



Merced Irrigation District Becomes First Public Utility to Sponsor Solar Institute at UC Merced

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MID Contact: Mike Jensen
209-722-5761
mjensen@mercedid.org

UC Merced Contact: James Leonard
209-228-4406
jleonard3@ucmerced.edu

MERCED, CA – Merced Irrigation District has become the first publicly owned utility to offer its support to the University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute.

Known as UC Solar, the institute marks a multi-campus effort — headquartered at UC Merced — to develop efficient and affordable solar technologies. The institute is also working to develop solar energy leaders and entrepreneurs.

To support the effort, MID is making a \$10,000 commitment, becoming the first public utility to sponsor UC Solar.

“UC Solar was established by the University of California Office of Research to facilitate collaboration among leading solar energy researches throughout the UC system, and we are delighted that MID has elected to become a member of the UC Solar Industry Consortium,” said Sam Traina, UC Merced’s vice chancellor for research. “These researchers and their students are working together to address one of the core challenges of the 21st century — energy independence. We are excited to have been selected as the headquarter campus for the institute.”

“MID currently operates a large-scale hydroelectric project and holds a contract for wind sources,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard. “We are committed to the development of clean, renewable and — above all else — affordable energy. UC Solar appears to be heading in the right direction and we are pleased to support this effort.”

Through collaboration with the solar industry, UC Solar researchers are working to develop technologies that can quickly be brought to the marketplace. The institute began in 2010 with a \$2.25 million grant from the UC Office of Research and includes faculty from UC campuses in Merced, Berkeley, Davis, San Diego and Santa Barbara. Ongoing research and development continues to be funded by government, corporate and private philanthropy.

UC Solar is led by UC Merced professor and world-renowned solar energy researcher Roland Winston.

“Industry participation will be critical to the long-term success of UC Solar, and that is especially true of Merced Irrigation District’s involvement,” Winston said. “If we are to solve the problems that are inhibiting the adoption of solar energy systems worldwide, we have to understand those problems. The best way to gain that understanding is by working directly with system developers, installers and end users. MID’s participation will enable us to understand their needs, as well as the needs of other utilities, and it will enable us to work together to design solar solutions that make sense and add value.”

“MID wants to contribute to further developments in solar technology, as MID will be considering solar energy in the future in concert with MID’s existing renewable, clean hydroelectric and wind energy sources.” said MID General Manager Sweigard.

For more information on the UC Solar institute, please click [here](#).

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