



News Release

Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District

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NAMPA & MERIDIAN TO FILL CANALS APRIL 8; **IRRIGATION WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK UNCLEAR**

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Water managers with the Treasure Valley's largest irrigation district will start diverting water into the historic Ridenbaugh Canal near Barber Park at 3 a.m. on April 8 to officially launch the start of the 2013 irrigation season, the Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District announced today.

NMID Water Superintendent Greg Curtis said the District is very closely monitoring this year's water supply. The lack of snowpack, particularly in the lower elevations, may mean that the district will have to start using its stored water in Arrow Rock and Anderson Ranch reservoirs much sooner than in the past few years.

Each year the irrigation district initially meets its need for irrigation water from natural snowmelt flowing in the Boise River. But when the river drops to certain levels, the district must then supplement its supply with water it has stored in the reservoirs.

"I am hopeful we will have a normal irrigation year but we really just don't know at this point so we are monitoring the situation daily. We do have carryover water from last year available but what we really need is precipitation and another good storm in the mountains that can top off the reservoirs just to be sure," Curtis said.

NMID delivers irrigation water to approximately 69,000 acres of Treasure Valley agricultural and residential lands in Ada and Canyon Counties including pressurized irrigation for more than 15,200 residential and commercial lots including 343 residential subdivisions. 2013 marks the 109th consecutive year of water deliveries to the Treasure Valley by the irrigation district

Once the headgates on the NMID water diversion are open, the process of filling some 500 miles of supply and lateral canals and drains with irrigation water will take several days. Curtis said he will slowly fill all the District's 80-plus canals and laterals to check for leaks and prepare for water delivery to NMID water users by mid-April. Typically, the water will flow in the NMID system until the first part of October.

The beginning of the irrigation season also marks the start of what historically means a sharply increased drowning risk for children, young people, even adults.

“Irrigation canals are attractive to young people because of the flowing water. But canals are inherently dangerous and especially for children because the water is deep, very cold and fast flowing. If a child falls in, it is almost impossible for them to get out, even if they can swim,” Curtis said. NMID canals are private property so playing in a canal or along their banks is considered trespassing under Idaho law.

The District conducts annually an intensive canal safety campaign on area radio and television stations to both educate and warn the public about the dangers of going near a full irrigation canal.

For more information about the District call 466-7861. Information is also available on its Internet website: www.nmid.org.

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