

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
(November 3, 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. **Update on EBID’s Leased Vehicles Program**
Speakers: Joah Franzoy
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

Joshua Espinoza
Enterprise Fleet Management Inc.

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.
Ballroom Foyer

Networking Break

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 (Invited)
General Manager
Kennewick Irrigation District

Ben Shawcroft
General Manager
Truckee Carson Irrigation District

11:30 a.m.

Rebuilt Heavy Equipment

Speaker: Bryce Evans (Invited)
Owner
Evans Equipment

12:00 p.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom B

Lunch Sponsored by Rubicon Water

Speaker: Concrete Canvas Representative (Invited)

1:00 p.m.
San Marcos
Ballroom A

Understanding Municipal Water Agency Budgeting and Planning

Speaker: Esther Saenz
General Manager
Desert Water Agency

1:30 p.m.

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

Moderator/ Speaker Kristin Bloomer
Desert Water Agency

Speakers: John Rylaarsdam
Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District

Greg Daviet
Elephant Butte Irrigation District

Dennis Swinger
East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

2:30 p.m.

Ten-Minute Presentations of Upcoming Industry Tours/Training

Speakers: Robbie Milton

Market Development / Technical Sales
Watertronics

Perry Leros (Invited)
Vice President of Sales
Hobas

David McGregor (Invited)
VP Sales and Regional Manager
MowerMax

3:00 p.m.
Ballroom Foyer

Ice Cream Sundae Break

3:30 p.m.

Assura Board Room: A New Way To Manage Meetings and Improved Archiving of Records

Speaker: Terrie Larsen
Executive Assistant
South Columbia Irrigation District

Technology 20's

4:00 p.m.

Soil Moisture Satellites for Smarter Irrigation

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

Steve Hansen
Chairman
North Dakota Irrigation Association

4:20 p.m.

A New Pivot Concept

Speaker: Wayne Pinch
Founder/CEO
Square Water

4:40 p.m.

Snowpack Enhancement

Speaker: Augustus Direcko
Owner/Founder
Rainmaker

5:00 p.m.

Exceptional Vendors Reception Sponsored by AquaLastic

THURSDAY, January 22

7:00 a.m.
Ballroom Foyer

Networking Continental Breakfast and Coffee

7:30 – 9:00 a.m.
Executive

Grant Writing Training: Resource Development and Funding Priorities
Trainer: Sarah Pruden

Boardroom	Grants and Marketing Coordinator Rubicon
7:55 a.m. San Marcos Ballroom A	Welcome: Kris Polly <i>Irrigation Leader</i> magazine Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
8:00 a.m.	Improving Supply Chains and Reducing Costs Speaker: ULINE Representative (Invited)
8:30 a.m.	Case Study: Smart Pump 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/ Speaker Kris Polly President and CEO Water Strategies, LLC Speakers: Lane Simpson Legislative Assistant Water Strategies Sarah Pruden Grants and Marketing Manager Rubicon
10:00 a.m. Ballroom Foyer	Networking Break
10:30 a.m. San Marcos Ballroom A	Developing Land: A Farmer and Irrigation District Board Member Perspective Speakers: Kirk Rathbun (Invited) President Kennewick Irrigation District

- 11:00 a.m. **AI Challenges and Opportunities**
Speakers: Jason Casuga (Invited)
 General Manager
 Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
- 11:30 a.m. **Data Centers Challenges and Opportunities**
Speaker: Russell Fager (Invited)
 Google
- 12:00 p.m.
San Marcos **Lunch Sponsored by International Water Screens**
Ballroom B **Value of Canal Views for Real Estate**
Speakers: Spencer Kamps (Invited)
 Homebuilders Association of Central Arizona
- Clark Princell (Invited)
 Valley Partnership
- 1:30 p.m. **Bus Tour**
Outside Ballroom Bus departs for walking tour of urbanized canal development site in Scottsdale.
Foyer
- 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.