

Irrigation Association Wraps Up Successful 2013 Show & Conference



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AUSTIN, Texas – The Irrigation Association’s 2013 Irrigation Show and Education Conference packed the Austin Convention Center Nov. 4 – 8, drawing 4,000 participants and 315 exhibiting companies. The Irrigation Show is the only national trade show for the irrigation industry.

It was the first time we’d ever held a show in Austin, and it was a great central location,” said Steve McCarter, chair of IA’s expo advisory committee and senior product sales manager at Rain Bird Corporation. “Among the exhibitors I spoke with, the overall consensus was that the show had good traffic and high quality attendees.”

The education conference officially kicked off Monday, Nov. 4, with the highest number of class registrants since 2007. Also boding well for the industry were well-attended irrigation seminars and technical sessions. The inaugural International Agricultural Irrigation Summit attracted speakers from Brazil, Chile, the United States and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture. All of the event’s 83 educational offerings provided attendees with opportunities to earn IA continuing education units, with 17 landscape irrigation education classes approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to earn licensed Texas irrigators TCEQ credits.

Another show highlight included IA’s opening night networking event, Celebrate Texas!, which attracted its largest crowd to date – nearly 600 participants enjoyed Texas barbecue and a musical performance from Javier Colon, first-season winner of NBC’s “The Voice.”

On Wednesday, Nov. 6, attendees crowded the trade show floor to view a record number of irrigation products displayed at the New Product Contest showcase, meet with exhibitors and attend show floor education sessions. In addition to

agricultural and landscape irrigation presentations, show floor sessions included the presentation of awards to the 2013 Smart Marketing Contest winners and an update from Smart Water Application Technologies.

“This year, we’ve had a lot more local people – people from the central part of the United States – interested in [our] products,” said Doug Lasater, district sales manager for The Toro Company. “The show is always well done . it’s a very well-organized show.”

Keynote speakers Nolan Ryan and Chuck Morgan headlined the event’s general session, addressing an audience of 800 attendees. Their question-and-answer format featured topics ranging from Ryan’s favorite baseball memories to the importance of protecting Texas’ water supply. Additional general session highlights included a state of the association report and the presentation of awards to the 2013 IA award recipients and to the winners of this year’s New Product Contest.

Planning for 2014 is already underway. The 2014 Irrigation Show will feature keynote speaker Lowell Catlett, Ph.D., regents professor in agricultural economics and agricultural business and extension economics and the dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at New Mexico State University.

IA will once again welcome the International Professional Pond Companies Association and the American Rainwater Catchment Systems Association as co-locating partners. IA is also pleased to announce that it has been selected to participate in the U.S. Department of Commerce’s 2014 International Buyers Program, which will help increase international attendance at the Irrigation Show in 2014.

After Phoenix, Ariz., Nov. 17 – 21, 2014, the Irrigation Show and Education Conference will travel to Long Beach, Calif. (Nov. 9 – 13, 2015) and then to Las Vegas, Nev. (Dec. 5 – 9, 2016).

“We’re excited to return to Phoenix in 2014,” said McCarter. “With the success of this year’s show, we know we have a big job ahead to make sure next year’s show is even better.”