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MID Electric Services Begins Construction of Low-Cost Power Link to Castle

Expanding Competitive Electric Distribution System Now Scheduled To Serve Livingston High School

MERCED, Calif. – Construction work kicked off recently on the first phase of the Merced Irrigation District's 115-kilovolt electric distribution system, marking a big step forward in the progress of MID Electric Services toward providing more of eastern Merced County with the benefits of low-cost power.

The Merced Union High School District also decided recently that Livingston High School will be served by MID Electric Services.

On the construction front, work has started on 24 foundations required for a like number of poles to support the 115-kilovolt electrical power line. Because these poles are located along MID canals, the foundation construction is being done early as to not interfere with the upcoming irrigation season.

"This construction start shows our commitment to building a distribution system that will deliver the benefits of low-cost power to more eastern Merced County communities, businesses and farmers," said Garith Krause, MID Assistant General Manager, Finance and Electric Services.

"Our modern, competitive distribution system will provide electricity at rates 20 to 30 percent less than those charged by the existing utility," said Krause.

Work will take place at two locations, along the Livingston Canal in the Livingston area and along the Cassad Lateral near the Castle Airport Aviation and Development Center.

Livingston is the starting point for MID's 33-mile power distribution system, which is designed to deliver reliable, low-cost power to parts of Atwater, Winton, Merced and the entire Castle Center.

Construction activity on the first portion of the 115-kilovolt loop, including the installation of a substation, is scheduled to increase in the spring and throughout the summer. MID expects to energize the 115-kv line to Castle by August, and to reach customers in the Merced area by December. Plans call for the entire loop to be completed within a year, connecting the Merced area back to Livingston.

Livingston is the focus for early development of the MID power distribution system, so the recent decision that Livingston High School will go with MID Electric Services means the benefits of low-cost power will extend further into the community.

"This certainly provides a cost savings to the district," said Terry Silva, Business Director for the Merced Union High School District. "We are confident MID will provide service that's as reliable or more reliable than what we're receiving now."

Savings from MID's low-cost power will help offset the energy costs of the planned installation of air conditioning in the school gymnasium, said Silva.

"Significant district resources go toward utilities," he said. "Any move we make that helps us control these costs ultimately benefits the students."

With the expected switch to MID electricity in June, Livingston High School will join customers already receiving MID low-cost power in that community, including the Sam's Food City shopping center, Foster Poultry Farms, the City of Livingston and other local schools.

Cesar Ancheta, Manager of Business Development for MID, said he enjoys working with local schools and the City of Livingston.

"When we help public agencies that serve the community, we're helping local residents," said Ancheta. "And providing low-cost, reliable power to businesses also delivers benefits, because we're helping the community to grow economically."

Additional businesses in Livingston have signed up to become MID Electric Services customers in the future. In the Merced area, a prominent local business, Richwood Meat Company, recently signed up as well.

More than 100 potential customers in Eastern Merced County have expressed interest in connecting up with MID Electric Services.