



SOUTH SAN JOAQUIN
IRRIGATION DISTRICT

THE POWER OF WATER:
*Celebrating a
Century of Service*

SSJID Spring 2010 Irrigation Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 1

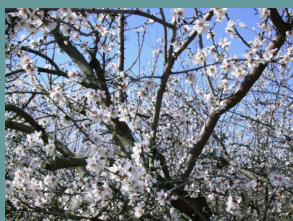
March 15, 2010

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DON'T FORGET YOUR PERMIT!

A friendly reminder to obtain a structure permit prior to any work done on District facilities. This preserves the integrity of our lines and ensures safety for everyone. To apply for a permit at no cost to you, please contact the Engineering Department at 209-249-4619. Thank you!



2010 Water Season Start Scheduled for March 17

On March 9, SSJID's Board of Directors discussed the opening date of the 2010 water season, which will begin on Wednesday, March 17. Division managers will begin notifying farmers of the first water delivery as early as possible.

District farmers are asked to ensure that all field valves are closed, including drain valves. Farmers who use field drains are required to notify their division manager before opening valves to drain into our system.

Once water deliveries begin,

please coordinate with your division manager regarding any repairs to your valves, boxes, etc. If you are aware of any damaged vents, please contact Ron Strmiska Jr., field/maintenance supervisor, at 209-249-4631 as soon as possible.

A relatively wet winter has put us in good standing related to water content in the Sierra snowpack. SSJID expects to meet all of its growers' needs without major challenges. However, water conservation is always important; please use

care in monitoring your water usage, and make your best effort not to waste water or over irrigate.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call **Joe Cantanzarite**, SSJID operations and water superintendent, at **(209) 249-4634** during regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM). The District wishes you a very successful 2010 growing season!

Finance Department Changes Implemented for 2010/2011 Billing Cycle to Improve Customer Service

SSJID's Finance Department has made it a priority to utilize customer feedback in an effort to improve its services. We hope that several recent changes to SSJID policies will be well received when they go into affect this November.

First, an increase has been made to the minimum acreage exempt from the District's groundwater recharge fee when the parcel is not being used for crop production. In the past, a fair amount of small parcel owners who have filed Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreements have been billed groundwater recharge fees. In January, the board of directors voted to exempt any parcel with less than 10 acres from groundwater recharge fees, effective the 2010/11 billing cycle. Previous policy exempted parcels of less than two acres. Those owners with less than 10 acres have been notified of this change in policy.

Second, the board elected to remove developed, non-agricultural parcels located inside the city limits of Escalon,

Manteca and Ripon from water charges. This affects owners who no longer want ag water service or have no access to service from the District. The Finance Department will waive water charges and the requirement for an Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement (ISAA) as long as the following conditions exist:

- The parcel is within the city limits of Escalon, Manteca or Ripon.
- The parcel receives, or is eligible to receive, water service from its city
- The parcel is not being served by SSJID
- The parcel is not being used for crop production
- The parcel owner does not object.

Besides saving these landowners money, this change removes the inconvenience of having to provide the District with copies of deeds and arranging to have signatures notarized in order to obtain a ISAA. SSJID is in the process of identifying these parcels and will notify the own-

ers of the intent to remove the parcel from further water charges unless they object by a set deadline.

Lastly, by Board Resolution 09-16-F, SSJID will be making a few changes to its collection policy. The new process will be as follows:

1. If first installment payment is not paid, SSJID will inform the property owner by certified letter of the additional fees that will be assessed if payment is not received.
2. One month prior to the second installment due date, a reminder will be sent to owners—this is a new service.
3. If the first installment is paid, but not the second, a certified letter will be sent notifying the landowner of the circumstances that will occur if not paid.
4. In the past, SSJID has published a list of delinquent landowners in local newspapers, which is considered acceptable notification per

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SSJID Tackles Another Ambitious Maintenance Season

SSJID maintenance crews and five construction companies tackled an ambitious winter maintenance season, completing 13 projects with an investment of over \$3.8 million. The projects will ensure a successful water season this year and system reliability for years to come.

In Manteca, work was completed on Laterals Wc, Wc-W Connection, Qo, R, Qk and Lateral Y on Union Rd. Over 11,000 feet of cast-in-place pipeline was replaced with rubber gasketed reinforced concrete pipe (RGRCP).

In Escalon, three jobs were completed on Lateral B, with 5,800 feet of pipeline being replaced and a new control structure built at Steinegul Road. The control box is Phase I of a future connector to Campbell Road, to relieve drainage issues on Highway 120.

Work in Ripon included pipeline replacement on Lateral V-Ufa, a connection on Lateral Kac-Qc, and a shotcrete job on Lateral R between Jack Tone and North Ripon Roads, south of Highway 120.

One of the largest projects was completed at a cost of nearly \$500,000 on the Joint Supply/Main Supply Canal at Shell Road in Knights Ferry. District crews toiled through all kinds of weather conditions to shotcrete existing canal walls and floor.

SSJID would like to thank its Engineering staff, Manteca's MCR Engineering, Inc., District crews and our contractors for the outstanding jobs they did at completing projects on time and within budget! Contractors included Knife River Construction, Rolfe Construction, Allen A. Waggoner Construction, Johnson Western Gunitite and Clyde Wheeler Pipeline, Inc.



A crew from Clyde Wheeler Pipeline forms the floor for a box on the Lateral R in Manteca, a pipeline replacement project north of Louise Ave. between Austin and Prescott Roads.

SSJID's crew performed a gunitite "facelift" of sorts on the Joint Supply Canal in Knights Ferry as part of a project to strengthen sections of the canal and stop seepage.



Finance Department Changes

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the California Water Code. SSJID also recorded liens and certificates of sales regardless of the amount of the delinquency. Our new policy is that publication in newspapers, and liens and certificates of sales will only be recorded on landowners that **failed to pay an installment**. SSJID will no longer publish or record a lien or certificate of sale for unpaid **penalties**—these balances will be carried forward to the next bill.

Any questions regarding these changes to our collection policies can be directed to the Finance Department at 209-249-4608.

Water Rates Remain Unchanged

SSJID's Board of Directors voted in October, 2009 to allow water charges for the 2010 Water Season to remain unchanged from the previous year. The irrigation water charge is \$24 per acre (with a minimum charge of \$50), and the groundwater recharge fee is \$12 per acre (with a minimum charge of \$25 per parcel when a Irrigation Service Abandonment Agreement is in place).

Soil Moisture Monitoring Program Continued

Last year, SSJID offered a new soil moisture monitoring program in an effort to assist growers with best management practices for water application to crops. Due to a great response, we are offering this program for another year.

Last year's program proved to be a success. This service is an extremely useful tool to the grower, indicating the optimum amount of water needed for each field and crop type. The District benefits from the analysis of records for future project planning as well as utilizing the information as a conservation tool. The program involves special-

ized monitoring tools and sensors that are installed at each site to provide information to the landowner and District on a regular basis.

Growers who wish to participate in this year's program can contact Dawn or Julie in the Engineering Department at 209-249-4619 no later than May 1, 2010. Staff will review the various program options and pricing with you. SSJID is pleased to offer cost sharing for this program.

We are hoping to get a wide sample across our service territory in order to avoid too many similar soil and crop types. Therefore, it is possible that not all growers who want to participate will be chosen. **Those growers who participated in the program last year are required to re-apply this year and will not be automatically re-enrolled.**

Water Department Contact Information

Division 1 Main Canal	Rick Hinkley Kent Gabrielson	652-6590	Division 7	Joe Lourenco Jason Wirstlin	652-3427
Division 2	Shawn Ussery Ken Guy	652-5965	Division 8	Jeremiah Johnson Tim Hagins	652-9888
Division 3	Joe Hasten Jonnie Moore	652-9793	Division 9	Michael Donahue Clayton Spurgeon	652-2409
Division 1-3 Relief	Darin Thomason Charlie Couto		Division 7-9 Relief	Jeff Hammond Alvin Nunes	
Division 4	Bob Anderson Quinn Higgenbotham	652-9784	Operations/ Water Supervisor	Joe Catanzarite	495-8927
Division 5	Keith Obrochta David Pauley	652-9775	Assistant Water Supervisor	Nick Fereria & Dick Pickering	652-2712
Division 6	Rob Shipman Josh Fleming	652-7025	Main District Canal Supervisor	Frank Avila	652-5480
Division 4-6 Relief	Jim Schaad Al Lopez				



TruePoint Software Revolutionizes Record Keeping at SSJID

The 2010 Water Season will usher in the implementation of the new True Point Software, a state of the art program that will revolutionize SSJID's record keeping system. This program will allow the division managers and ditchtenders to enter water and irrigation information into personal notebooks mounted in their District trucks, taking the place of the run sheets they have used in the past. At the end of each shift, the data will be downloaded to a server, ensuring its safe-keeping.

Division 3 Manager Joe Hasten and True Point staff have been busy training the department and have received positive feedback from most everyone. Executive Secretary Cheryl Burke will serve as one of the administrators maintaining the software and reviewing/compiling the uploaded data, while Information Technology Support Technician Michael O'Leary will

maintain the server.

The many benefits of the system include a vast number of reports available to the District as well as our growers, real-time flood reports, crop reports, as well as detailed reports about each parcel irrigated. Each computer also comes equipped with maps detailing laterals, drains and stations for ease in locating facilities. The system, including software, hardware and training, has been an investment of about \$65,000.

As Water Operations Supervisor Joe Catanzarite states, "although we may face a significant learning curve, this system is a huge advantage to the Maintenance and Water Operations Departments because of its communication abilities. The ditchtenders will also have access to e-mail and will be able to communicate with all departments at all times." Catanzarite is also excited about the record keeping accuracy this system brings through

its updated technology.

When asked what he hopes to achieve with the True Point Software, General Manager Jeff Shields exclaims, "defendable records!" Starting January, 2010 a new package of California water laws went into

effect, and Shields' hope is that True Point will give us the quality of data that will allow us to protect our water rights—records that allow us to defend, before a judge, how we account for our water.



Shown above is an example of the wireless HP notebooks that are now mounted in District trucks. The notebooks run SSJID's new TruePoint software, an investment made to improve record keeping for both the Water Operations Department and our growers.



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Phone: (209) 249-4600
www.ssjid.com

To Sign Up as a
Supporter of
SSJID's Plan to Provide
Retail Electric Service
Go to
SAVEWITHSSJID.COM
Click on "What You
Can Do"

SSJID Leadership

Key staff and elected officials
include:

President **Dave Kamper**
Vice President **John Holbrook**
Director **Dale Kuil**
Director **Ralph Roos**
Director **Robert Schulz**

General Manager **Jeff Shields**
Finance & Administration
Manager **Bere Lindley**
General Counsel **Steve Emrick**

The SSJID Board meets at
9:00 AM every second and
fourth Tuesday of the month.
Meetings are open to the public
and are held at the SSJID Head-
quarters located at 11011 East
Highway 120 in Manteca.

If you would like more infor-
mation, please visit our website
at www.ssjid.com, where you
can view upcoming agendas,
approved Board minutes, and a
map of District divisions.

Providing Water Since 1909

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What Voters Need to Know About Prop 16

At SSJID's February 23 Board Meeting, a vote was taken to OPPOSE Proposition 16 (4-0, Kuil absent), which will be on the June 8, 2010 ballot. Prop 16 is fully funded by Pacific Gas & Electric, and the company has vowed to spend at least \$35 million of funds collected from ratepayers to convince voters to support this amendment to the California Constitution.

The proposition would require a two thirds vote, or supermajority, of local voters before public agencies, including irrigation districts, could expend public funds or borrow money **to establish or expand electric distribution services**, or implement a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program. If Proposition 16 is approved by voters, it will make it more difficult than it is currently for local entities to form either public utilities or a CCA.

We want to be clear about how Prop 16 will affect SSJID's plan to provide retail electric service to PG&E's current customers in Escalon, Manteca and Ripon. Many of you have been following our pro-

gress and are aware that we are awaiting a hearing date on our application before the San Joaquin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). LAFCo has jurisdiction over whether or not SSJID can enter the retail electric market. Currently, if we receive an affirmative LAFCo vote, SSJID will be able to move forward with the next steps to purchase PG&E's local electric distribution system.

However, if Prop 16 passes, even with a YES vote from LAFCo, SSJID will be forced to hold an election in our service territory and win by a two thirds vote before we will be allowed to offer local residents and businesses a more reliable and affordable option for electricity. While we have heard from thousands of supporters of our electric plan, under Prop 16 it would only take a small minority of voters to prevent SSJID from becoming your electric provider. Of course, this will also add a great deal of additional expense to the process.

Furthermore, if SSJID were to succeed at the polls on the issue of becoming your provider, anytime

we would need to expand electric services for a new residential subdivision or a new business or retail center, we would again have to hold an election and those in both our current service territory and voters in the area of expansion would have to approve it by a two thirds vote.

You will probably be hearing from PG&E, or a front-group funded by PG&E, about Prop 16 before you go to the polls this June. They will be spending millions to get your vote. Please be aware that public agencies like SSJID are prohibited by law from spending any money to campaign for or against ballot initiatives. We can only educate and inform you. However, we believe our Board's position speaks volumes. We encourage you to pay close attention to what Prop 16 really is—an attempt to preserve a for-profit utility's monopoly hold on Californians. Try doing a simple internet search on Prop 16 to learn more about its few proponents and many opponents, or call our office at 209-249-4624 for more information.