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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Army Corps of Engineers electricity projects in southern Iraq bearing fruit

By John Connor
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TALLIL, Iraq – Many power projects undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in southern Iraq are coming to fruition.

According to Allan Giese, a Corps of Engineers electricity section representative, 22 power substations of the 33/11 kV variety were completed recently in the southern area of Iraq served by the USACE Gulf Region South district. He put the total cost of these projects at \$55 million.

Examples of these facilities are the three substations completed in Thi Qar province—in Al Shatra, Al Aslah and Al Fajer. Each of these 33/11 kV substations cost \$2.4 million and includes a switchgear room, transformer room, and guardhouse in an enclosed compound with an entry gate.

“These substations are part of a master plan that the Ministry of Electricity and GRD (the USACE Gulf Region Division, headquartered in Baghdad) have created to upgrade the current electrical infrastructure here in Iraq,” said Mike Fellenz, a project engineer with GRS, which does reconstruction projects in Iraq’s nine southern provinces. “Overall, the plan is to provide increased capability and a modern electrical network that will increase the quality of life for the Iraqi people.”

In addition to the three Thi Qar facilities, there are six 33/11 kV substations in Maysan Province, three in Karbala Province, eight in Qadisiyah Province, one in



Soil is compacted for an access driveway as work nears completion on an electricity substation in Al Amarah, Iraq. (USACE photo)

Najaf province, and one in Muthanna Province, according to Giese.

Constructing these facilities was harder than anticipated, with security issues and supply problems among the factors cited as causing delays. “It was more difficult and took longer but in the end there is a revitalized electrical distribution system in southern Iraq,” said Giese.

Iraqi officials have agreed to accept all 22 of these substations, Giese said, and had accepted a dozen at last count. Then there are larger 132 kV substations. According to Stephen Pitts, a GRS project manager for Electricity, 10 such substations have been energized in southern Iraq and are expected to be turned over to Iraqi authorities before long. The total cost of these facilities is \$80 million, he said. Saying many power projects in the Iraqi south are “moving toward completion,” Pitts said an additional five 132 kV facilities costing a total of \$50 million are expected to

be finished by Christmas. And he said three more 132 kV facilities, one new and two rehabilitation jobs, are expected to be finished during the summer of 2008 at a cost of \$34 million.

Also nearing completion, about 97 percent done at present, is a 400 kV

substation in Amarah in Maysan Province, costing about \$37 million, Pitts said. He also said three overhead 132 kV feeder lines costing a total of \$53 million have been under construction, with one completed recently and the other two to be completed in the first quarter of next year



Doors and windows are installed on a switch gear and transformer room as work nears completion on an electricity substation in Al Zuite, Iraq. (USACE photo)

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