



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Merced Irrigation District General Manager Ross Rogers Announces Retirement

October 23, 2003, Merced, California – Ross Rogers, General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of the Merced Irrigation District since 1991, has announced his retirement effective this coming spring. Mr. Rogers joined the District after successfully managing the East Contra Costa Irrigation District for 18 years and has provided 44 years of service to the water business. Although he has not set an exact retirement date, he stated the District's Board of Directors would be meeting to develop a plan to choose a successor.

"It has been my great privilege and pleasure to have served as General Manager of the District for 13 years," Mr. Rogers said. "I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked with an exceptionally supportive Board of Directors and an outstanding team of professionals at the District. This combination has given the District the reputation of being one of the most modern, effective, efficient and respected irrigation districts in California."

Mr. Rogers stated that he was proud to have led the District during the period that saw a number of significant accomplishments, including:

- Major improvements to the District's aging water delivery system, which have improved system conveyance efficiency, reduced operational discharges and upgraded the level of service to District growers;
- Development of creative water solutions and participation in important statewide water issues that have had positive environmental impacts, while preserving local water rights;
- Development of the Merced Water Supply Plan with the City of Merced and UC Merced, which, when implemented, will ensure a long-term supply of water for eastern Merced County;
- Formation of the Energy Resources Department in 1995 that successfully put the District into the retail electric service business; and
- Raising the public's awareness of the District and its role as a community asset.

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“Most of all, I am proud of the great team that we have been able to assemble at the District in the past decade,” Mr. Rogers said. “Building a strong, high quality staff and using its expertise and creativity have been my most satisfying accomplishments.” Mr. Rogers stated that this would be the team he leaves behind to carry on the work of the District into the future.

“We could not have achieved these accomplishments without support from the current and past Boards of Directors,” said Mr. Rogers. “The Directors were not only willing to appropriate the necessary funds for these projects, but encouraged innovative solutions to our region’s water concerns, and through their willingness to look forward, the District was able to make significant advancements that addressed the needs of our growers, helping to make their operations more efficient and productive.”

Mr. Rogers noted the District has always been blessed with people of vision who, since the establishment of the District in 1919, have seen the big picture. “It took a lot of foresight and vision to build Exchequer Dam in 1926 and New Exchequer and McSwain Dams in 1967,” He said. Mr. Rogers noted that he believes the Merced River Development Project (the above two dams and power plants which impound Lakes McClure and McSwain) is perhaps the most important public works project ever undertaken for the benefit of eastern Merced County.

Jack Hooper, President of the Board, commended Mr. Rogers for his leadership on both the water side and the electric side of Merced Irrigation District’s business. He said, “Ross has been instrumental in arranging water transfers to out-of-district buyers when this practice was new to California.”

Mr. Hooper stated such transfers were accomplished without curtailing deliveries to local growers. The funds from these sales have been used for three purposes:

- To build water conservation facilities resulting in water savings to create the water transfers without adverse impact to water supplies.
- To enhance water conservation, which has improved ag deliveries and the drought resistance of the District; and
- To help provide funding for the approximately \$20 million of costs associated with the re-licensing of the New Exchequer Dam in 2014.

“In addition, these water transfers have settled environmental litigation and regulatory requirements in the Bay Delta and on the Merced River without the loss of supply to our growers,” Mr. Hooper said. The Board President added that had this settlement not occurred, greater amounts of water would likely have been “taken” by resource agencies without compensation to the District.

On the energy side, Mr. Hooper noted that Mr. Rogers presided over the move into retail electric sales. “Merced Irrigation District provides retail electric service to eastern Merced County at considerable savings to local residents,” he said. “This has also reduced the cost of business to our commercial customers and household costs to our residential customers.”

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In 2014 the wholesale contract with PG&E for the New Exchequer Dam generation terminates. The District's retail system provides a home for the use of that power, helping to ensure the re-licensing of the project for all Merced Irrigation District customers.

In looking to the future, Mr. Rogers said, "Today we have a number of challenges ahead of the District." He stated that these include:

- Continuing to meet the increasing needs of agriculture for clean, affordable water;
- Preparing for re-licensing New Exchanger Dam in 2014, which will take considerable effort in time and resources;
- Expanding the Energy Resources Department, which will provide increasing revenues for the District as well as assisting the economy of eastern Merced County;
- Continuing to ensure our region has a reliable water supply through protecting its water rights and groundwater resources;
- Continuing to enhance the District's irrigation facilities to improve system efficiency and service for its growers; and
- Continuing a leadership role in regional environmental issues.

As for Mr. Rogers' plans after he leaves the District, he stated, "The fun part is figuring out what to do. My wife and I have fun just planning." He noted that he and his wife love to travel by auto and have seen the western two-thirds of the United States and much of Canada and would now like to see the rest of the story.

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