

# MODESTO IRRIGATION DISTRICT, DIVISION 5

## Question 1) What are your Qualifications?

**Nick Blom – Incumbent**

**No response**

## **Chris Ott – Candidate**

I am a 3rd generation farmer, born and raised in west Modesto. My family and I farm almonds, walnuts, cherries, blueberries, corn, oats and alfalfa. I have been serving as a firefighter for Woodland Ave. Fire Department for the last 18 years, and currently serve as a Battalion Chief for the department. I attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and received a degree in Fruit Science with a minor in Ag Business. After graduating, I worked for Gallo Vineyards Inc. Central Valley, assisting Ranch Managers on day to day vineyard operations before coming back home to join the family farm. After returning home, I decided to open our farm to the community for upick blueberries and cherries.



# MODESTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 6

**Question 2) What Would be your top priorities?**

**Nick Blom – Incumbent**

**No response**

**Chris Ott – Candidate**

My experience as a farmer has given me a clear understanding of the water challenges we face. Our water is always under threat by the state and other outside interests. We must always be vigilant in protecting our water rights. As a firefighter, I am also committed to serving the public. MID Directors should serve the public interest and recognize the impacts of electrical rates on local businesses and families. If elected, I will put MID ratepayers first.



# MODESTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 6

**Question 3) How can MID help businesses in their service area?**

**Nick Blom – Incumbent**

**No response**

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**Chris Ott – Candidate**

All businesses are impacted by electrical costs. MID has 13,061 commercial accounts and 143 industrial accounts. Those accounts represent businesses both large and small that are impacted by MID rates. On the water side, we all know that agriculture is a major economic engine in our region and that there are many businesses that form part of our agricultural economy. For us, water availability is key to having a thriving economy. By protecting our water, we are also protecting local businesses that depend on it.



# MODESTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 6

**Question 4) What are the greatest challenges MID faces and how would you address them?**

**Nick Blom – Incumbent**

**No response**

**Chris Ott – Candidate**

Our two greatest challenges will be protecting our water and controlling electrical costs. We have been engaged in fights with the state for years over the Bay-Delta Plan and protecting our water rights. I believe that will continue to be a problem in the years to come. We need an MID Board that can work collaboratively and professionally together to present a united front against such attempts. We also have to ensure that people outside of our district cannot access our MID water resources for less than market value. In May, my opponent voted to sell our water to outside interests at a 70% discount – for \$60 an acre-foot, which is below market value. I did not agree with that vote. If we do have excess water, it should be sold at market rate and that money should be reinvested to benefit MID ratepayers. In addition, the Board has voted to raise electrical rates, putting additional cost burdens on families and businesses. I fundamentally do not agree with charging ratepayers more and giving outside interests discounts. I would oppose such actions on the Board.



# MODESTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 6

**Question 5) Do you believe the electric side of MID subsidizes the water side of MID? If so, what changes if any should be made?**

**Nick Blom – Incumbent**

**No response**

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**Chris Ott – Candidate**

This issue has been litigated and a judge has ruled that there is a subsidy. Late last year, another judge ruled that despite the subsidy ruling, there will be no reimbursement for ratepayers. This is an issue that is very complex and given that I am not currently on the MID Board, I have not had the opportunity to delve into this issue at length beyond what is available as public information. Fundamentally, I believe that MID needs to ensure fairness and low rates to benefit ratepayers on both the water side and the power side.

