

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
(October 1, DRAFT)

TUESDAY, January 20

5:00–6:00 p.m. **Welcome Reception**
1912 Lounge

WEDNESDAY, January 21

7:00 a.m. **Networking Continental Breakfast and Coffee**
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. **Assura Board Room: A New Way To Manage Meetings**
Speaker: Terrie Larsen (Invited)
Executive Assistant
South Columbia Irrigation District

8:30 a.m. **District Budget Training**
Speaker: Joah Franzoy (Invited)
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

9:00 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

Keith Denos (Invited)

Principal of GK Denos Consulting

Keith Yaskin (Invited)
Flipside Communications

Sarah Pruden (Invited)
Rubicon

10:00 a.m.
Ballroom Foyer

Networking Break

10:30 a.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom A

Managing Large Scale Capitol Projects: Lessons Learned

Speakers: Craig Simpson (Invited)
General Manager
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

Shane Leonard (Invited)
General Manager
Kennewick Irrigation District

Ben Shawcroft (Invited)
General Manager
Truckee Carson Irrigation District

12:00 p.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom B

Lunch
Rebuilt Heavy Equipment by Evans Equipment

Speaker: Bryce Evans (Invited)
Evans Equipment

1:00 p.m.

Improved Archiving of Records

Speakers: Terrie Larsen (Invited)
Executive Assistant
South Columbia Irrigation District

Savannah Leonard (Invited)
Archivist
South Columbia Irrigation District

1:30 p.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom A

Understanding Municipal Water Agency Budgeting and Planning

Speaker: Esther Saenz (Invited)
General Manager
Desert Water Agency

2:00 p.m.

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

Moderator/ Kristin Bloomer (Invited)
Speaker Desert Water Agency

Speakers: Jared Balcom (Invited)
South Columbia Basin Irrigation District

John Rylaarsdam (Invited)
Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District

Greg Daviet (Invited)
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

Dennis Swinger (Invited)
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

3:00 p.m.
Ballroom Foyer

Ice Cream Sundae Break

3:30 p.m.

Update on EBID Leased Vehicles Program

Speaker: Joah Franzoy (Invited)
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

4:00 p.m.

Reducing Costs and Nitrogen Losses with Satellite Data

Speaker: Jackson Stansell (Invited)
Founder and CEO
Sentinel Ag

5:00 p.m.

Vendor Reception

THURSDAY, January 22

7:00 a.m.
Ballroom Foyer

Networking Continental Breakfast and Coffee

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Executive
Boardroom

Grant Writing Training: Finding Your Funding

Trainer: Sarah Pruden
Grants and Marketing Coordinator
Rubicon

7:55 a.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom A

Welcome: Kris Polly
Irrigation Leader magazine

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

8:00 a.m.

Improving Your Supply Chains and Reducing Costs

Speaker: ULIN Representative (Invited)

8:30 a.m.

Case Study: Smart Pump Conversion Update

Speakers: Noel Carter (Invited)
Buckeye Water Conservation and Drainage District

Robbie Milton (Invited)
Watertronics

9:00 a.m.

Campgrounds and Cabins as a Source of Income

Speakers: Russ Callan (Invited)
General Manager
Lower Loup Natural Resources District

Devin Brundage (Invited)
General Manager
Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District

10:00 a.m.

Networking Break

Ballroom Foyer

10:30 a.m.

Developing Land: A Farmer and Irrigation District Board Member Perspective

San Marcos
Ballroom A

Speakers: Kirk Rathbun (Invited)
President
Kennewick Irrigation District

11:00 a.m.

Creating Small Potable Water Systems

Speakers: Robby Milton (Invited)
Watertronics

11:30 a.m.

Data Centers Challenges and Opportunities

Speaker: Russell Fager (Invited)
Google

12:00 p.m.

Lunch

San Marcos
Ballroom B

Value of Canal Views for Real Estate

Speaker: Spencer Kamps (Invited)
Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona

1:15 p.m.

Bus Tour

Outside Ballroom
Foyer

Bus departs for walking tour of urbanized canal development site in Scottsdale.

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

Olive & Ivy

7135 E Camelback Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85251

(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.