mississippi Division. Under Bush Administration budget cuts for the Army Corps of Engineers, this dam, and the others on the Ouachita-Black River system, were to be shut down imminently. A core of state legislators and Congressmen mobilized against the shutdown, holding an emergency field hearing April 29 in Camden, Arkansas. On May 6—just 12 days before the state primary—Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (R), under fierce pressure, announced that the White House had told him it would relent, and authorize \$8 million additionally in Fiscal Year 2005, to keep open the Columbia and three other installations. What the follow-through will be, is not known.

In fact, the Army Corps has other installations under the same threat. The American Civil Engineers Society points out that thousands of non-Federal dams and water structures are also in bad need of repair. All in all, there are some 78,000 dams in the U.S. National Inventory of Dams, which continue to age and deteriorate. There were 21 dam failures in 2001-2003. Going ahead with all the “off-the-shelf” proposals for maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement projects would mean a huge and immediate boost to job creation, and bill-of-materials orders for industry.

The worth of the projects in themselves is self-evident. Rep. Larry Prater (D-83rd) in Arkansas, a leader of the mobilization on behalf of saving the Ouachita-Black River infrastructure, participated in the April 29 emergency field hearing, and provided a dossier from the hearing to Lyndon LaRouche on May 9 in Little Rock, and to *EIR*. His wife Janice, running for the 83rd District seat in November to succeed her husband, stressed in a May 7 interview, “That is a depressed area to start with. All up and down the Ouachita River, that runs through Arkansas . . . people depend upon it for the economy in that area.”

Excerpts from the Arkansas Legislative Interim Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Economic Development’s resolution calling on Congress to restore the funding for the locks and dams on the system, indicate the importance of the dam:



“Whereas, the Ouachita-Black Navigation System provides multi-use benefits including transportation, water supply, recreational use, fish and wildlife habitat, economic development, conservation of the endangered Sparta Aquifer, flood control, and community river front redevelopment; and

“Whereas, the Ouachita-Black Navigation System is composed of 336 miles of 9-foot draft channel with four locks and dams and 23 Federal recreational areas, and, as a tributary to the Mississippi River System, it is an artery of commerce bringing products of Louisiana and Arkansas to world markets and world resources to multiple locations within the region . . . ;

“Whereas, numerous municipal and industrial water supply intakes are dependent upon the pools formed by the four locks and dams that are being abandoned under this proposal; and

“Whereas, for every dollar invested in operations and maintenance, there is a return of \$14.10 in benefits; and

“Whereas, increased highway damages, increased fuel consumption, higher accident rates, increased air pollution, and higher consumer transportation costs and, most importantly, loss of jobs will follow diversion of cargo from waterways to other modes of transportation; and

Whereas, water transportation is approximately 5.5 times more economical than trucks, and a gallon of fuel moves a ton of cargo some 514 miles on the waterways and only 59 miles by truck . . .”—*Marcia Merry Baker*