

October 3rd, 2023

The Mt Lemmon Domestic Water Improvement District (MLDWID) has been actively applying for grants from the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority of Arizona (WIFA). The first grant proposal was submitted in July 2023 to provide funding for a new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system.

The SCADA system monitors water levels of each of the five water tanks and flow of water both into and out of the tanks. The current system displays this data in the office, but it does not have an Alarm system to notify employees by phone. MLDWID faced a harsh reality when damage to one of the fire hydrants caused catastrophic water loss and there was no notification to MLDWID employee after office hours to immediately address the situation. The approximate water loss in that damage was 500,000 gallons of water. Due to the age and reliability of the current SCADA system, it was decided to apply for a grant to replace SCADA with new current technology hardware and add the Alarm system function. It also includes a back-up generator for the office to insure it's able to function even during a power outage.

A second grant proposal was submitted at the end of this September, that requested funding for upgrades to our existing Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system. In the current system data is transmitted from each customer meter to a handheld data collection device. This device must be in proximity of the meter to get the data, so it requires an employee to bring the collector to each meter. This is done once a month (called the drive round) to gather the usage data for billing. The new system will have new meters with stronger transmitters that will communicate with a nearby tower. The tower will then transfer the data by wireless phone network to a remote data center. The data center will store and backup all the data. MLDWID will have access to the data through an internet connection. Every customer meter can be read every day, so leaks can be detected at customer meters and Alerts can be sent to employees for quick response.

So far for 2023, MLDWID has identified customer water leaks approximating to 343,977 gallons of water. To put things into perspective on the mountain, MLDWID's goal is to maintain a water reserve of about 500,000 gallons for Mount Lemmon Fire District to use to protect the Mount Lemmon community from wildfires and structural damage caused by fire.

The Mt Lemmon Domestic Water Improvement District would like to extend our gratitude to the following local entities, as they have provided letters of support for each grant proposal submission: Mount Lemmon Home Owners Association, Mount Lemmon Business Economic Association, and the Mount Lemmon Fire District.

The Mt Lemmon Domestic Water Improvement District (MLDWID) is committed to providing clean safe water to our residents and businesses, as well as striving to conserve the water that is so precious to the mountain.