



## Merced Irrigation District Increases Sponsorship of Solar Institute at UC Merced

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MERCED, CA – Merced Irrigation District announced today it has increased its annual sponsorship level of solar research at UC Merced to \$15,000.

Last August, MID became the first publicly owned utility to offer its financial support to the University of California Advanced Solar Technologies Institute. More commonly known as “UC Solar,” the multi-campus effort is headquartered at UC Merced and aims to develop efficient and affordable solar technologies. The institute is also working to develop solar energy leaders and entrepreneurs.

To support the effort, MID announced last year it would support the research effort with a \$10,000 commitment. Today, the District announced it would increase its sponsorship to \$15,000 this year.

MID currently operates large and small hydroelectric projects, holds a contract for wind energy and manages a home solar program.

“We continue seeking ways to participate in California’s renewable energy efforts. At the same time, we are extremely mindful of the difficult economic times our community finds itself in and are committed to keeping the most affordable electric rates possible,” said MID General Manager John Sweigard.

Sweigard noted that UC Solar is committed to improving solar technology and to making it affordable.

“This is absolutely in line with MID’s views on renewable energy,” he said. “We are pleased to increase our support of the UC’s efforts.”

Through collaboration with the solar industry, UC Solar researchers are working to develop technologies that can quickly be brought to the marketplace. The institute began in 2010 with a \$2.25 million grant from the UC Office of Research and includes faculty from UC campuses in Merced, Berkeley, Davis, San Diego and Santa Barbara. Ongoing research and development continues to be funded by government, corporate and private philanthropy.

UC Solar is led by UC Merced professor and world-renowned solar energy researcher Roland Winston.

“Merced Irrigation District’s sponsorship of UC Solar has enhanced our ability to achieve our mission of lowering the cost of future generations of solar energy systems while educating tomorrow’s solar energy leaders,” Winston said. “They have been great about sharing their real-world energy management experience with our faculty, students and researchers. We are very pleased that they have decided to increase their level of support for the 2012-2013 membership year. This will absolutely benefit our research activities.”

In addition to its increased financial support, in July MID joined with the UC Solar Institute and provided several visiting engineering students from South Korea a tour of the District’s hydroelectric facilities. (For the complete article, please click [here](#).)

For more information about UC Solar, please click [here](#).

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