

13TH 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
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. **Ice Cream Sundae Break Sponsored by Rainmaker**
Ballroom Foyer

Technology 20's

3:30 p.m. **Assura Board Room: A New Way To Manage Board Meetings**
San Marcos
Ballroom A
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. **Exceptional Vendors Reception Sponsored by AquaLastic**
Ballroom Foyer

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.