

Ditchbank

Questions? Please contact us at (760) 339-9334



Imperial Irrigation District
Protecting the flow of progress.

A newsletter for IID agricultural water customers

www.iid.com/Water/NewsFromTheDitchbank

New water cards need to be returned by Feb. 28

Water cards for agricultural lands were mailed to agricultural landowners and tenants in January.

The new documents need to contain the most current water user and tenant information so the district can administer the equitable distribution plan for 2009.

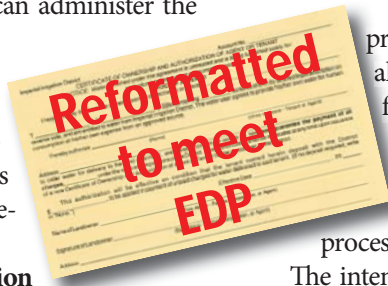
The water cards now consist of three forms:

1. Certificate of Ownership and Authorization of Owner Designee or Tenant. This essentially is the same information as was required by the traditional water cards.

2. Equitable Distribution Authorization and Obligation Information. On this form, the owner will: (1) indicate how much of the apportionment he or she wishes to accept for use on the field; (2) indicate what the owner will permit the tenant to do with the water; and (3) if applicable, detail payment obligations, etc.

3. Farm Unit Designation. On this form, customers will list all the fields that will be included in the customer's farm unit account so he or she can freely move water among those fields, avoiding the need to use the district water exchange to move water among these fields.

See **CARDS**, Page 2



FAQ: Equitable Distribution

The following are frequently asked questions about the equitable distribution plan. Responses include excerpts from the regulations and/or staff comments.

What is a farm unit and what fields are eligible to be in a farm unit under EDP?

Section 2.11 Farm Unit. As part of the water card process, agricultural water users can aggregate some or all of their fields (leased or owned) into one account for purposes of managing their water accounts. The amount of apportioned water available on leased fields included in the farm unit must be approved by the landowner of those fields through the water card process.

The intent of the farm unit is to allow some water flexibility for farmers so they will not have to acquire more water through the district water exchange for fields they farm if the field needs more than the SDI apportionment. Farm unit accounts can only be formed under the entity that is actively farming the field. No field shall be permitted to be in more than one farm unit account at any time.

Are there any penalties for not using all of the accepted SDI apportionment water, or water purchased from the district water exchange under EDP?

Such a circumstance is addressed in **Section 4.6 Charge for**

See **FAQ**, Page 3

Hey, I'd like to know...?

"What is the district's policy on how customers are to report disruptions in their ag water delivery, especially at night?"

All issues or grievances about water deliveries are to be called in to the zanjero or patrolman on watch for the lateral where the delivery is disrupted.

If the zanjero cannot be reached, please contact a supervisor at the appropriate division office. If a supervisor cannot be reached in a timely manner, then contact personnel at the Water Control Center. Grievances will be recorded so the information can be tracked and maintained

for review and evaluated for the cause.

Please keep in mind that unauthorized gate adjustments are the main causes of water delivery disruptions.

Persons found to have adjusted gates without authorization can be fined up to \$100 per incident.

This question comes from Robert Fleming, a board member with the Imperial Valley Vegetable Growers Association. He farms near Brawley and Calipatria.

**Do you have a question?
Contact IID's Dean Currie at (760) 339-9334**



Zanjero contact information is available online at:
www.iid.com/Water/ZanjeroMobileContactsCanalRunInformation

Local Entity begins latest grant application process

In its new capacity as the Local Entity, the deliberative body responsible for soliciting claims and distributing mitigation funds to those affected by the adverse socioeconomic impacts of land following in the Imperial Valley, the Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors has begun the latest grant application process.

Utilizing the procedures established by the reconstituted, all-volunteer entity that was tasked with distributing \$3.5 million in following mitigation funds for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 following years, the IID board will be soliciting applications from farm-service providers in the non-competitive round of the process in the next 30 days. The competitive application period, which is open to job-training and human services agencies, will follow this summer.

The 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 following events, which extend from July 1 through June 30, will be covered simultaneously, according to IID general counsel Jeff Garber, who is assisting the board in fulfilling the Local Entity function. Farmland in the Impe-

rial Valley is being followed through an annual subscription process as a means of generating water for transfer.

Through the 15-year following period, a fund of \$50 million is being established to address the third-party socioeconomic impacts associated with following. More than \$46 million is available to be distributed through 2017.

Following currently creates conserved water for transfer to the San Diego County Water Authority and for Salton Sea mitigation deliveries. This agricultural-to-urban water transfer, which is the largest in the U.S., began in 2003, when the IID became a signatory to the Quantification Settlement Agreement, a water conservation pact that enabled the state of California to live within its annual allotment from the Colorado River of 4.4 million acre-feet.

Application forms and other materials are available through the district's Web site, www.iid.com.

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Continued from front page

District Water Exchange

The equitable distribution plan includes a district water exchange where any unused water will be available to eligible agricultural acreage needing additional water. Water that is not needed (referred to as unaccepted supply/demand imbalance apportionment) will be made available through the district water exchange at a cost of \$1 more per acre-foot than the current agricultural water rate.

Agricultural water users who intend to make water available through the district water exchange must complete a notice of intention to sell form. Agricultural water users intending to purchase water through the district water exchange must complete a notice of intention to buy form. All forms must be submitted to the division office or water administration.

Priority to purchase water through the district water exchange will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Buyers must make the purchase in advance of delivery to obtain water through the exchange.

Public Workshops

To assist customers in completing the new water card forms and understand the regulations of the equitable distribution plan, the district began hosting workshops the week of Jan. 26.

Said Carlos Villalon, assistant water department manager: "We will continue to conduct workshops as long as the demand to have them by our customers exists."

The new water cards must be submitted by February 28.

Once received, the information will be processed to deter-



Michael L. King, Water Department manager, discusses the need for new water cards so the district can administer the equitable distribution plan.

mine how much water is apportioned to each field and farm unit account, as well as how much water will be available through the district water exchange.

Notice can help manage irrigation

IID allows agricultural water customers to make adjustments to their water orders to help manage tailwater. Adjusting your water order can be a useful management tool when an irrigation event finishes before the scheduled turn-off time.

The district must receive the request at least three hours in advance of the desired change as zanjeros must make heading and gate adjustments.

Zanjero contact information can be obtained at:

www.iid.com/Water/ZanjeroMobileContactsCanalRunInformation

Public invited to participate in water rates process

To cover its costs of service, the IID has recommended an increase in water rates that would affect various types of water users.

A workshop on the district's proposed water rates will be held at 5 p.m., March 17, in the Condit Auditorium, El Centro.

A public hearing on the proposed new charges is scheduled for 5 p.m., April 7, also in the Condit Auditorium. At this meeting the IID board may consider all oral and written comments, but all official Protest Forms must be received by IID before the commencement of the public hearing.

Workshop
5 p.m., Tuesday, March 17

Public Hearing
5 p.m., Tuesday, April 7

The workshop and hearing are open to anyone who may wish to attend or provide comments and participate in the public process .

IID encourages customers to learn more about the need for the rate increases, including the recent Water Department cost of service study. The study is available on the IID Web site. Water customers should soon receive notice through the mail about the workshop and public hearing.

Please check the community calendar section of the district's Web site for meeting dates, locations and notices.

FAQ *Continued from front page*

Unused Water. If an agricultural water user buys additional water through district water exchange, then he/she must either: (a) use the purchased water during the SDI water year; or (b) offer the purchased water for sale through the district water exchange no later than Oct. 1.

If an agricultural water user does none of the above and has not used the total of purchased water plus accepted SDI apportionment on his eligible agricultural acres at the end of the SDI water year, the agricultural water user shall pay a charge to the district (in addition to his take-or-pay obligation). The charge shall be equal to the unused water charge multiplied by the amount in acre-feet by which the agricultural water user's unused purchased water from the district water exchange plus unused accepted SDI apportionment for the SDI water year exceeds five percent of the amount apportioned to the agricultural water user's eligible agricultural acres.

2.21 Unused Water Charge. This charge has been waived for 2009. This is a dollar amount per acre-foot set by the district prior to Dec. 1 preceding an SDI water year. Under the current regulations, this dollar amount per acre foot would be used to calculate the charge for unused water pursuant to Section 4.6. The unused water charge for 2009 is \$20 per acre-foot.

3.4 Agricultural Water Users. On Dec. 31 of the SDI year, any

remaining amount of unused water part of the take-or-pay obligation will be included in the year-end invoice.

Information to help you

Would you like to have some help in getting your lease agreement in order? IID has provided information that landowners and tenants may find helpful in drafting land lease agreements during the years when a supply/demand imbalance has been declared.

The language is available online at:

www.iid.com/Water/HelpfulLeaseLanguageforAgProperties

Information about new water cards:

<http://www.iid.com/Water/WaterCardUpdate>

Workshops, meetings, dates & locations:

<http://www.iid.com/About/CommunityCalendar>

Canal cutout schedules

www.iid.com/Water/CutoutSchedule

Water Conservation Advisory Board

www.iid.com/Water/WaterConservationAdvisoryBoard

Local Entity

www.iid.com/Water/LocalEntity

Hey, I'd like to know... ?

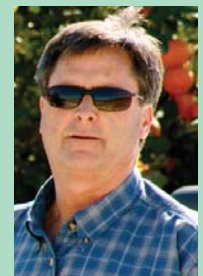
"When I irrigate my field, what water will be charged against my apportionment under the equitable distribution plan?"

The amount of water debited against a field's apportionment account will be the amount charged (which is the same as it has been for non-SDI water years for billing purposes).

If water is returned to the district before the normal turn time, every attempt will be made to reduce the charge to the original customer who ordered that water *if* arrangements

can be made with another customer who agrees to have that water delivered to their field off the normal schedule.

However, prior notification of at least three hours – to either the zanjero on the run or the division office – is needed so the district may have the opportunity to accommodate the request.



This question comes from citrus grower Mark McBroom. Mark serves on the Water Conservation Advisory Board.

All-American lining project said to be 90 percent complete

In late December 2008, Reaches 2 and 3 of the All-American Canal lining project were completed and opened for service four months ahead of schedule.

The project, which began in June 2007, is approximately 90 percent complete. Though the project was not expected to be complete until March 2010, it is now anticipated that major concrete-lining operations will be complete by March 2009.

It is expected, in May 2009, that water will be transferred to the newly-lined canal over its entire length. Completion of the transitions from the old canal to the new canal will be the bulk of the remaining work, which must be completed during the 2009/2010 low-flow season.

(Right) Kiewit Pacific Company, contractor for the All-American Canal lining project Reach 1, moves its barge/crane downstream in the newly lined All-American Canal to open the canal.



If you are delinquent in your water availability charge, it will cost you water

It's been a long-standing – and enforced – policy that delinquent water delivery accounts be denied water until the water delivery charges are current.

However, several reasons have prompted the IID to begin denying water delivery to accounts in which the **water availability charge** is not current. The new practice started in January 2009.

“It was determined to not allow water to be delivered to those accounts that had unpaid **water availability** for several reasons,” said Michael L. King, Water Department manager.

One reason, King said, was because IID had received many comments from other farmers and farm organizations over the last few years that it was “not fair” that the IID allow water to be delivered to those people who have not paid while others pay.

Another reason is that IID is not in the business of loaning money.

“The charges would not be assessed if the revenue was not needed to help maintain the delivery system,” said King.

Water Conservation Advisory Board

The Water Conservation Advisory Board usually meets the second Thursday of each month (except in August) at 1:30 p.m. in IID's Water Control Center conference room in Imperial. The meetings are open to the public. Public comments are welcome.

Interested parties are advised to check the IID community calendar on the Web site as the WCAB has been meeting more frequently and sometimes the starting time is changed.

“These meetings are a valuable resource for farmers because they provide the opportunity to give input and direction to the IID Board of Directors and staff. This input comes from people with first-hand knowledge and a common-sense approach to the water issues from a farmers' perspective,” said Rick Hilfiker of Sunrise Acres, LLC. He is a member of the WCAB.

Agendas for each WCAB meeting are posted several days prior to each meeting. The agenda can be accessed via the IID Web site at:

www.iid.com/Water/WaterConservationAdvisoryBoard

The focus of recent WCAB meetings has been on the on-

farm efficiency conservation program. Under this program, farmers can be paid for their efforts to conserve water.

2009 and 2010 fallowing programs

At the request of the farming community (to help farmers with their planning process) IID initiated the application process for the 2009-2010 fallowing program earlier.

A total of 310 applications were received by the Nov. 25, 2008 deadline, representing 29,880 acres. This fallowing program will commence July 1, 2009 and conclude June 30, 2010. Contracts were mailed to participants in early February.

A separate fallowing program is anticipated to commence Jan. 1, 2010 and run to Dec. 31, 2010. This program is also in response to farmer concerns as growers expressed a desire to fallow land in step with the calendar year rather than the fiscal year.

Application deadlines and details about the calendar year fallowing program will be provided when the information becomes available. For more information about the IID fallowing programs, please visit:

www.iid.com/Water/FallowingPrograms