

# THE MAIN CANAL

S E P T E M B E R 2 0 0 2

V O L U M E 1 2 N O . 4

## District Meets 2002 Challenges



From the  
**General  
Manager's  
Desk**  
by Ross Rogers

**W**here did the summer go? It doesn't seem possible that we're winding down the irrigation season already. We feel we've had a very successful year. It now appears that we will meet or exceed projected 2002 budget deliveries of

315,000 acre-feet.

Although we have experienced a second consecutive dry year, sufficient 2001 carryover in Lake McClure, combined with on-going water

conservation programs, have allowed us to successfully meet all in-district demands.

Our new headquarters building (744 W. 20th St.) is rapidly nearing completion. The general contractor, Zumwalt Construction, Inc. of Fresno, has done a great job. We are excited, and look forward to begin our move-in during early October.

The Administration, Electric Services, and Planning departments will be moved first. Upon completion of the irrigation season, we will relocate the Finance, Irrigation Operations and Water Resources Engineering departments to the new facility. This will

prevent any interruption of service and inconvenience to our growers.

Our budget process is underway for 2003. We will also be working on our on-going five-year business plan, 2003-2007. More on that later.

At this time, the water supply situation for next year could be a problem. However, we do have some degree of optimism from our weather experts who are predicting a moderate El Niño year in 2003 (see story on page 3). With reasonable snow pack and rainfall in our watershed above Lake McClure, we will be all right.

## Hydroelectric Staff Paints U.S. Flag



In tribute to the heroes of 9-11 the District's Hydroelectric crew at New Exchequer painted this American flag inside the powerhouse. It is so realistic some people think it is not a painting.

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## Old Exchequer Dam to Emerge from the Depths

After eight years of slumber beneath hundreds of feet of water, the original Exchequer Dam is expected to again be visible by the end of October. Old Exchequer Dam, a concrete gravity arch dam completed in 1926, now acts as reinforcement to the upstream toe of New Exchequer Dam which was completed in 1967. The old dam impounded a maximum of 281,200 acre feet. With the completion of New Exchequer Dam, Merced Irrigation District growers now enjoy the security of Lake McClure which provides storage up to 1,024,600 acre feet. Due to two consecutive dry years of snow-melt inflow combined with two years of robust water sales, Lake McClure storage is now down to 391,000 acre feet, or 38% of capacity. This year's April through July runoff from the high Sierras to the lake totaled 426,700 acre feet, or 66% of the 98-year average. 2001 April through July inflow was only 357,900 acre feet or 56% of average. With the end of the 2002 irrigation season fast approaching, lake storage is expected to drop to 290,000 acre feet, a level not seen since November 1994. A steep drop in inflow to the lake in mid-July also caused the early termination of surplus surface water sales to lands outside the Merced Irrigation District boundaries.



Both of the dams can be seen in the photo above. The Old Exchequer Dam is curved and shown in the forefront of New Exchequer Dam.

*Due to two consecutive dry years of snow-melt inflow combined with two years of robust water sales, Lake McClure is now down to 391,000 acre feet, or thirty-eight percent of capacity.*



Old Exchequer Dam

# District Salutes Employees Of The Quarter

## 1st Quarter



**Tim Townsend** has worked at the New Exchequer Dam for four years as a Roving Operator and has become a very proficient powerhouse operator. He understands the operation of hydroelectric generators and the water regulation necessary to meet irrigation demands while keeping the Merced River flows balanced as required.

Tim also handles various electrical maintenance projects and is the safety coordinator for the Hydroelectric Project. He works very well with all Project and District employees and is always very willing to help others.

## 2nd Quarter



**Paula Reiner** began her employment with the District in 1999. Her courteousness, professionalism and patience are evident to those who interact with her. Among her duties are: assisting with the Main Canal Newsletter; maintaining the water quality database and the District Board minutes and tracking expenses for both the Engineering and Water Conservation Departments.

Paula's latest accomplishment was her unwavering effort in completing the District Groundwater Storage Program Construction Grant Application in a highly, professional manner for submission to the California Department of Water Resources. She was recently promoted to Water Resources Operations Trainee.

## 3rd Quarter



**Rick Labuga** began his employment with the District in the Pump Department in 1976 as a Utilityman I. After 16 years in the Pump Department, Rick transferred to the Maintenance Department, where he became very efficient with cement and pipe work. Rick was promoted to his current position as Foreman in the Maintenance Department in 1998.

Rick has proven to be a valuable asset to the District, particularly over the last four years as a Foreman.

# New Hires

## Director of Finance



The Merced Irrigation District is pleased to introduce **Jeff Bixby**, CPA, as the new Director of Finance. Jeff is a native of North Dakota

who graduated from California State University, Hayward in 1986 with honors. Previously, he was the Corporate Controller for HomeTech Medical Services in Northern California. Earlier, he was a financial and accounting consultant to companies such as Sutter Health and NEC Electronics. From 1995-1999 he was a Senior Business Analyst with Foundation Health Systems, a Fortune 500 healthcare industry leader in Rancho Cordova. Jeff has been a Certified Public Accountant since 1995. "Jeff is an important addition to our management team," noted Ross Rogers, General Manager. "He brings 10 years of accounting and financial management experience to the District. His background and experience will be invaluable to the District as we continue to grow."

## Manager of Business Development, Electric Services



One of Merced I.D.'s newest staff members is **Jem Brown**. Jem was born in Wisconsin and began his career in the electric industry at Illinois Power

Company. Jem then worked at North Carolina Electric Cooperatives in Raleigh from September 1997 to July 2002. His position as Vice President of Business Development included work with 26 electric co-ops and working within the Northeastern United States selling power and energy services in deregulated markets.

"Jem's experience made him a top candidate for the District's Manager of Business Development, Electric Services," said Garith Krause, Assistant General Manager, Energy Resources. "He brings tremendous experience and will be a great asset to our team."

## NOAA Forecasts Moderate El Niño

According to a recent news release from the Climate Prediction Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a moderate El Niño is anticipated to affect our weather in early 2003. Jim Laver, Director of the Climate Prediction Center said that he believes the El Niño is expected to last at least

into early 2003. He added that the climate phenomenon will be a weaker version of the powerful El Niño of 1997-98. However, significant moisture will not arrive soon. A 90-day forecast through the end of November calls for below normal precipitation and above normal temperatures.

## District Board of Directors

Tom Reta (*Secretary*) Division 1  
Tim Pellissier Division 2  
Jack Hooper (*President*) Division 3  
Stan Morimoto Division 4  
Billy Pimentel (*Vice-Pres.*) Division 5

## District Staff At Your Service

Ross Rogers  
*General Manager & CEO*

Ted Selb  
*Assistant General Manager,  
Water Resources*

Garith Krause  
*Assistant General Manager,  
Energy Resources*

Bob Blum  
*Director of Administrative Services*

Bob Acker  
*Director of Facilities and Planning*

Jeff Bixby  
*Director of Finance*

Mike Bermingham  
*Parks Manager*

Bobby Mooneyham  
*Hydroelectric Project Manager*

Steve Dunn  
*Manager of Engineering & Operations  
Electric Services*

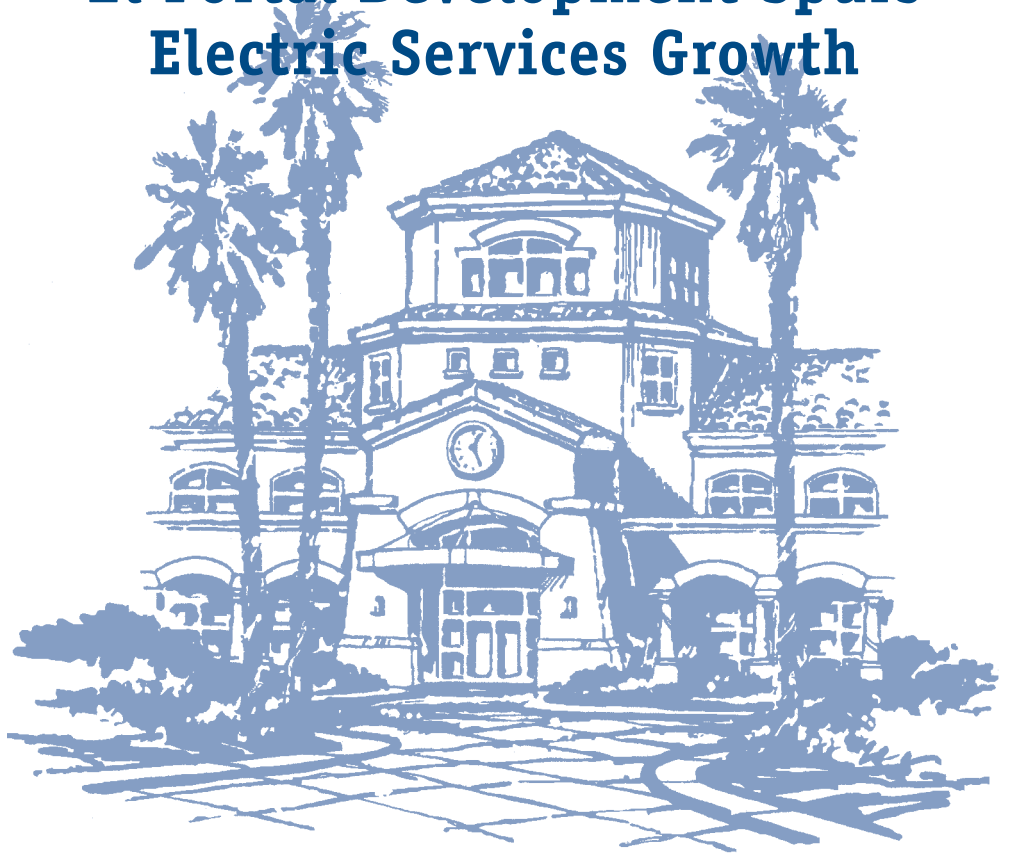
Jem Brown  
*Manager of Business Development  
Electric Services*

Hicham ElTal  
*Manager of Engineering  
Water Resources*

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# El Portal Development Spurs Electric Services Growth



**M**erced Irrigation District's Electric Services continues to expand with its recent addition of the contract with the Plaza at El Portal. Merced I.D. will be the sole provider of electricity to the upscale business park. The project will include professional and commercial offices, two sit-down restaurants, a coffee shop and an inn that will be surrounded by palm trees, water and open spaces compli-

mented by Santa Barbara Mission-style architecture. "The addition of the Plaza at El Portal is an important expansion to our distribution system," said Garith Krause, Assistant General Manager, Energy Resources. "The development will bring approximately 25 to 30 new customer accounts to the District with an annual projected load of over 3.5 million kWh."

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**DISTRICT**

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