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Hard Times:Mendota

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The town of Mendota has a 40% unemployment rate. This town relies heavily on farming as 8 out of 10 people here are in agriculture. The city is seeing a rise in crime and long lines at free food giveaways. Mayor Robert Silva says his town is experiencing another Great Depression. The problems could affect the entire nation. Part of the problem is a lack of water for farming, which not only puts people out of work, but could mean higher prices for food across the country.

Mendota has a population approaching 9,000 people. Eight out of ten people in the town are connected to agriculture.

Mayor Silva says because of zero water allocation for farmers, crops aren't being grown and workers aren't being employed. Sarah Woolf of the Westlands Water District says the combination of environmental regulations in the delta and a 3rd consecutive year of a drought have made it difficult on farmers.

Woolf says farmers will have to rely solely on ground water this year. On the bright side, there are local groups and the Fresno County EOC which regularly come by to deliver food to the residents in Mendota.