

## Floating desalination plant launched in Yanbu

*08 July 2010*

RIYADH: A water-desalination barge with a production capacity of 25,000 cubic meters per day was launched on Wednesday in Yanbu.

Fehied F. Al-Shareef, the governor of the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC), and Nabil Azmaruli, general manager of the General Directorate of Water in Madinah, launched the project which includes two barges anchored in Yanbu. The second barge will be deployed soon.

These barges are the largest floating desalination plants in the world and were built and constructed based on the directions of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah to meet high seasonal demand for potable water in any region. The ceremony was attended by a number of officials from SWCC and the General Directorate of Water in Madinah.

Al-Shareef also inspected the second floating water desalination barge which also has a production capacity of 25,000 cubic meters per day and is to be commissioned subsequently.

Al-Shareef witnessed the completion of all required work in record time with a high degree of quality ensuring the safety of the barges and their installed equipment during operation after the barges had been transferred from Shuqaiq in the southwest to Yanbu.

"These two barges will contribute to meeting the increased demand for potable water in Madinah and Yanbu," said Al-Shareef. He added that the SWCC is keen on ensuring that demand for desalinated water in Saudi Arabia is met and that SWCC has put forth strategic plans to meet this demand.

The barges were first put into operation in 2008 to support increased requirements in the western region and were anchored on the coast of Shuaibah. In 2009 the barges moved to the shores of Shuqaiq city in record time and with minimal resources, making mobility one of the most important features of the barges.

The water desalination barges are owned by BOWAREGE, a group comprising the International Barges Company for Water Desalination Ltd., which was established in partnership between ACWA Power International with 65 percent ownership and 35 percent stake owned by Rakaa Saudi Water and Power Ltd.

Abdullah A. Bajunaid, executive managing officer (EMO) of BOWAREGE, said the project, which was carried out at a total cost of more than SR370 million, has succeeded in achieving its primary objectives of focusing on supplying desalinated water for the seasonal growing demand in the coastal areas as they have been moved from two previous sites to Yanbu with the lowest cost and in minimum time.

"We are proud that in the Kingdom we have the two largest floating water desalination barges in the world. They can be rapidly transferred at any time to areas that suffer from a lack of potable water." Each of the two barges has a production capacity of 25,000 cubic meters per day of desalinated water. They are independent of each other as each barge contains all the necessary required equipment and facilities for the desalination process such as electric generators, laboratories, control rooms and living quarters for staff.

Currently SWCC is the sole client with an obligation to buy the entire production as per a signed agreement.