



MID Named Large Business of the Year by Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce

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MERCED, CA – The Merced Irrigation District has been named Large Business of the Year for 2011 by the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce.

“This year’s business of the year award marks a bit of a departure from our traditional recognitions,” said Chamber Board President David Melin during the Chamber’s annual installation dinner on Friday June 29. “However, in the past year, MID has set a sterling example of business and community involvement that has so significantly benefited Merced County that it could not be overlooked.”

The Chamber noted that in difficult economic times, MID had not only been successful but also significantly given back to the community.

MID owns, operates and maintains the New Exchequer and McSwain reservoirs and hydroelectric facilities. The District provides irrigation water to more than 2,000 growers, and low-cost electricity to 1,300 businesses and 6,000 residences in Merced County.

“At every level, MID has shown itself to be a proven community partner,” said Melin

The Chamber noted that MID had shown strong initiative as a supporter of clean renewable energy – while at the same time fighting back against Sacramento mandates that would increase costs to businesses and residents in Merced County. The Chamber also commended MID for its successful efforts to lobby Congress this year for increased water storage, which would provide a host of benefits to the entire community.

Among other undertakings by MID:

- It has helped add an additional day of racing and sponsorship of the MERCOCycling Classic, a significant generator of economic activity for the community each year.

- It's the first public utility to sponsor the UC Solar Institute at UC Merced.
- It has become a major sponsor of the county fair, both helping the community and providing MID an opportunity to educate the public about energy saving programs, solar opportunities and canal safety.
- MID and its staff has devoted their personal time and resources to assisting local nonprofit organizations: United Way of Merced County, CASA of Merced County, the Boys and Girls Club and many others.

The Chamber noted that most recently, when the community rallied behind the city's efforts to re-open McNamara Pool, MID agreed to help contribute to the effort and conduct its annual water and canal safety day there. Additionally, its managers purchased \$600 in vouchers allowing 600 of the community's youth to swim for free this summer.

Through its cost-cutting measures and effective management, MID has still managed to maintain affordable water and electric rates. It's most recent external audit showed the District to be on solid footing with healthy reserves, paying off its debt and was given the highest opinion an outside auditor can provide. For the 2010-11 calendar year, MID's net assets increased by \$11.6 million while long-term debt decreased by \$1.8 million.

"Rather than asking the question, 'when will the economy improve?'" MID asked – and answered – the question, 'how can we work to improve the economy right now?'" said Melin.

MID Vice Chairman Wil Hunter and Dave Long accepted the award.

"This is a significant honor for MID," said Director Hunter at the dinner event. "MID, like everyone else, has faced difficult decisions during the down economy. MID's managers and employees have arisen to the challenge, and they have succeeded."

Director Dave Long echoed similar sentiments as he jointly accepted the award.

"It is clear from this recognition that our management team and employees are meeting and exceeding the expectations of our fellow business partners and our community," he said. "We thank you for this tremendous recognition."

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