

IWVWD General Manager's Column
September 28, 2016

“Fall Season Brings Opportunity”

By Don Zdeba

The transition from summer to fall brings a reduction in demand on our system as customers reduce their landscape irrigation and the need for evaporative cooling lessens with the cooler fall weather. Because we operate fewer wells during the fall and winter months, the season provides us the opportunity to perform both preventative and needed maintenance at our facilities and to also initiate capital improvement projects. This season will be a particularly busy one and I welcome this opportunity to share with you some of the projects we are working on to eliminate waste, reduce costs, and operate more efficiently.

One upcoming maintenance project is the rehabilitation of our Well 33, located in the Southwest Wellfield. This well was completed in 1999 and still has the original pumping unit installed. It is the only District well with the original pump in it. We have recently noted a decline in the pumping rate that is likely attributed to the age and condition of the pump. The contract for this work is scheduled to be awarded at the October 11th meeting of the Board of Directors.

There are two parts to the District's Water Supply Improvement Project (WSIP); an upgrade to the pumping unit and electrical switchgear at Well 34 and the drilling and equipping of Well 35. The purpose of the WSIP is to provide system redundancy in order to be able to meet peak demand should a significant portion of the District's pumping capability be impacted by an outage, electrical or mechanical. For example, should an electrical issue result in the two arsenic treatment plants going offline, approximately 40% of the pumping capability would be unavailable. We expect both parts of the WSIP will be completed by Spring 2017.

After years of investigating the economic benefits of installing solar energy, the District has partnered with OpTerra Energy Services on a 2.08 megawatt solar photo-voltaic project involving six sites. The project includes other energy efficiency improvements such as installing LED lighting and new high-efficiency HVAC units at the District office. This project will create \$9,000,000 in direct savings over a 20 year period while reducing District electricity costs by approximately 63%. The project is scheduled to break ground the week of October 3rd.

The District's Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) pilot project is progressing. The pilot project involves approximately 468 meters throughout our service area. Three new collector towers and two antennas have been installed to relay information to the District office. The AMI system has a number of enhanced features and capabilities designed to allow customers to monitor their water consumption and the District to alert customers to unusual trends that could indicate a leak or running toilet, for example. Each month, we receive claims from customers for unusually high bills. Often, it is the result of a leak

that went unnoticed for a month or more. The AMI system will provide the District with the capability to send an alert by text, e-mail, or a phone call preventing the shock of a high bill as well as the waste of a significant volume of water. Ultimately, full implementation the AMI system will greatly reduce the need to manually read meters and allow our staff to focus more on customer services such as water audits and providing conservation information and assistance.

And speaking of conservation, the Cash for Grass Program is still available for our residential customers desiring to replace up to 2,000 square feet of turf in their front yard with desert appropriate plants and landscape. The program has been expanded to reimburse high water users, those using more than 2,000 hundred cubic feet (1,496,000 gallons) per year, for up to 10,000 square feet of turf removal. Details about the program are available on our website, www.iwvwd.com or at our office.

Finally, the District has adopted a conservation target of 20% compared to 2013 going forward at least until the end of January 2017. As such, I want to provide a reminder that Ordinance 100 remains in effect. Ordinance 100 allows one day per week landscape irrigation, either Saturday or Sunday depending on whether your address ends in an even or odd number, from November 1st through the end of February. Details of Ordinance 100 are also available on the District's website.

For information related to state and local water issues I encourage you to "Like" and regularly visit the District's Facebook page (IWV Water District). The Board of Directors and staff of IWVWD thank you for using water responsibly.