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## Freeport-McMoRan's Sierrita Operation Helps Bring Water to FICO Through Joint Pipeline Project

Green Valley, AZ (December 3, 2020) – Freeport-McMoRan's Sierrita operations and Farmers Investment Co (FICO) are celebrating the completion of a pipeline that will deliver Central Arizona Project water to local pecan orchards and help restore the local aquifer in the Sahuarita / Green Valley area.

Freeport-McMoRan contributed \$11.2 million of the \$17.1 million privately funded pipeline that brings the Colorado River water through the Central Arizona Project to the pecan orchards of FICO. FICO is the parent company of Green Valley Pecan. The project was completed in October.

"This project is instrumental in improving regional groundwater levels in the Sahuarita / Green Valley area," said Sandy Fabritz, Director-Water Strategy for Freeport-McMoRan, who led a team that has spent nearly a decade planning, permitting and developing the pipeline. "It marks a historic achievement of bringing renewable water supplies to the region, benefiting all water users, including our tribal neighbors at the Tohono O'odham Nation's San Xavier District."

The pipeline, known as the "FCAP waterline," helps reduce groundwater pumping, restores the local aquifer balance and saves quality drinking water for future uses.

"FICO and Freeport have a long-term view of the need to sustain the aquifer in the Green Valley area," said Dick Walden, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, FICO. "By utilizing renewable CAP water supplies delivered by the FCAP waterline, more water will remain in the aquifer for all water users in the region, including our future generations."

### **Saving groundwater**

FICO's Sahuarita Farm was permitted in 2001 as a groundwater savings facility by the State of Arizona with an annual capacity of 22,000 acre-feet.

Freeport-McMoRan contributed two thirds of the funding to construct the connecting pipeline and will store up to 10,000 acre-feet of its CAP water at the FICO Groundwater Savings Facility, which will offset a portion of Sierrita's water use.

"For many years, Sierrita operations has not had access to Central Arizona Project water supply," said Kali Rhea, Chief Environmental Scientist at Freeport-McMoRan's Sierrita operations. "The pipeline was specifically built to bring CAP water to the FICO Groundwater Savings Facility, and FICO is now using this CAP water instead of groundwater. This is a net community benefit because less water will be pumped out of the local aquifer."

Pipeline construction began in 2015, but Fabritz and Walden have spent many more years building the relationship between Freeport-McMoRan and FICO and doing some considerably heavy lifting to prepare for this day, said Tim Campbell, Project Manager, FICO.

"Sandy and Dick have been the brains of this thing, working on it for almost nine years. It's not just the pipeline they developed but also the collaborative partnership they have helped develop between Freeport and FICO to benefit the sustainability of the greater community," Campbell said.

### Down the line

The 12-miles of water line takes what was an adventurous route to engineer, Rhea noted.

“There was a quite a bit of complexity. The pipelines go under the interstate, two railroad crossings, through a filtration system, and under a lot of other roads and obstacles,” Rhea said.

The long-term view for the Sahuarita / Green Valley community is that the pipeline eventually will allow FICO to use CAP water on its entire Sahuarita Farm, which includes the northern half that is served by the current waterline project.

“This is the initial phase of this waterline project. It brings 10,000 acre-feet of water into the area immediately,” Campbell said. “The next would be to extend the infrastructure to the south end of the Sahuarita farm. That extension would open up even more storage capacity and would be a huge community benefit.”

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Dick Walden, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, FICO, and Sandy Fabritz, Director-Water Strategy for Freeport-McMoRan, spent almost a decade helping to develop the pipeline and the collaborative partnership between the two companies.



Tim Campbell, Project Manager, FICO, explains the filtration system of the FCAP waterline system.



The pipeline system travels underneath an interstate, two railroad crossings, and several other roads and obstacles.