

# THE Main CANAL

MID's Monthly Newsletter

September 2011



WATER & POWER

#### MID Main Office

744 W. 20th Street.  
Merced, CA. 95340  
(209) 722-5761

#### Customer Service

Water: (209) 722-2720  
Electric: (209) 722-3041

#### Automated Water

(866) 825-2475

#### Websites

[www.mercedid.org](http://www.mercedid.org)  
[www.lakemcclure.com](http://www.lakemcclure.com)

#### Board of Directors

Div 1: Tim Pellissier  
Div 2: Gino Pedretti  
Div 3: Dave Long  
Div 4: Suzy Hultgren  
Div 5: Will Hunter-President

#### Board Meetings

Merced Civic Center  
678 W. 18th Street  
Merced, CA 95340

The first and third Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am.

#### Mailing Address

PO Box 2288  
Merced, CA 95344

## MID Continues Proud Tradition Providing Electricity

Refrigerators. Light bulbs. Televisions. Air conditioners. They all run on electricity. It flows overhead, underground – and on occasion – under waterways throughout Merced County.

What begins as 115,000 volts of electricity flowing from overhead transmission lines is converted into 120 or so usable volts that flow into Merced homes and businesses running coffee pots, micro-waves, computers – and

anything else plugged into an electrical outlet. Before it reaches MID customers, it has traveled along a system consisting of three substations, 35 miles of overhead transmission lines, 360 miles of underground electric lines and some 2,000 transformers and over 400 switches, breakers and fuses.

Maintaining and operating that system for more than 6,400 local residences and 1,300 businesses is a small army of engineers, map-

pers, linemen and substation technicians. The electricity flowing through MID's system comes with the benefit of competitively priced, low rates, provided by a public utility district, which is overseen by a locally elected board of directors.

"It takes a lot of work from some extremely dedicated people to keep it all working," said MID's Electric Distribution Supervisor, Jason Grace.

MID's Energy Resources Department consists of 12 linemen and technicians in the field, three distribution designers and an elec-

trical engineer.

"Every person in this department performs a vital function in keeping the system robust and reliable," said Grace.

Each day, MID's electric crews are in the field by 7:30 in the morning. Their work includes routine maintenance and inspection of the system's conductors and equipment, installing connections for new residences and

*See "Your Power" Back Page*



**A crew from MID's Energy Services Department connects power to Mercy Medical Center Merced's new hospital in North Merced.**



## FROM THE HEADGATE: MID GENERAL MANAGER JOHN SWEIGARD

What does it take to get a light bulb to turn on? It turns out it takes quite a bit. Providing electricity to Merced County residents and businesses is just one of the many things we do here at Merced Irrigation District. In this month's issue of the Main Canal we are proud to highlight just a small amount of the work our Energy Resources Department does every

day. There is also news to share with you about the upcoming National Public Power Week and our preliminary view of potential irrigation water supplies for next year. As always, we'd like to share some of the latest news about our partnerships in the local community.

*See "Headgate" Back Page*



#### 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>

*Continued From Front: "Your Power"*

businesses, responding to trouble calls and reading customers' meters. Training is paramount and never ceases for those working in the ever-evolving electrical service industry.

Most of the workers have specialized certifications that allow them to operate and work on energized high-voltage lines and equipment. Often, their work is performed at night and goes unseen by sleeping Merced County residents and MID customers.

"When scheduling new connections or system upgrades, we try to have the least impact possible on our customers, their businesses and our community," said MID's Grace.

MID has always had the ability and right to sell electricity since its inception under the California Irrigation Code. Although the original Exchequer Powerhouse came on line in 1927, 1996 began a new era for MID with Foster Farms becoming its first electrical customer. In the following years, MID continued expanding its customer base by providing reliable, competitively priced elec-

tricity to commercial, industrial, municipal and residential customers. The District has historically received electricity and related services under contract from Turlock Irrigation District



**An MID electrical technician, manager and safety supervisor examine a transformer at a Merced-area substation.**

("TID") and recently entered into a new contract with TID that will help ensure low-cost rates through July of 2014. At that time, MID will begin to receive the benefit of electricity produced at the New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project. Currently, PG&E receives the electricity produced at the Project under partnership agreements that paved the way for construction of the New Exchequer Dam and Powerhouse.

"The Board of Directors and Managers at MID who are entrusted with protecting and managing our community's water and energy resources are extremely proud of the service we provide to Merced County," said MID General Manager John Sweigard. "It will be a wonderful day when MID's constituents receive the benefits which can be derived from the New Exchequer Hydroelectric Project."

*Continued From Front: "Headgate"*

**WATER SUPPLY**

As we all know, California was blessed with a good water year and we received plenty of snowpack and rain to meet your irrigation needs. We are pleased to inform our growers that we currently expect to have a full supply of carry-over water for next year stored in Lake McClure at the end of the 2011 irrigation season. Although that is good news, we are far from celebrating. Headlines up and down California have declared the state's "drought is finally over." As Californians, we must come to terms that our state will forever be bound in a cycle of wet years and dry years. In other words, we need to look at California's water outlook as this: there is no "normal" water year. We tend to have dry years or wet years. San Joaquin Valley agriculture has thrived because irrigation companies and districts have been able to capture and store water in wet years and use it during the dry ones.

This is what continues to motivate MID to seek Congressional support of its proposal to modify its spillways on Lake McClure. As you likely know, we are requesting Congress pave the way for us to study the possibility – and any impacts – of storing an additional 70,000 acre feet of water in Lake McClure in wet years. This would be of tremendous benefit to our agriculture economy and our farming community. Our Valley Congress members from both sides of the aisle continue to support the proposal.

**PUBLIC POWER WEEK**

National Public Power Week is just around the corner. MID will

be celebrating the 25th anniversary of National Public Power Week, Oct. 2-8, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned electric utilities. Collectively, we all provide electricity on a not-for-profit basis to 46 million Americans. MID considers itself fortunate to be able to provide low-cost power to your homes and businesses at competitive rates.

Lower electricity rates attract and retain businesses that provide jobs for our Merced County residents. We are able to keep our rates reasonable because we don't pay dividends to stockholders. Instead, all profits are returned to our customers in the form of lowered rates and infrastructure reinvestment.

**IN THE COMMUNITY**

As your local public utility, we continue to believe it is absolutely critical we remain involved in the community. To that end, we were extremely pleased to host the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce monthly business connector on a beautiful summer evening in August at Lake Yosemite. Looking forward to October, we are excited about participating in the Pedal Merced Family Bicycle Fest. The annual Oct. 9 event helps draw families together for a fun day of exercise, adventure and prizes. The 10-mile ride begins at 10 a.m. at Merced High School and finishes there as well. Check-in is from 9 a.m. to 9:45. Families play games along the way and finish strong with a barbecue and prize drawings. For more information, please call 209-383-4242 or visit [www.pedalmerced.org](http://www.pedalmerced.org). As we continue to say, our resources belong to the community and our doors are always open. We look forward to every opportunity to be of assistance to you.