



OMWD and UC Riverside Joint Study Yields Reduction in Energy Use

Encinitas, Calif.—A collaborative study conducted by OMWD and UC Riverside shows that water agencies can reduce energy consumption and energy costs by closely analyzing trends and managing consumption. The energy optimization project was funded by a \$3 million California Energy Commission grant, awarded in May 2015, with the purpose of bringing energy efficiency solutions to California’s water sector.

The project involved OMWD implementing energy management and communication and control systems designed by UC Riverside professionals that integrated with existing systems by which to control pumps. Much like residential customers avoiding energy-intensive activities like laundry during hours of peak demand, the new systems have assisted OMWD operators to adjust time of use for pumping, thereby reducing energy use, energy loads, and energy costs.

OMWD also gained an improved understanding of demand charges that led to the optimization of operational processes for cost benefits. The study identified that if OMWD simultaneously ran its backup power generator at the same time it performed routine pump testing, the total demand on SDG&E’s power grid was decreased during the 10 to 15 minute test. This resulted in significant savings to OMWD’s ratepayers, as energy rates for the entire year are based on maximum peak demands.

Bob Kephart, OMWD’s Board Secretary, stated: “Moving water is one of the most energy-intensive activities in California. The State Water Project, for example, is the largest user of energy in the state. This energy efficiency project is something that we can do at the local level to reduce the carbon footprint of each drop that we serve, and it also helps to minimize the costs to our ratepayers.”

“Sustainability is one of the core tenets of OMWD’s mission. Not only does the partnership help us achieve this mission, but our partners are able to achieve their goals as well,” explained Kimberly Thorner, OMWD General Manager. “This is another example of government agencies doing the right thing—working together to best leverage public funds for public benefit.”

CEC, established by the legislature in 1974 and located in Sacramento, is the state’s primary energy policy and planning agency. CEC focuses on promoting energy efficiency, conservation, and development of energy research throughout California.

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Olivenhain Municipal Water District is a public agency providing water, wastewater services, recycled water, hydroelectricity, and operation of Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. Organized in 1959, OMWD currently serves approximately 86,000 customers over 48 square miles in northern San Diego County.

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