

THE Current

Spring 2020

MID MERCED
IRRIGATION
DISTRICT
WATER & POWER

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Multiple water projects are completed

From the second irrigation season ends, the clock begins ticking. There is a limited time to perform crucial maintenance and complete projects on MID's water distribution system before it again fills for next irrigation season. Further compounding the challenge are unpredictable winter storms that can delay construction projects and other maintenance on the 100-year-old system. With more than 800 miles of water distribution facilities, there is no shortage of work to do in a short window of time. The goal is always the same: to provide the most efficient delivery of water to our growers

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74 new delivery gates were installed over the winter.

Winter work by the numbers

- ◆ 1,100 miles of vegetation sprayed
- ◆ 900 miles of vegetation mowed
- ◆ 200 miles of canal and right of way graded
- ◆ 75 miles of canals cleaned out
- ◆ 74 new delivery gates installed
- ◆ 28 canal breaks contained and repaired
- ◆ 2 miles of canal banks restored to grade
- ◆ 1 mile of canal relined with concrete

Budget and water rate adopted in March

At its March meeting, the Merced Irrigation District Board of Directors adopted a \$105 million budget for its 2021 fiscal year. No allocation restrictions were

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MID canals began filling on March 1, the start of Irrigation season.

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while conserving as much water as possible.

Here are some of the key projects that MID has been working on.

Le Grand and Planada Canal Bifurcation Water Regulating Reservoir

In January, construction began on the 120-acre-foot Le Grand and Planada Canal Bifurcation Water Regulating Reservoir. Located north of Planada on the Le Grand Canal, it is a key component of the District's long-range Water Resources Management Plan. The reservoir will enhance irrigation flexibility for MID growers in the Planada and Le Grand areas by locally storing water to better match supply and demand. It is scheduled to be completed in late 2020.

Hammett Lateral Pipeline

During the winter months, MID was busy on the Hammett Lateral Pipeline construction project. The project involved pipelining approximately

2,800 feet of the Hammett Lateral with a 66-inch diameter reinforced concrete pipeline assembly that runs through the Livingston area. Benefits of the project include water conservation and reduced future maintenance.

Le Grand Canal Headworks Project

The Le Grand Canal Headworks project was recently completed and is intended to provide improved flow measurement and flow control at the head of one of the District's large arterial canals, the Le Grand Canal, where it begins flowing from Lake Yosemite. The project included enhancements to provide uniform flow through the sluice gates, as well as modifications to the mechanical gate actuators and remote operation (SCADA) controls. The improved flow measurement will improve service to downstream growers

and improve water operation efficiency.

Traveling Screens

Traveling screens serve a critical role in removing debris before water enters key headworks or other facilities. Over the winter, MID replaced several traveling screens located upstream of key booster pump stations on MID canals. Many of the screens were up to 20 years old, requiring extensive maintenance.

Deckert Lateral Improvements

Significant work was undertaken this winter to the lower Deckert Lateral along Applegate Road south of Atwater. Enhancements to the lateral will allow it to receive increased flows from the Atwater Drain/Tin Flume Lateral bypass pump station. The station was installed in 2019 with support from a federal grant and will result in more than 6,600 acre-feet of water being conserved in Lake McClure each year.

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placed on in-District water availability this season.

MID began taking water orders from in-District growers on March 1 due to dry conditions. All water orders made by District growers will be charged at \$50 per acre foot, beginning at midnight Tuesday, March 10.

Additionally, the Board made water available for temporary water transfer to potential out-of-District purchasers within the Merced groundwater basin. Depending on water year type and

timing, and subject to certain restrictions, water may be available at a price of \$180 per acre foot, or \$300 per acre foot. Potential purchasers should contact MID for specific details.

The budget adopted by the MID Board of Directors responds to multiple financial challenges caused by hydrology and energy markets this year. The increased cost of materials, construction and professional services have also contributed to overall increased operating costs for the District. Meanwhile, MID expects to see increased costs associat-

ed with protecting its water rights, both locally and at the state level.

In meeting its budgetary needs, the Board agreed to delay some capital improvement projects. The MID budget includes revenues of approximately \$22.6 million from its Water Resources Department, \$12.4 million from the Hydroelectric Department and approximately \$66.9 million from the Energy Resources Department. MID will continue meeting all its bond covenant requirements and cash reserve guidelines for fiscal year 2021.