



The Irrigation Technology Center Newsletter

Texas Cooperative Extension
October 2001
Volume 1, Issue 1



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Irrigation Technology Center Moves into Development Plan Phase

The Irrigation Technology Center took a giant step forward during the summer of 2001 by officially moving into the development plan phase. This is the second phase of effort to establish the center, which began as a concept in 1997.

Components of the Development Plan include:

- ?? Detailed construction and operating costs of the ITC and a financing plan
- ?? Economic impact assessment

- ?? Construction and implementation schedule
- ?? Site evaluation and selection
- ?? Preconstruction design of buildings, infrastructure and cutting-edge facilities
- ?? Obtaining approval of the Texas A&M University System to establish the center.

Organizations in the San Antonio area and the Agriculture Program of the Texas A&M University System are providing funding for development planning. (See related story on page 2.)

Steering Committee Established, Advisory Groups to be Formed

In May 2001, a steering committee was established to provide leadership, guidance and oversight during the development plan phase. This committee consists of representatives from each of the donor organizations (see related story on page 2) and City of San Antonio Mayor Ed Garza.

In early 2002, a broader Advisory Council will be formed and will consist of representatives from public agencies, private organizations and individuals.

More technical advice will come from specialized work groups and design review teams that will also be formed. These groups will review and provide feedback on specific components of the ITC.

Advisory groups fall into three categories: planning, facility design review, and cooperation and collaboration. Organizations and individuals interested in serving on the council or groups should complete the ITC Interest Form which can be found on the ITC website (<http://itc.tamu.edu>).



Sweet Stuff

The Texas Produce Convention provided complementary booth space for the Irrigation Technology Center in the trade show at their annual meeting. The Convention was held August 16-18 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio and was co-hosted by the Texas Association of Apple Growers, Texas Blueberry Growers Association, Texas Citrus Mutual, Texas Fruit Growers

Association, Texas Produce Association, and the Texas Vegetable Association. The convention theme was "Partnering for Success," and was highlighted by an address from Susan Combs, Commissioner of the Texas Department of Agriculture. Convention-goers were shown the ITC informational video and slide show presentation at the booth. Extension Associate, Jarah Redwine was on-hand to answer questions and obtain feedback.

\$240,000 Committed to Fund Development Plan



The Irrigation Technology Center is receiving strong support from organizations in the San Antonio area and across the state.

Organizations that have adopted statements or resolutions of support include Medina County Groundwater Conservation District, San Antonio City Council, San Antonio Water System, San Antonio River Authority, Edwards Aquifer Authority, Texas Water Wise Council, and BexarMet Water District. The statements and resolutions can be viewed on the ITC website (<http://itc.tamu.edu/>).

Four organizations have shown their commitment to the ITC by donating a

total of \$146,000 to help fund the Development Plan. They are:

- ?? San Antonio Water System
- ?? BexarMet Water District
- ?? San Antonio River Authority
- ?? Medina County Groundwater Conservation District

The Agriculture Program of the Texas A&M University System, through Texas Cooperative Extension, committed an additional \$94,000, bringing the total funding to-date for the Development Plan to \$240,000. This represents about 60% of the expected development plan costs.

Firm Selected to Assist in Development Planning



In August 2001, the Agriculture Program of the Texas A&M University System finalized contractual agreements with the consulting firm Beach Ramirez, Inc. of Houston to devise and document a business development plan. The development plan will include a demand assessment for services, an economic impact analysis, project cost

estimations, a development strategy, land requirements, and several other components. Beach Ramirez personnel are currently contacting potential clients of the ITC, including members of the irrigation industry concerning interest in services that the ITC will provide. The final report will be completed by December 1, 2001.



Redwine Tours Senninger Irrigation, Inc Testing Labs

Jarah Redwine, Extension Associate, visited the manufacturing facilities and testing labs of Senninger Irrigation, Inc. near Orlando, Florida in July. The trip was made in preparation for the design of the ITC testing facilities. Redwine said she wanted to see how other sprinkler testing labs were designed to ensure that the ITC labs are state-of-the-art and on the cutting edge of technology.

Redwine was first given a tour of the manufacturing facilities by James Burks, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Senninger manufactures a variety of sprinklers, wobblers, nozzles, and pressure regulators for agriculture, urban and mining applications. They design and injection mold their own thermoplastic parts and have been in business for over 37 years.

Redwine was also given an in-depth tour of the sprinkler testing lab and other research and development facilities by Chris Striby, R&D Project Manager, and other members of his team. They discussed in detail the design of the

sprinkler testing lab and the changes made since its inception in the mid-1990's. Redwine was walked through the steps taken in developing a new product, from the original sketches, to CAD design, to working prototype and preliminary and final performance testing. She explored the means employed to test sprinkler longevity and durability.

Important points that Redwine feels were accentuated on the trip include:

- ?? The facility must be large enough to handle throws of large sprinklers.
- ?? The control system for the pumps, sprinklers and other testing equipment should be technologically advanced and practically designed.
- ?? The drain system should be adequately designed.



Jarah Redwine recently visited Senninger Irrigation, Inc. headquarters (shown here) in Orlando, Florida.

IA Comes to San Antonio

The Irrigation Association has generously invited the Irrigation Technology Center to participate in the International Irrigation Show by offering a complimentary booth at the Exposition. The annual meeting will be held in San Antonio at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center November 4-6. ITC staff will be on-hand to answer questions and obtain input from the irrigation industry about the center. Steering Committee members will be available at various times during the

exposition. A stakeholders information meeting will also be held during the exhibition on November 6.

The Irrigation Association is the largest irrigation trade association in the world and has served the irrigation industry since 1949. For more information about the Irrigation Association or the International Irrigation Exhibition, refer to the website <http://www.irrigation.org/>, or call the headquarters office in Falls Church, Virginia at 703-536-7080.





**The Irrigation
Technology Center**
207 Scoates Hall
2117 TAMU
College Station, TX
77843-2117

Phone:
(979) 845-3959

Fax:
(979) 847-8828

E-Mail:
itc@tamu.edu

We're on the Web!

<http://itc.tamu.edu>

Redwine Tours Center for Irrigation Technology

Jarah Redwine, Extension Associate, toured the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) in Fresno, California in August. The purpose of the visit was to prepare for planning and design of the Irrigation Technology Center by evaluating CIT facilities.

The CIT is based at California State University, Fresno. Ed Norum, long-time agricultural engineer for the CIT, hosted Redwine. Mr. Norum provided background information on how CIT was started and discussed day-to-day operations. Redwine was then given a tour of the labs and facilities. Highlights of the tour were the hydraulics lab and the sprinkler testing lab. The hydraulics lab is currently used most extensively for testing backflow prevention devices, filters, and emitter plugging. The indoor sprinkler testing

lab can evaluate sprinklers with a radius of throw of up to 100 ft. and contains a drip test bench.

Important ideas acquired on trip relating to the design of the Irrigation Technology Center include the following:

- ?? Long-term goals and long-range planning from the beginning will be essential for the success of the ITC.
- ?? Capability to test the mechanical properties of water would be a valuable asset.
- ?? The system used to support sprinklers during testing is critical to the accuracy of the results.

A Word from Dr. Fipps

The official launching of the development planning phase this summer is a significant step forward for the ITC. This has only been possible through the hard work and dedication of many individuals and organizations, as well as continued support from the Agriculture Program and others in the Texas A&M University System.

Our vision is to create a new facility with resources unlike any that presently exist. These resources will complement and expand, but not replace, the existing capabilities of public and private irrigation testing laboratories.

We anticipate close cooperation with other testing laboratories as ITC programs develop. There is more than ample work for all, if we are to preserve our industry in light of increasing competition for water.

This fall we will be completing the first phase of the ITC development plan, which will give us the "big picture," i.e.

total costs, projected revenues, concept design, land requirements, and organizational structure. Beginning in January 2001 will be the detailed planning and design review that is needed before actual construction can begin.

Land does not appear to be a problem. However, raising the millions to build and operate the center is not a small task and will require partnerships between federal, state, and local government, organizations, companies, and individuals. There are a number of ways that organizations and individuals can actively participate in making the ITC a reality. Please see our website or contact us directly for more information.

Guy Fipps
Professor and Extension Agricultural
Engineer