

# 13<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL IRRIGATION LEADERS WORKSHOP

## “Constant Improvement”

Sponsored by *Irrigation Leader* magazine  
Crowne Plaza Resort Phoenix–Chandler Golf Resort  
1 San Marcos Place  
Chandler, AZ 85225  
January 20–22, 2026

### **TUESDAY, January 20**

5:00–6:00 p.m.      **Welcome Reception Sponsored by Arizona Irrigation Leader magazine**  
1912 Lounge

### **WEDNESDAY, January 21**

7:00 a.m.      **Networking Continental Breakfast and Coffee Sponsored by Kisters of North America, Inc.**

Ballroom Foyer

7:50 a.m.      **Welcome:**      Kris Polly  
San Marcos      *Irrigation Leader* magazine  
Ballroom A

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Introductions and Opening Comments

8:00 a.m.      **Bureau of Reclamation Update**  
Speaker:      Alexander Smith  
Area Manager  
Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office

8:30 a.m.      **From Budget to Breakthrough: Driving Financial Change**  
Speaker:      Joah Franzoy  
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

9:00 a.m.      **Campgrounds and Cabins as a Source of Income**  
Speakers:      Russ Callan  
General Manager  
Lower Loup Natural Resources District  
  
Devin Brundage  
General Manager  
Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

10:00 a.m.      **Networking Break Sponsored by SWAN**

Ballroom Foyer

10:30 a.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom A

**Managing Large Scale Capitol Projects and Multi-Million Dollar Equipment Purchases: Lessons Learned**

Speakers: Craig Simpson  
General Manager  
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

Shane Leonard  
General Manager  
Kennewick Irrigation District

Ben Shawcroft  
General Manager  
Truckee Carson Irrigation District

11:30 a.m.

**Rebuilt Heavy Equipment**

Speaker: Bryce Evans  
Owner  
Evans Equipment

12:00 p.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom B

**Lunch Sponsored by Rubicon Water  
History and Future of Drip Irrigation**

Speaker: Naty Barak  
Chief Sustainability Officer Emeritus  
Netafim

1:00 p.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom A

**Case Study: Advanced Surface Irrigation**

Speakers: Grant Chaffin  
PVID grower, Chaffin Farms

Alejandra Odegard  
Customer Success Manager  
SWAN Systems

1:30 p.m.

**Perspectives on Improving Effective Board Participation, Leadership, and Lobbying Roles**

Moderator/ Kristin Bloomer  
Speaker Desert Water Agency

Speakers: Greg Daviet  
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

Dennis Swinger  
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

2:30 p.m.

**15-Minute Upcoming Industry Tours/Training Presentations**

Speakers: Robbie Milton

Market Development / Technical Sales  
Watertronics

Jeffrey LeBlanc  
Director of Project Development  
Hobas Pipe USA

3:00 p.m.  
Ballroom Foyer

**Ice Cream Sundae Break Sponsored by Rainmaker**

**Technology 20's**

3:30 p.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom A

**Assura Board Room: A New Way To Manage Board Meetings**

Speakers: Terrie Larsen  
Executive Assistant  
South Columbia Irrigation District

Hamish Howard  
CEO  
Assura Software

3:50 p.m.

**Scalable and Safe Aquatic Chemical Application**

Speaker: Shawn Collins  
Director - Technology  
AquaInject

4:10 p.m.

**Soil Moisture Satellites for Smarter Irrigation**

Speaker: Zachary Kabelac, PhD  
Founder CEO  
Aperture Space, Inc.

Steve Hansen  
Chairman  
North Dakota Irrigation Association

4:30 p.m.

**A New Irrigation District Insurance Paradigm**

Speaker: George Dazzio  
Insurance Office of America

4:50 p.m.

**Snowpack Enhancement**

Speaker: Augustus Doricko  
Owner/Founder  
Rainmaker

5:11-6:10 p.m.  
Ballroom Foyer

**Exceptional Vendors Reception Sponsored by AquaLastic**

**THURSDAY, January 22**

7:00 a.m. **Networking Continental Breakfast and Coffee Sponsored by Emrgy**  
Ballroom Foyer

7:30-9:00 a.m. **Grant Writing Training: Resource Development and Funding Priorities**

Executive Trainer: Sarah Pruden  
Boardroom Grants and Marketing Manager  
Rubicon

7:55 a.m. **Welcome:** Kris Polly  
San Marcos *Irrigation Leader* magazine  
Ballroom A

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

8:00 a.m. **Case Study: EBID's Ongoing Leased Vehicles Program**

Speakers: Joah Franzoy  
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

8:30 a.m. **Case Study: Well Sentry Conversion Update**

Speakers: Noel Carter  
General Manager  
Buckeye Water Conservation and Drainage District

Robbie Milton  
Market Development / Technical Sales  
Watertronics

9:00 a.m. **Reducing Aquatic Herbicide Costs**

Speaker: Aspen Kenyon  
Western Region Manager, PCA  
ClearChannelVM

9:30 a.m. **2026 Leaders Training Preview: Board Members/Manager Training, Communications Training, and Grant Writing Skills**

Moderator/ Kris Polly  
Speaker President and CEO  
Water Strategies, LLC

Speakers: Lane Simpson  
Legislative Assistant  
Water Strategies

Sarah Pruden  
Grants and Marketing Manager  
Rubicon

10:00 a.m. **Networking Break Sponsored by Assura Software**  
Ballroom Foyer

10:30 a.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom A

**Developing Land: A Farmer and Irrigation District Board Member Perspective**

Speakers: Kirk Rathbun  
President  
Kennewick Irrigation District

11:00 a.m.

**Understanding Data Center Water and Power Trending Needs**

Speaker: Richard E. Donaldson, P.E.  
WSP

11:30 a.m.

**Negotiating Data Center Construction Projects**

Speaker: Ed Mears, P.E.  
HDR

12:00 p.m.  
San Marcos  
Ballroom B

**Lunch Sponsored by International Water Screens  
Value of Canal Views for Real Estate**

Speakers: Clark Princell  
Valley Partnership

1:30 p.m.  
Outside Ballroom  
Foyer

**Bus Tour Sponsored by Hobas**

Bus departs for three-stop tour of urbanized canal development.

**Arcadia OSHO**

4900 East Indian School  
Phoenix, Arizona 85018  
(602) 955-0358

**Arizona Falls on the Arizona Canal**

5802 E Indian School Rd, Phoenix, AZ 85018

**Scottsdale Waterfront**

4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

**Canal View Reception Sponsored by Hobas**

**Olive & Ivy**

7135 E Camelback Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
(480) 751-2200

(Note: The bus will deliver people to the final reception and not return to the hotel. Options for returning to the hotel include taxi and Uber services.)

HOTEL INFORMATION: Crowne Plaza Phoenix–Chandler Golf Resort, 1 San Marcos Place, Chandler, AZ 85225. Phone: (480) 812-0900

Irrigation Leaders

In my 30-plus years working on irrigation and water-related issues, during which we debuted *Irrigation Leader* and its subsequent state-specific editions, *Municipal Water Leader*, and *Hydro Leader* magazines, I have had the great opportunity to meet thousands of people.

The following is a list of qualities and shared behaviors that I have observed among the most successful, effective, and happy people in the water sector:

1. Faith and family are their two top priorities.
2. Integrity. These are reliable, honest people who keep their promises and commitments.
3. Healthy. They take their health and general fitness seriously.
4. Positive outlook. They are upbeat people and look for the good in everything.
5. Never complain. As a rule, they do not complain or share their woes with others.
6. Solution orientated. They see solutions and opportunities, not problems.
7. Responsible. They take immediate and full responsibility for mishaps and are generous in giving credit to others for successes.
8. Highly organized. Their work spaces are clean and orderly, sometimes shockingly so.
9. Timely. They take pride in being early for meetings and not wasting other people's time.
10. Strong work ethic. They are hard workers. They get up early and put in the time and effort to get things done.
11. Good communicators. They speak directly and communicate clearly. They have strong writing skills and are well practiced at public speaking.
12. Even tempered. They are always in careful control of their emotions; they tend to speak lower and slower when angry.
13. Hobbies. They always have outside-of-work interests, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, watching sports, reading, traveling, sailing, flying, or mountain climbing.
14. Treat others well. Most importantly, they are personable, polite, and humble.
15. Manage their people well. They provide adequate resources, clear objectives, guidance as needed, and credit for jobs well done.