



IRRIGATION NEWSLETTER

SSJID Introduces



a Public Education Campaign to Explain Bid for PG&E Assets

The South San Joaquin Irrigation District (SSJID) has launched a public education effort named Powered by Purpose in response from the public for updates about SSJID’s effort to replace PG&E as the retail electric power provider for Manteca, Escalon, Ripon and the surrounding areas.

Powered by Purpose is intended to build awareness and understanding of SSJID’s 16-year quest to become the locally owned and operated power provider within its boundary. Recently, SSJID has offered to pay \$116 million for the local assets of PG&E, which filed for bankruptcy protection in January 2019 and faces up to \$35 billion in unfunded liabilities related to California wildfires in 2017 and 2018.

SSJID’s vision to deliver electric service is guided by these core principles:

Safety: SSJID will proactively work to assure that local electrical distribution is safe and reliable for the region, just as it does now with its irrigation and water treatment services.

Accountability: SSJID is governed and overseen by a Board of Directors who live in the District and are elected by District residents. Board meetings are open to the public, allowing

customers to participate in, and be a part of, the District’s decision-making process.

Value: Reduced rates will save SSJID customers millions of dollars each year. Rate stability will mean lower increases in the future as SSJID maintains a 15% discount from PG&E’s rates.

The Powered by Purpose website features details about SSJID’s offer, including information about the economic benefits to the communities, a history of the project and answers to frequently asked questions.

“The name ‘Powered by Purpose’ speaks to the District’s ongoing commitment to carrying out its mission and vision of service to local customers and communities,” said Peter Rietkerk, SSJID’s general manager. “The effort also outlines the core tenants that continue to drive SSJID’s project to become a community owned retail electric provider for our region. We believe the Powered by Purpose website will serve as a resource to keep our customers up to speed with the latest activities in SSJID’s long, ongoing efforts.”

Catch up on this important effort to improve our community by visiting the links shown below:

Facebook:
facebook.com/poweredbypurpose/

website:
PoweredBySSJID.com

LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/company/ssjid

District Working to Increase System Reliability with Proposed Canyon Tunnel

In an effort to increase reliability of water delivery into the next century, SSJID is moving forward with the next step in possibly constructing a bypass tunnel for its Joint Supply Canal (JSC). The tunnel is currently referred to as the “Canyon Tunnel.”

The JSC conveys water from the Goodwin Dam diversion on the Stanislaus River to both Oakdale Irrigation District (OID) and SSJID, with SSJID using approximately 72 percent of the canal capacity. On January 15, 2019 the SSJID’s Board of Directors approved a contract with Condor Earth to initiate the feasibility study and 30 percent design for the approximately 12,000 foot long tunnel. On April 28, 2020 SSJID’s Board approved advancing the project to the 60 percent design level. OID expects to contribute to the tunnel project and its board also approved moving to the 60 percent design phase.

The Canyon Tunnel would bypass a risk prone portion of the JSC located immediately downstream of Goodwin Dam and

would extend approximately 12,000 feet downstream to a point where the JSC departs from the Stanislaus River canyon. This section of the JSC lies below an unstable rock slope which occasionally drops rock onto the canal. A new tunnel would provide for a safer work environment for District personnel, and additional reliability of supply for the District and its customers.

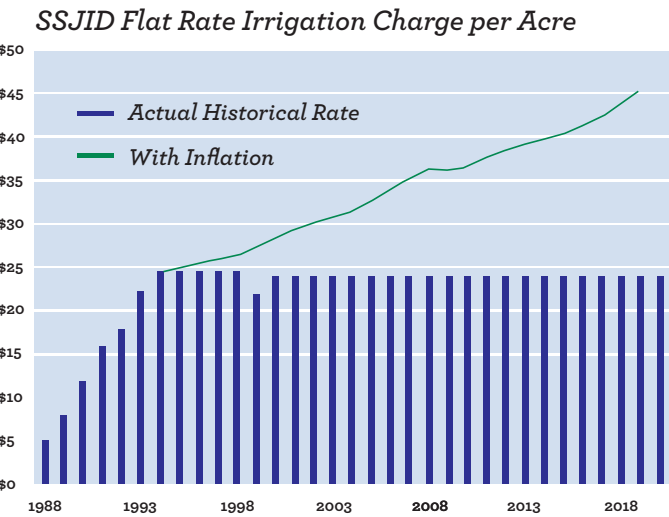
Previously, Condor Earth studied potential risks and work that SSJID should perform to ensure the long-term reliability of the JSC. The Canyon Tunnel proposal was developed based on a recommendation from Condor Earth following a hazard study completed in the fall of 2017. The study identified hazards that threaten the reliability and safety of those facilities. The hazard study recommended significant repair, maintenance, and stabilization activities, which would be very costly. Those costs could be avoided through construction of a tunnel bypassing all of

those hazard areas. The Canyon Tunnel would provide a long-term, low-maintenance solution.

The 60 percent design phase will include exploratory boring, refining plans, initiation of land/easement acquisition, environmental permitting and scoping for a 90 percent design. The final decision to construct the project will be informed by the work performed in the design phase. Ultimately, this decision will involve deliberation from both SSJID and OID.

Condor has indicated that a ballpark cost estimate to construct the contemplated Canyon Tunnel could fall in the \$40-50 million range. The tentative project schedule indicates a possible construction completion date in 2026, with construction beginning as early as spring 2024.

Acreage Charge Unchanged for 26 Years



Amazingly, as the graph above shows, SSJID’s flat rate charge for irrigation water is about the same today as it was 26 years ago in 1994! Actually, it’s less now; in 1994 the annual rate was \$24.50 per acre and now it is \$24 per acre.

SSJID irrigation water charges consist of the flat rate acreage charge and a volumetric rate based on how much water is used. (The volumetric rate is \$3 per acre-foot for first 48 vertical inches of water in a year, and \$10 per acre-foot for water in excess of 48 vertical inches in a year.) For the 1999 season, the rate was dropped to \$22 and in 2000 it rose to the current amount of \$24. The green line in the graph shows how much the rate would be today if it had increased by the rate of inflation each year. With inflation, the rate today would have been over \$45 per acre.

Because we have not raised the flat rate charge for so long, irrigators in SSJID now pay among the lowest prices in the state of California for irrigation water.

COVID-19 and SSJID Water Deliveries

South San Joaquin Irrigation District is maintaining efforts to prevent the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) based on the advice provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

Core to our mission, SSJID is sustaining essential delivery of irrigation water to our agricultural customers in and around Manteca, Ripon, and Escalon, and safe and reliable treated drinking water to the cities of Lathrop, Manteca, and Tracy. Current treatment methods used by SSJID in our water treatment plant are sufficient to disinfect and remove contaminants, including COVID-19.

SSJID has closed our main office in Manteca to the general public in order to further prevent the spread of COVID-19. We encourage our customers to pay bills online, by mail, or by utilizing the drop-box outside of the Manteca office. Our customers doing business with our Engineering Department may contact Engineering via phone (209-249-4619) or email (dawn@ssjid.com) and utilize online options (ssjid.com) as necessary. Please know that our staff is still available to assist you via email or phone.

Pay Your Bill Online

Since the District’s main office has been closed to the public and walk-in bill payments are not allowed at this time due to COVID-19 safety measures, we encourage customers who have not taken advantage of this option to do so now. Simply go online to ssjid.com and visit our Home page. There you will find “Manage Your Account,” followed by “Billing.”

It’s simple...click, and then follow the directions to create your account. You will receive an email verifying that we received the request. Your account will then be linked to your log-on password. This process is completed within a day, and you will receive another email verifying that you’re now ready to utilize the online payment system. Our Finance Department can quickly complete this process in one business day after you request this service. Questions? **Call (209) 249-4610.**

Groundwater Sustainability Plan Adopted

In September, 2014 the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) was enacted to introduce state regulation of groundwater to California. One of the requirements of SGMA was to establish Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to achieve sustainability in local groundwater subbasins. Many of the water users within SSJID became concerned about what this might lead to.

In order to comply with the new regulation, SSJID joined with the cities of Escalon and Ripon to form the South San Joaquin Groundwater Sustainability Agency. We are one of 16 GSAs within the Eastern San Joaquin Groundwater Subbasin which encompasses approximately 770,000 acres within portions of Calaveras, Stanislaus and San Joaquin Counties. Together, all 16 GSAs have adopted a single Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the entire subbasin ahead of the January 31, 2020 deadline.

The new GSP is a project-driven plan that reaches the subbasin’s sustainability goal by recharging groundwater with 78,000 acre-feet of surface water per year instead of reducing groundwater pumping by a like amount. There are multiple sources of surface water to develop groundwater recharge projects including the Stanislaus, Calaveras, and Mokelumne Rivers. We call this approach “in-lieu recharge” which is short for using surface water in-lieu of (instead of) groundwater.

SSJID maintains a strong financial position and has long fought to defend our pre-1914 water rights on the Stanislaus River. The best local defense against SGMA is to continue to serve the area’s agricultural and urban customers with Stanislaus River water. SSJID and its partners in Escalon and Ripon are actively implementing and administering the GSP using current revenue sources.

Contact Brandon Nakagawa, SSJID Water Resources Coordinator, at (209) 249-4613 or bnakagawa@ssjid.com.



2020 Water Season Division Assignments		
Division	Days 5am - 5pm	Nights 5pm - 5am
1 (209) 652-9793	Sean Jefferson	Andrew Betschart
2 (209) 652-9784	Austin Jackson	Brandon Scott
1 & 2 Relief	Nathan Walker	Andrew Teicheria
3 (209) 652-9775	Randy Sprinkle	Ken Bedsaul
4 (209) 652-7025	Josh Stanley	Rob Shipman
3 & 4 Relief	Clint Carter	Colin Sparkman
5 (209) 652-3427	Jason Wirstlin	Jason Andre
6 (209) 652-2409	Patrick Mays	Michael Travao
5 & 6 Relief	Chris Sousa	Cody Williams
MDC (209) 652-6590	Sean Powers Travis Shahan	Chris Looney Ryan Thrasher

Operations Manager Frank Avila (209) 652-5480
Irrigation Services Supervisor Joe Hasten (209) 652-9888
24 Hour Emergency (209) 249-4632

Assignments subject to change