

THE Current



MID's Monthly Newsletter

May 2016



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The first Tuesday of
every month at 10:00 am

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MID's Electric Services: *Lighting the Way for 20 years*



This month marks 20 years that MID has been providing electricity to the community. We invite you to join us in celebrating the benefits of community owned public power.

In May of 1996 MID began selling electricity to its first customer. Since then, the District has built an electric system that serves publicly owned electricity to more than 8,000 residents and businesses. This May marks 20 years that MID has been lighting the way. We invite you to join with us in celebrating this milestone anniversary and the benefits of community-owned public power.

Throughout the month of May, we invite you to visit us in our lobby and online at

MIDLightsTheWay.com to learn more about the benefits of public power and to receive free tips about saving energy – and saving money.

PUBLIC POWER – WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?
Public power means that there are no profits – it also means local decision making. Unlike investor-owned utilities, there are no investors, no stock shares and no dividends. Power is provided “at the cost of service” with no-mark-ups. The revenue generated by MID is returned to the benefit of all **See “20 Years” Back Page**

FROM THE HEADGATE: MID GENERAL MANAGER JOHN SWEIGARD

After four years of drought, MID saw its first significant storms since 2011. The District has allocated 275,000 acre feet of water to growers. In addition to the direct benefit to local agriculture, the allocation will benefit the groundwater for our entire community. Although this winter's storms have benefitted MID and other water users throughout the state, the

District continues to face challenges to its water supply through ongoing state regulations.

Priced at \$66 per acre foot, Class I Growers will receive a surface-water allocation of 4 acre-feet per acre. Class II Growers will receive a surface-water **See “Headgate” Back Page**

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electric customers through investments in the electric system and providing the lowest possible rates.

CLEAN ENERGY – AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

MID continues to be a strong supporter and advocate for clean, renewable energy. Since its inception, MID has maintained a steady eye on the future. That philosophy holds just as true today

as it did in the earliest days of the District’s formation. We are committed to providing the most affordable clean energy possible, to protect our environment now and for future generations. MID produces up to 110 megawatts of zero-emission hydroelectric energy. Additionally, MID holds contracts for wind energy produced by Iberdrola Renewables, and is proud to be the first public utility to sponsor and partner with the University of California Advanced

Solar Technologies Institute based at UC Merced.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS

The Merced Irrigation District is dedicated to helping its residential customers keep their electric bills low. Buying ENERGY STAR appliances is a great way to cut your energy costs and help conserve energy. To learn more, visit the MID lobby during business hours, or learn more at MIDSavesYouMoney.com

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allocation of 2 acre-feet per acre.

The allocation was made as the MID Board of Directors adopted an \$87,145,000 consolidated budget for the coming fiscal year.

MID’s Lake McClure serves as the districts primary source of stored surface water. Located on the Merced River 23 miles north of the city of Merced, it also serves as MID’s primary source for hydroelectric power. Over the last four years, the severe drought had caused Lake McClure to fall to record-low levels. In February of 2015, the reservoir fell to just 6 percent of capacity, setting a record-low. This spring, the reservoir has risen to more than 40 percent capacity, but still remains below the average for this time of year. With approximately 450,000 acre feet in storage at the 1 million acre-foot reservoir, the Department of Water Resources projects another 400,000 acre feet of runoff throughout spring and summer.

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION RELICENSING

In December 2015, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the relicensing of MID’s New Exchequer Merced River Hydroelectric Project. The federal proposal stands to affect every aspect of MID water and hydroelectric operations. Potential impacts range from irrigation supplies and finances to hydroelectric generation and environmental stewardship of the Merced River.

Among other things, the EIS includes:

- new requirements related to wildlife protection



The 1920s-era Exchequer Dam is again below water after emerging in the drought in 2013.

- increased water-release requirements from the reservoir
- obligations to develop and monitor a variety of new plant and animal management plans
- new environmental mitigation measures

The relicensing effort still faces several challenges moving ahead. Regulatory processes remain, which involve consultations with the State Water Resources Control Board, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The State Water Resources Control Board is expected to soon release its latest plan to increase flows from the Merced River to the Bay Delta and away from our community’s use. MID has developed an alternative “straw man” – or settlement proposal – which would include significant habitat restoration on the Merced River, investments in the Merced River Salmon Hatchery and more. We are awaiting a response from conservation organizations as well as and state and federal agencies.

WATER RESOURCES MANGEMENT PLAN

For more than a year, MID has been in the development phases of a long-range Water Resources Management Plan. Once completed, it will help guide future decisions about MID’s operations and its financial management. A variety of goals have been developed through active involvement of a

variety of stakeholders: a number of operational and facility improvements have been identified to meet those goals. These options have included a thorough examination and discussion of the following:

- Water rights
- Local on-farm systems and practices
- Water system models
- Groundwater impacts
- Land use
- Financial goals, obligations and future funding options
- Customer and community input

Important products of the water resources management planning process have been the development of both a water resources modeling tool and a financial modeling tool. They will allow MID’s Board, staff and the public to examine the impacts of various future financial, operational, and water management decisions. Work will continue on MID’s water resources management plan during the FY 2016 year.