

THE Main CANAL

MID's Monthly Newsletter

June 2011



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Div 1: Tim Pellissier
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Div 3: Dave Long
Div 4: Suzy Hultgren
Div 5: Will Hunter-
(President)

Board Meetings
Merced Civic Center
678 W. 18th Street
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The first and third Tues-
day of every month at 9:00
am.

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Electric Customers:

Summer rates are now in effect. Please contact customer service if you need ideas on how to conserve energy or visit our website at: <http://www.mercedid.org/moneysavingenergytips>



FROM THE HEADGATE: MID GENERAL MANAGER JOHN SWEIGARD

It continues to be a pleasure to serve our electric and irrigation customers as well as our community. As you may have noticed, we have made some significant changes here at MID. From technological improvements, to new faces, we are making great strides to improve the way we conduct business for our customers and community. In this issue of the Main Canal, we have included news updates about how these efforts will benefit you and our community. As always, protecting and managing our resources – especially our water – remains a top priority.

Following three years of drought, we have been blessed with above-average rainfall. Winter and fall months saw significant accumulations, and the California Department of Water Resources has reported that the snowpack is holding well above-average water content.

This is clearly good news for the state in the wake of three years of difficult drought. As we anticipate your resource needs, we remain diligent and are taking careful steps to maximize our carryover water storage beyond 2011 irrigation deliveries.

You may have seen in the local newspa-

pers the MID Board of Directors recently approved a power supply contract with the Turlock Irrigation District (TID). This is a critical step for MID as we look toward our very bright future. Under a current power lease agreement, MID manages the hydroelectric project on Exchequer Dam and PG&E receives the power while reimbursing MID for operational and maintenance expenses. On July 1, 2014 MID will begin to procure the electricity from the New Exchequer facilities and our customers will benefit from "in-house" produced electricity. The cooperative agreement reached with TID, approved by the MID Board in February, ensures a steady supply of electricity for our customers – with competitive rates – and up to \$5 million in savings from current market pricing. It also provides MID more time to focus on additional water and power projects to benefit our community, rather than continually focusing on the next annual power purchase agreement.

Throughout its history, MID has proudly partnered with the community to benefit our neighbors and those we serve.

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Visitors Safety and Comfort Rests in Hands of MID Rangers

Each year, hundreds of thousands of campers, hikers, fishermen and boaters descend on MID's Lakes McSwain and McClure. Nestled in the quiet and scenic foothills of the Sierra, visitors know the MID Recreation Area is the perfect nearby get away for an afternoon of fishing or a weekend camping trip with the family.

Ensuring maintenance and safety are up to par for our many visitors each year is no small task. It takes landscapers, plumbers, road crews, maintenance staff, law enforcement, welders, customer service representatives and more. These tasks are all done by the same workers with one simple – but proud – title: MID Park Ranger. The rangers are tasked with maintaining 600 campsites, six boat ramps, 80 miles of shoreline, 27 miles of roadway, 34 restrooms – and MID's own systems for drinking water and sewage.

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Water Storage Project Gaining Support

A proposal to expand the water storage capacity of Lake McClure has continued to garner significant support throughout Merced County and beyond. MID, which provides water to more than 2,200 growers in our community, has proposed increasing its spillways – not the New Exchequer Dam itself – by up to 10 feet. The result would be up to an additional 70,000 acre feet of temporary storage being made available in wet years, such as what California is currently experiencing.

In March, Rep. Jeff Denham introduced legislation, H.R. 869, which would allow for federal consideration of the project. The legislation received strong bipartisan support from Rep. Dennis Cardoza. Also cosponsoring the bill were Reps. Costa, McCarthy and Nunes.

Since the legislation was introduced, the MID Board Members and staff have been active in educating the community about the project's benefits and continuing to work closely with the bill's bipartisan supporters in Congress.

"We have been blessed with a wet year, but that does not mean the states water storage and supply problems end," said MID General Manager John Sweigard. "We need to recognize that California lives on a cycle of wet years and drought years. We must take advantage of wet years like this one to prepare for the dry years. MID has found a way to do so without constructing a new dam and without asking for funding from the state or federal governments."

There would be no request for federal or state funds, nor would there be any significant environmental impacts. The additional storage space would only be utilized during wet years – likely once every three years – and for only two-to-eight weeks. The additional water would be stored approximately 1,700 feet up the Merced River in an area which already experiences high water during wet years. The area is within MID's boundaries established by FERC, and is located approximately 35 miles downstream off The Yosemite National Park entrance.

The proposed project would require review by FERC to ensure that it meets all environmental, cultural and recreational standards required by law. Currently FERC is unable to consider the project under federal law. H.R. 869 would allow for such consideration.

"We greatly appreciate the overwhelming support this proposal has received from the community and from the San Joaquin Valley's bipartisan delegation of Congressmen," said MID's Sweigard. "I think after the past years of drought, it has become clear that when it comes to farming and water supplies, the status quo cannot continue. Our region's economy depends on agriculture – and agriculture depends on water. If we can move this project forward, MID can provide that desperately needed resource in a manner that is both economically and environmentally responsible."

For more information, please visit <http://www.mercedid.org/spillwayproject>



MID's Gated Spillway

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We continue that tradition and are always looking for new ways to be of assistance.

On March 3 we were excited to host the first ever MID Road Race, a new segment of the MERCO Cycling-Classic Presented by McLane. The 12.5-mile loop, mostly on MID property, gave cyclists the opportunity to race through the scenic Sierra Nevada foothills. The proceeds directly benefit the local United Way of Merced County. We look forward to continuing this race for years to come.

Thank you for your interest in MID. Our doors are always open to those we serve.

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every day."

For information about fishing and camping at the lakes, visit us online at: www.lakemcclure.com or call (800)468-8889.

"They give a lot. They have to be dedicated to the job to be a Ranger," said Parks Director Jay Mills of his staff, noting that they are often most busy during long weekends and miss out on time with their own families in order to serve the families visiting the lakes.

"You see it," said Ranger Brian Grissom as he looked up from his dock repair work and motioned to the surrounding green hills and blue lake. "You see kids come out here with their families and truly enjoy their time together. It makes me feel good about what I do



Your water, your power – our way of life!