

Strategic Planning Provides California Utility Structure for Addressing Regulatory and Business Challenges

The Turlock Irrigation District provides electricity to more than 98,000 accounts and irrigation water to 150,000 acres of farmland in California. Today, TID Water & Power is facing a variety of challenges. On the electric side, TID must meet state-mandated greenhouse gas requirements and renewable portfolio standards. On the irrigation water side, TID is struggling to preserve surface water and groundwater supplies in the fourth year of a drought. At the same time, the utility is working through the long-term process of relicensing the Don Pedro Dam and hydroelectric project. “With all these challenges, we felt we needed to think through and strategically plan our path forward to meet these and the other issues we are likely to face,” said Casey Hashimoto, General Manager.



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TID Board President Ron Macedo launched the effort to create a strategic plan in 2014. He secured support from the rest of the Board and then approached General Manager Hashimoto with his concept. After making the decision to pursue a strategic plan, both the Board and staff felt it best to hire an external facilitator to lead them through the strategic planning process. TID staff identified potential candidates, who were interviewed by the Board president. “We wanted someone who has experience and understood our irrigation water and electric utility business,” Hashimoto said. “We also wanted someone who could manage our Board and staff to get the results we desired. Tim Blodgett from Hometown Connections had the right experience and personality to lead us through this process.”

Blodgett worked with the Board and staff to prepare for his onsite visits. At Blodgett’s recommendation, TID invited utility customers and elected officials to participate in the strategic planning meetings, to secure helpful feedback on TID’s performance.

“Tim was an excellent facilitator,” Hashimoto said. “His knowledge and understanding of our business made it easy for him to relate to our customers, our Board and our staff. He led us through an orderly planning process that achieved a strategic plan that met our expectations.”

TID’s strategic plan has five operating strategies and a total of 23 goals to help implement those operating strategies. Hashimoto and his assistant general managers are responsible for working on these goals and reporting their progress to the Board of Directors.

Hashimoto noted, “During the strategic planning process, we agreed to conduct a half-day governance training session for the Board annually. We also agreed to meet biannually to discuss TID strategy.”