



## YOUR IRRIGATION DISTRICT

## READY TO RESPOND

**Another wet winter?** The impacts of heavy rainfall this past winter were felt throughout the year as we dealt with a late start to the irrigation season, reduced irrigation demand, and unanticipated maintenance to repair storm damage. With this past water year and irrigation season now in the books, we start looking ahead toward this upcoming winter outlook. So far, it's shaping up to be another wet year, with a very strong El Niño pattern forecasted, which could result in warmer and wetter conditions—just how wet remains to be seen. We welcome the strengthening of our local water supplies, but wet weather can create challenges during both irrigation and maintenance periods. Thankfully, after several years of drought, we learned a lot this past rainy season and we are well prepared going into winter.

**SSJID cares about how water legislation impacts our region.** During the legislative session, SSJID acted to protect our pre-1914 appropriative water rights, which are vital to the region's agricultural economy and support community growth, housing and development goals. SSJID worked through local and statewide coalitions to stall two bills, Assembly Bill (AB) 460 and AB 1337, and get clarifying language on Senate Bill 389. At the end of the day, SSJID will always continue to safeguard our water rights for customers and bring value to our local communities.

**SSJID protects water reliability in many ways, including through our Water Master Plan (WMP).** The plan was approved by the Board of Directors in December 2022 and outlines improvement projects that will bolster and maintain SSJID's operations into the future. Following the approval of the WMP, SSJID proposed a rate change this year that would allow SSJID to continue to provide an affordable, dependable water supply with outstanding service to our irrigation customers, all while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

## Irrigation Season Ends

Irrigation season ended on October 29. As we enter maintenance season this November, remember to contact SSJID about any projects happening on your own property that may affect the District's irrigation system, including new irrigation systems and structures. Call our Engineering Department at (209) 249-4619 or learn more at [ssjid.gov/district-services/construction-and-engineering](https://www.ssjid.gov/district-services/construction-and-engineering).

This was a direct result of the WMP efforts which concluded irrigation rate increases would be necessary to:



**Afford ongoing operations and maintenance**



**Conduct timely infrastructure repair, rehabilitation, and replacement**



**Accelerate an aggressive capital improvement program**



**Maintain financial stability**

The rate increase was approved by the Board of Directors in July of 2023, and we are already making headway on projects, including new processes such as spray cast pipelining. SSJID anticipates completing 10,000 linear feet of pipelining across the District in the 2023-2024 maintenance season. Also part of the WMP, the Canyon Tunnel Project will create a two-mile-long Joint Supply Canal Bypass Tunnel originating from Goodwin Dam down to the vehicular bridge/access ramp. The project is currently 90 percent designed and is expected to break ground in mid-2025.

**We're looking for opportunities to support projects that enhance our services and infrastructure.** SSJID was part of a group of local water agencies that received \$5 million from the California Department of Food and Agriculture, State Water Efficiency and Enhancement Program (SWEET), of which SSJID's share is \$500,000. The grant will fund projects that improve on-farm irrigation efficiency and reduce water use and greenhouse gas emissions. SSJID is excited to work with customers on these projects and to continue to seek funding for other regional improvements. Learn more about the grant and how to participate at [www.ssjid.gov/news](https://www.ssjid.gov/news).

**Thank you for entrusting us with your irrigation needs. We remain committed to providing dependable irrigation water and excellent service.**



**Peter Rietkerk**  
General Manager



# NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

*SSJID is excited to welcome the following new members to our team!*

**Kyle Songer**

*Ditchtender/Maintenance Worker*

"SSJID, so far, is a great place to work. Everybody is friendly and welcoming. I enjoy the freedom that comes with the job and how different it is to anything else I've done in the past. I'm looking forward to the years ahead."

**Wyatt Barksdale**

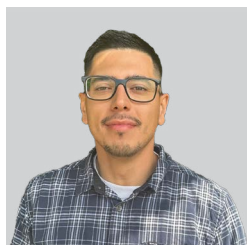
*Ditchtender/Maintenance Worker*

"SSJID is a great place to work. I couldn't have asked for a better job!"

**Brenden Lub**

*Ditchtender/Maintenance Worker*

"Everyone is very welcoming and willing to teach you things you don't know. I appreciate the knowledge base everyone has at SSJID."

**Pedro Cordova**

*Industrial Electrician II, Control Room*

"I like that I come to a team that is willing to help each other out like a family. I also enjoy all the different views when I am out in the field working."

**Denise Freiwald**

*Accountant*

"I was nervous about what to expect starting at a new place of employment, but SSJID has surpassed my expectations. Everyone has been so friendly and welcoming. I am excited to be a part of the finance team and continue to help the District be the best for our customers."

**Michael Slyusarchuk**

*Instrument and Control Technician,  
Nick C. DeGroot Water Treatment Plant*

"So far, SSJID has been great. Everyone I've had the pleasure to work with has been committed, skilled, and excited to do a good job."

**Elias Olson**

*Industrial Electrician II, Control Room*

"In the few months I have worked here, the things I enjoy most are everyone's willingness to help out, the chance to get out and drive around and see our beautiful farmland, the wonderful crops that are grown right here in the central valley, and my chance to help improve electrical infrastructure that we work with on a day-to-day basis."

**Mila Godinez**

*Account Clerk*

"I'm very excited to be the newest member the SSJID team. I was drawn to SSJID after my interview with Don, Sonya and Maria. The type of questions they asked me for the position I applied for fit so perfectly with my combined experience in accounting and customer service. Everyone I've met so far has been so welcoming and helpful. I'm very proud to be a part of such a knowledgeable team, and I can't wait to learn more about the irrigation industry."







# MAINTENANCE UPDATES:

A FUTURISTIC VIEW

SSJID completed a variety of projects to keep water flowing smoothly during this year's irrigation season. One of the most notable tasks was the installation of 2,000 feet of high density poly-ethylene (HDPE) liner on the Frankenheimer Power Canal to fix an existing, aging concrete liner. The District collaborated with Turlock Irrigation District (TID), who operates SSJID's Frankenheimer hydroelectric unit, to complete this work. The HDPE liner has a life expectancy of 20 years, extending the usefulness of the canal well into the future.

As we head into the 2023-2024 maintenance season, SSJID plans to complete numerous projects that will support upcoming irrigation seasons. We anticipate:

-  **Completing 10,000 linear feet of pipelaying across the District.**
-  **Automating gates and sensors at laterals Kac and R364dd.**
-  **Maintaining the Upper Main Supply Canal with planned shotcrete and gunite repairs for 3,500 linear feet.**
-  **Tackling several control box and float valve construction projects. These include two single cell boxes on laterals Haa and OB, a pour over box on the Wc, a float valve two-way connection on the H93dd, and cutting down pour over walls where necessary.**

In addition, SSJID is contracting with specialists to shotcrete the upstream portal of the Mile-Long Tunnel to fortify the structure and prevent rockslides from affecting the canal. Work will require rock scaling, bolting and placing of concrete.

The project is a crucial piece of maintenance to our delivery system. The tunnel is part of the Joint Supply Canal at Goodwin Dam, which carries water by gravity from the Stanislaus River – through hills and mountains – to our service area. SSJID General Manager Peter Rietkerk said, “These facilities are important for us to maintain so that we can keep water flowing to the region, and they require maintenance and construction in varying degrees annually to assure their integrity.”

SSJID is committed to maintaining our system components to ensure a dependable supply of water. Additional projects may be added or prioritized after end of season inspections. **For more information, contact SSJID at (209) 249-4600.**



## TOUR PROMOTES REGIONAL EDUCATION



Local community leaders learned about the water delivery system that supports our region at a comprehensive SSJID tour in September. Attendees got a behind-the-scenes look at everything from the Tulloch Reservoir and the Goodwin Dam on the Stanislaus River to our water treatment plant and pressurized irrigation system. The full day also included updates on our electric utility efforts. SSJID welcomed the opportunity to engage with local leaders in a productive and enriching experience for all.



# SSJID ADOPTS NEW RATES TO FUND RELIABLE IRRIGATION

The SSJID Board of Directors approved an irrigation rate increase on July 25, 2023. The rate increases will take effect in the following manner:

- ✓ **The flat acreage rate will be collected on the 2023/2024 San Joaquin County Property Tax Bill**
- ✓ **The volumetric rate will be billed during the 2024 Irrigation Season**

**This does not change the way customers pay their irrigation bills.** Customers will continue to pay the flat acreage rate on their property tax bills issued by San Joaquin County, and their volumetric bills via online payment or at the District's Office at 11011 E. Highway 120, Manteca, CA 95336.

The new water rates are included in the table below:

RATE CATEGORY	2024
Flat – per acre	\$38.00
Volumetric – Tier 1 ( $\leq 48''$ ) – per acre-feet	\$5.00
Volumetric – Tier 2 ( $> 48''$ ) – per acre-feet	\$12.50
Minimum Charge – Flat Rate	\$50.00



**SSJID hired an independent financial expert** to prepare a detailed Cost-of-Service Analysis to show the full cost of providing irrigation service, including the amount of irrigation non-rate revenues and general-purpose revenues used to cover those costs.

To learn more, scan the QR code or go to [www.ssjid.gov/rates](http://www.ssjid.gov/rates). For questions regarding the rate changes, please call the District office at **(209) 249-4600**.

## SSJID HOSTS ALMOND INDUSTRY LEADERS



In August, SSJID hosted the Almond Leadership Program (ALP), a group of 18 professionals immersed in the Almond Board of California's industry leadership course. The District engaged the ALP in a discussion of emerging water issues, offered a tour of the pressurized irrigation system, and showcased the adopted Capital Improvement Plan. SSJID also guided a session on how an irrigation district manages and distributes irrigation water in a complex regulatory environment, with resulting impacts on water management by farmers. Historical context provided framing for the discussion.

SSJID was proud to offer the ALP Class of 2023 insights to guide their decision-making as the next leaders in the California almond industry.













# CONTROL MOSQUITOES NOW TO “FIGHT THE BITE” NEXT SPRING

Article courtesy of San Joaquin County Mosquito & Vector Control District

As winter approaches, mosquitoes will be far from our minds, but these annoying creatures are still planning their reemergence for next spring. Mosquitoes increase their populations late in the season to ensure their survival the following year. Female mosquitoes deposit their eggs in items that hold as little as a half-inch of water, while others lay them on damp ground or even glue them to the sides of containers. Some species will overwinter as adults, hiding under tarps, in sheds, and anywhere they can escape the frost and frigid winter winds. Mosquitoes can carry diseases, including West Nile virus, which can be deadly in humans. Here are some steps you can take to help prevent mosquitoes from returning around your home and farm:



-  **Inspect outdoor areas and drain water that may stand longer than 96 hours. Drill drainage holes, cover, invert, or eliminate any outdoor container or object holding standing water (saucers under potted plants, buckets, jars, trash cans, tarps, boats, etc.).**
-  **Install surface drains to remove excess water that collects at lower levels of irrigated fields.**
-  **Back-fill tire ruts or other low areas that can hold water.**
-  **Ensure drainage channels are vegetation and debris-free with a proper grade to promote quick drainage.**
-  **Clean clogged rain gutters and yard drains so they flow freely.**
-  **Keep inlets free of accumulations of sediment, trash, and debris to prevent standing water from backing up on roadways and gutters.**
-  **Inspect, maintain, and repair irrigation systems to avoid leaks and runoff into storm drains.**
-  **Use pumps or aerators to keep water moving in ponds and other ornamental water features.**
-  **Completely drain and refill water in birdbaths, unchlorinated fountains, and animal troughs regularly. Keep swimming pools chlorinated and pumps and filters operating. Unused or unwanted pools need to be emptied and dry or removed. Add mosquito-eating fish to larger water sources, including ornamental ponds, unmaintained “green” pools, water retention ponds, and water troughs.**
-  **Prevent mosquito breeding in rainwater catchment systems such as rain barrels by properly screening all openings.**

For more information on what you can do to help “Fight the Bite” and prevent mosquito-borne disease, go to [www.sjmosquito.org](http://www.sjmosquito.org).

## SSJID.COM TRANSITIONS TO SSJID.GOV

You will now find SSJID online at [www.ssjid.gov](http://www.ssjid.gov), a move that provides additional security benefits to our customers. Check us out online. New website address, same dependable irrigation service!



## SSJID IN THE COMMUNITY—#SSJIDCARES!



In June, SSJID was honored to receive the Large Business of the Year Award from the Manteca Chamber of Commerce! The award recognizes exceptional businesses in our community. SSJID is proud to be an active participant in our region, supporting and serving our local businesses, families, and farms.

*Pictured: General Manager Peter Rietkerk and former Executive Director of the Manteca Chamber of Commerce Joann Beattie*



*SSJID attended Main Street Day in the heart of downtown Ripon in October.*



*In October, SSJID presented at AgVenture in Manteca, where third-grade students learn about crops, nutrition and water.*

### Look for us in 2024!

SSJID is honored to be selected as the Grand Marshall for the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Almond Blossom Festival, stewarding 115 years of excellence in serving our customers with responsible and reliable service!