



# New SJRA Highlands Division Emergency Operations Center

By: Barry Shoemake, G&A Division

After several years of careful planning and preparation, construction of the San Jacinto River Authority's new Highlands Division Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is scheduled to be complete by the end of December, 2013. The EOC is located in east Harris County on the site of the previous Highlands Division operations facility. The previous Highlands Division office and maintenance shop, located at 1108 E. Canal Road, was constructed in the early 1980's and is being replaced with a new 10,000 square foot pre-engineered metal building designed to function as an emergency operations center, operations office, and maintenance shop facility.

The EOC is the heart of the Highlands Division operations, which delivers raw water from a large portfolio of water rights



Old Highlands Division operations building.



New Highlands EOC

owned by the Authority in Lake Houston and the Trinity River through an extensive 27-mile canal system and 1,400-acre reservoir. It is through this system that raw water is provided to a number of industri-

al, municipal, and agricultural customers in East Harris County. In fact, the Highlands Division is SJRA's oldest operating division and delivers more water each day

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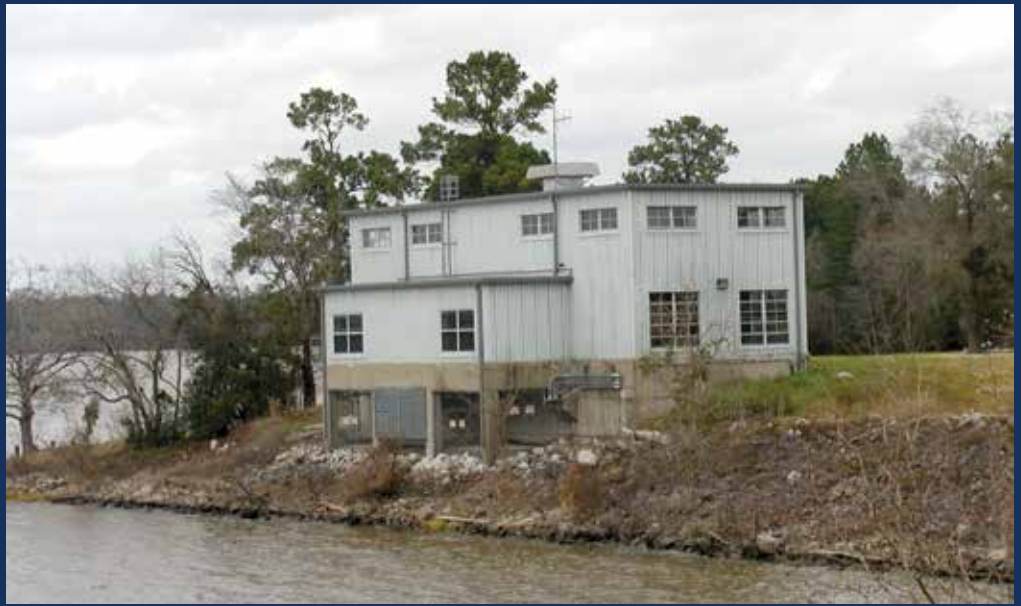
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than all of SJRA's other operating divisions combined. The sale of raw water via the Highlands Division has been SJRA's principle enterprise for almost its entire 75-year history and provided the majority of revenues for the Authority during this same period.

An interesting fact that many don't realize is that in the early 1940's, the Federal Works Agency (FWA) built this extensive canal system to supply raw water to the industry in the Ship Channel area to support the war efforts. Specifically, delivering water to Humble Oil and Refining's Baytown Refinery (now ExxonMobil), as well as other manufacturing industries in this area. At the conclusion of World War II, SJRA purchased the eastern portion of the FWA canal, while the City of Houston purchased the canal on the west side of the San Jacinto River.

While the Highlands Division holds the current SJRA record for daily water



delivery, it is SJRA's smallest division, employing only seven full time employees. Their duties include operating and maintaining the Lake Houston pump station at the headwaters of the 27-mile canal system, regulating water flow through the canal system and reservoir providing over 70 million gallons of water per day to SJRA customers, as well as monitoring 42 siphons and other water control structures. The Highlands Division is also tasked with maintaining the overall water supply system, which typically includes 1) keeping

the pumps, motors, and control systems at the Lake Houston pumping station in good working order; 2) mowing, desilting, and repairing the canal berms and levies around the reservoir; and 3) maintaining all dam safety facilities at the reservoir. Highlands Division staff is also responsible for controlling aquatic vegetation along the 27-mile canal system.

For more information, visit our website at [www.sjra.net](http://www.sjra.net), or "like" us on Facebook. ♦



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