



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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MID Announces Start to 2005 Irrigation Season

Merced, California. March 17, 2005. On the heels of a wet winter, irrigation water will begin flowing through the Merced Irrigation District's (MID) 780 miles of canals and laterals on Friday, March 18, 2005 — signaling the start of the 2005 irrigation season. The 2005 irrigation season is expected to extend through October.

Due to wet conditions throughout most of the annual winter capital improvement and facility maintenance period, portions of the distribution system are still under construction. However, completion in most areas is expected in the next several weeks.

Because of excellent snowpack conditions in the Merced River watershed, modest releases are anticipated this spring to ensure Lake McClure's storage capacity is not exceeded.

On Monday, March 21, 2005, irrigation water orders will be accepted beginning at 8 a.m. and Distribution System Operators (DSOs) will be in their areas. As in previous years, irrigation orders may be placed 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the irrigation season via the MID Customer Services Department by calling (209) 722-2720 or (800) 750-2720. The 2005 irrigation water rate for in-District growers is \$15.25 per acre-foot. The Standby Fee rate is \$24 per acre.

The MID Board of Directors has determined that surplus water will be made available to Sphere-of-Influence (SOI) growers whose lands lie outside the perimeter of the District. Irrigation water rates for SOI growers are \$35 per acre-foot and \$7 per boost where applicable. Irrigation service to SOI lands may extend into August.

Any questions can be directed to MID Customer Service Supervisor Lamonte Tumbling.

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