



TID TIDINGS

Newsletter of the Tulare Irrigation District

GOODBYE TO SAN JOAQUIN AVENUE

Board of Directors

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The Board of Directors holds regular public meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 9:00 am at the District office in Tulare.

TID's 60-year home at 1350 W. San Joaquin Ave. is now a thing of the past. Started in the spring of last year, construction at our new site was essentially complete by mid-February. We proceeded to set up shop here shortly thereafter and have been fully operational since the first week of March.

As is the case with most large-scale construction jobs, we had some hitches along the way, but in the end we came in at a total cost of \$3.54 million, just under our budget for the project. A hefty sum indeed, but it included all design, buildings, fencing, paving, landscaping, utility hook-ups, and some of the shop equipment that had to be replaced as part of the move. The entire cost was paid for out of District cash reserves and the Board of Directors does not foresee the need to raise assessment or water rates to pay for the project. Also aiding the financing was the sale of TID's old lot to the City of Tulare, offsetting in large measure the cost of the 40 acres purchased at our new location. We'll see additional revenue too when the 10 acres to the east of the new yard—not needed for O&M nor the planned on-site recharge basin—is sold off.



TID's new home at 6826 Avenue 240

TID staff played a significant role in the project, from the planning/permitting stages right through to its construction. Since last May, we've had crews involved in grading, utility trenching, paving, construction of the weed control/storage building and, ongoing as we speak, landscaping and associated irrigation lines. We were prepared to do more, but the starts and stops of the 2009 irrigation season took precedence and outside contractor assistance came in as some of our crewmen went back into ditch tending.

As noted earlier, the District got some 60 years out of the old location at the corner of West St. and San Joaquin Ave., a 4-acre plot of land deeded over to us by the City of Tulare way back when. It has served its purpose and in the near future the City has plans for a multi-residence housing development located there. Our new facility should stand for many decades to come and TID's current employees, being the first of several generations of District staffing to occupy the new site, express sincere thanks to the area's landowners and farmers for the use of their money in this endeavor. We trust that the level of service to be provided through these new accommodations will be much enhanced from what it has been in the past.

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Open House Coming!

Mark Friday, May 14th on your calendars for an open house and tour of TID's new facilities. Food and refreshments to be provided. Valov Farming, Clarklind Farms and George Watte and Sons have offered to supply the meat and provide their BBQ skills.

McKay Point Control Facilities

The Kaweah & St Johns Rivers Assn. (K&SJRA), in partnership with Kaweah Delta WCD, has been participating in an ambitious project to replace the water diversion facilities at McKay Pt. Located about 3 miles below Terminus Dam on the mainstem of Kaweah River, McKay Pt. is the historic juncture where the river splits into the St. Johns branch to the northwest and the Lower Kaweah branch to the southwest. K&SJRA, of which TID is a member, has had as a challenge for decades the control of flows at this juncture to divert what's needed down both river branches to meet irrigation demands on each. The existing structures being replaced were modified over the years and worked reasonably well but were considered to rest on older concrete foundations whose life span was coming to an end. Moreover, the operational limitations of these structures, particularly in flood-flow conditions, made life difficult and downright hazardous for KDWCD personnel who have been assigned to man the structures 24/7 when water was being released from the dam or raging down from Dry Creek below the dam.



New structure on the Lower Kaweah side, with gates installed

The new facilities will feature automatically-controlled flap gates – nine on each river branch – that will regulate water flows to meet daily water orders. The other key feature is a hefty bridge deck across the top of each structure that will allow heavy equipment to be positioned in locations to remove large debris that can collect at the structures during flood flows. Such debris in the past could not be so readily or safely removed, posing substantial risk to the integrity of the structures.

The period of construction was chosen as to impose the least disruption to the Kaweah water users' normal delivery operations which generally occur during May through August. When the run was over last summer, work began in earnest and, by October, things were well underway. What to do about wintertime flows represented another challenge and TID, with its access to spreading basins and multiple delivery points along the river system, became part of the solution. Frequent releases from Terminus Dam were staged to avoid higher rates as might have been required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the federal entity with authority over lake operations during the rainy period of the year. The problem was that water needed to be shunted around the construction site and sent down the St. Johns River branch, eliminating the opportunity for many of the river units to take delivery of their share of the water. TID offered up a proposal to buy their water or exchange it on a three-for-one return basis, and this became the operational plan during construction. While other units stepped up as well to buy water, TID was able to acquire the lion's share and purchased 15,000 AF and exchanged another 25,000 AF when all was said and done and the flood release period wrapped up. We were able to put the water to good use by meeting some irrigation demands and sending water to recharge basins, including those utilized in TID's program with the City of Tulare.



RAYMOND THOMPSON RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS WITH THE DISTRICT

Back in 1975 a young man decided to try his hand at maintaining TID's many ditches and basins. He also thought that he would give running water a try. TID is very thankful that Mr. Thompson decided to "give us a try" because his top-notch skills at running all of the equipment at TID has made him a valuable employee.

A celebration was recently held in honor of Mr. Thompson where a resolution was presented to him for his many years of hard work and dedication to the District. Mr. Thompson's retirement plans include traveling with his wife Louise, home projects and part-time work at TID. Thank you, Raymond, for a job well done and happy retirement!

WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK

After three years of below-average snowfall and runoff into local reservoirs, this year's winter has shaped up to offer welcome relief. It's not a record setter by any means nor comparable to the back-to-back really wet years of 2005 and 2006, but should provide a decent surface water supply nonetheless. Overall in the southern Sierras, we're seeing more snow at lower elevations, so spring temperatures will be a key factor in determining when the snow pack melts and finds its way into streams and rivers headed towards reservoir storage. Whether or not the flows can all be stored for later scheduled summer deliveries or must pass on and be diverted now depends on how much of this storage can be filled rather than remain empty as flood space reservation.

The Kaweah watershed has fared among the best in the region, with the snowpack standing at 135% of average. The San Joaquin is not far behind at 115%. Because of the previous dry years, however, runoff projections are somewhat less, and DWR hydrologists are projecting about 110% of average for the April through July flow period.

As of this writing, our Friant allocation from USBR is 100% of our Class 1 supply (30,000 AF) and somewhere between 10 and 20% of our Class 2 supply (14,100 to 28,200 AF). Much of the Class 2 water may need to be taken during April and May as Millerton Lake cannot hold all of the flows until later without spilling. TID's Kaweah water rights may yield upwards of 80,000 AF, and it looks like most if not all of this can be retained behind Terminus Dam without any further winter/spring "flood" releases forcing water out to maintain flood reservation space. All in all, we are looking at a summer irrigation run lasting a good two months and maybe more. More than likely, the run may begin in April with Friant water and continue on in combination with Kaweah water.

"As of this writing, our Friant allocation from USBR is 100% Class 1 and an estimated 10-20% Class 2."



**SAVE THE DATE—
MAY 14TH — TID'S OPEN HOUSE!**



Delta Problems—Who's to Blame?

At the request last fall by Congress, the National Research Council (NRC) has recently published a report on the health of the Delta and its water supply and fishery needs. Formed in 1916, the NRC was established to advise the federal government on issues of science and technology. Congress felt it was time for an independent panel of scientists to offer a fresh perspective on what's happening in the Delta and what may be done to revive its fisheries and yet restore the federal and state water project exports that many parts of the state have come to depend on. While the report states there is scientific justification in considering Delta flows and water export operations in actions to be taken to sustain the fisheries, it is critical of the lack of correlation between fishery improvements and water export cutbacks. More compelling, it makes numerous references to the fact that many other factors, called "stressors," are affecting the fisheries and overall environment in the Delta. These include agriculture and man-made infrastructure in and upstream of the Delta, water pollution from Bay area and other upstream discharges, and non-native/introduced species. A second NRC report is due late in 2011 which is to deal with these other stressors and their contributions to the fishery declines. It has been suspected for many years that these other factors, many of which were occurring well ahead of the development of the CVP and SWP, were having significant impacts on the Delta's environment, and it appears that now finally they are getting the attention they deserve.

The NRC report is being read many different ways by those with divergent points of view; however, the tide would appear to be turning on the self-serving notion that the CVP and SWP water projects are the prime causes of the Delta's woes. Our Friant water supplies from the San Joaquin River can be directly impacted were Delta water exports to further decline, and the NRC findings are good news in the struggle to maintain the stability of our CVP imported water supplies so important to us and to Tulare County in general.

*Tulare Irrigation District
6826 Avenue 240
Tulare, California 93274*

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Visit Us At...
www.tulareid.org



Founded in 1889, Tulare ID was one of the first irrigation districts in California. Its purpose is to serve the water supply needs of the greater Tulare area, a rich and agriculturally diverse region within the Southern San Joaquin Valley. The water provided comes locally from the Kaweah River and is also imported from the Federal Central Valley Project.

Important Dates to Remember

April	Bureau of Reclamation landholder forms must be on file before receiving Federal water 5th—Start of Water Run
May	1st—2nd Installment Reminder Notice Mailed 14th—TID's Open House
June	20th—2nd Installment Due