

THE Current

Winter 2020



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Year in Review: MID celebrates 100 years

In the past year, Merced Irrigation District has been recognized for its strong financial management. It's been recognized as both business and organization of the year by leaders of the local business community. And it's successfully continued to advocate policies that protect rates for water and electric customers. All this while celebrating the District's 100-year anniversary.

"It's been a great year for the District," said MID General Manager John Sweigard. "From our Board of Directors to our employees, we are proud of the service we've provided our community."

100 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In November 1919, the community overwhelmingly voted in support of forming the Merced Irrigation District. Exactly 100 years later,



The Courthouse Museum is hosting an exhibit on the first 100 years of MID history from now through February.

in November of 2019, an enormous crowd again showed their support for MID. This time it was at the Merced County Historical Museum for a community celebration and the opening of an exhibit dedicated to the first 100 years of MID's history.

"This exhibit has been a marvelous collaboration between the Courthouse Museum and the District," said Museum Director Sarah Lim.

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MID working to comply with state groundwater law

Merced Irrigation District is continuing to work toward compliance with a state mandate to address over-pumping of regional groundwater. MID is a major contributor to replenishing local groundwater using water from

Lake McClure. The California Sustainable Groundwater Management Act requires communities with overdrafted groundwater to be sustainable by 2040. This means that a community is not removing more water from

the ground than can be replenished. Under the state law, all local groundwater pumpers in the basin are expected to cooperate. MID has joined the Merced Irrigation Urban Groundwater Sustainability

See "Groundwater"

Continued From Front: "100 years"

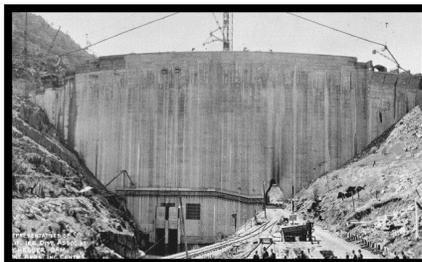
"The rich history of MID is a testament to the vision and hard work of its dedicated employees and leaders past and present. The Museum is honored to tell their stories in this history display."

Among speakers for the November exhibit opening and celebration were Merced Mayor Mike Murphy; County Supervisor Daron McDaniel; Farm Bureau President Gino Pedretti III; as well as Greater Chamber of Commerce President Joe Ramirez, and Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President Juan Roman. From MID, Board President Scott Koehn and General Manager John Sweigard spoke.

After it was established in 1919, MID purchased the Crocker Huffman Land and Water Company irrigation system, and constructed the original Exchequer Dam on the Merced River at the site of the Exchequer Mining Co. In the late-1960s, the District built the larger New Exchequer Dam, creating a bigger reservoir – Lake McClure – for local water supply and flood control.

Now, 100 years since its formation, MID provides irrigation water to approximately 2,200 growers in eastern Merced County and non-profit, public electricity to approximately 10,000 residential and commercial customers. MID continues to advocate for responsible environmental stewardship and restoration, and remains a key stakeholder in developing solutions to local groundwater challenges.

More information can be found at www.MIDisThere.com



The original Exchequer Dam under construction in the 1920s.

FINANCIAL SUCCESSES

Municipal bonds used to finance Merced Irrigation District infrastructure projects were upgraded in October by S&P Global Ratings, reflecting MID's ongoing efforts to contain costs and maintain the strongest financial management possible.

The improved bond ratings should benefit MID customers by reducing future borrowing costs for funding associated with larger District infrastructure enhancement projects.

In April 2019, for the fourth consecutive year, MID received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting through the Government Finance Officers Association.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Over the years, MID has

remained committed to the community it serves and worked to remain a strong civic partner.

This year, MID was selected by the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce as the Business of the Year. It was also selected by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce as the Organization of the Year.

MERCED DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY

In the spring of 2019, Merced Irrigation District and the City of Merced signed a Memorandum of Understanding signaling their intent to review and possibly provide Merced River water as a source of municipal water. Specifically, the MOU formally indicates an intent to pursue a water sale agreement. Before the City of Merced began using wells for its water supply, it had depended on the water in Lake Yosemite.

PUBLIC POWER BENEFITS

Wildfires and blackouts across the state related to large investor owned utilities have created significant interest in public utilities such as MID: all decisions are made locally, there are no profits and no investors. The electric bills of MID customers remain about 20 percent less than customers of large corporate utilities. MID is closely watching Sacramento policy decisions that could affect local rates or operations of public utilities such as MID.

Continued: "Groundwater"

Agency, or "MIUGSA." The agency is tasked with addressing local groundwater management in much of eastern Merced County. Its members include the cities of Atwater; Livingston; Merced; Le Grand and Planada Community Services

Districts; and Winton Water and Sanitary District.

According to analysis in the draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan, the local groundwater is being overdrafted by about 200,000 acre feet per year, mostly outside of MID. That's the same amount of

water that would fill Lake Yosemite about 25 times.

Several projects have been identified in the draft sustainability plan to both monitor and support groundwater replenishment. Groundwater pumping reduction from both domestic and agricultural

users is expected in the coming years to help comply with the state mandate. Additional information will be provided as it becomes available. To learn more, please visit www.miugsa.org