

Texas Irrigation Technology Center

Issue Statement:

The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce supports the effort to secure \$4 million in funding over the next biennium for the creation and statewide establishment of the Irrigation Technology Center (ITC), as proposed by the Texas A&M University System, that will be headquartered in San Antonio.

Background:

The Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System approved the establishment of the ITC in May 2002. The ITC is part of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and will work in partnership with Texas Cooperative Extension Service. The Board of Regents has also agreed to place the ITC headquarters in San Antonio.

The ITC will be administered through the Texas Water Resources Institute, a research and public information unit of the Experiment Station, which serves as a focal point for water-related research and outreach at Texas universities. Research and extension faculty at ITC facilities, Texas A&M University and 11 Agricultural Research and Extension Centers will work cooperatively to address the vital issue of water for Texas.

The ITC is seeking a state appropriation of \$2 million per year over the next biennium to cover unmet operating costs. Revenues also will be realized from some activities of the ITC, specifically the testing and certification labs, education and training, software sales, transfer fees, grants and donation.

To ensure adequate water supplies for the future, Texas must realize the full benefits of existing technologies; develop more efficient irrigation products, management, and reuse practices; educate agricultural and landscape irrigators; and identify policies that encourage conservation. Toward that end, The Texas A&M University System has established the ITC to lead in attaining these goals.

A new facility will be constructed in San Antonio to serve as headquarters for the ITC. Programs conducted there will address urban water issues, focusing on research and extension work in urban irrigation, equipment testing and certification, and wastewater reuse. Applied research studies and instruction on landscape irrigation, sprinkler testing, run-off collection, irrigation scheduling and testing also will be provided. The programs of the ITC in San Antonio will be closely coordinated with urban water utilities and authorities. In addition, the San Antonio facility also will house a self-supporting international division that will provide research and development programs for international agencies and organizations on a fee-basis.

The ITC will benefit from the following partners:

USDA: Agricultural Research Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Local and Regional: Agricultural commodity organizations; Bexar Met; City of San Antonio; Edwards Aquifer Authority; El Paso Water Utilities; River Authorities; San Antonio Water System; Texas Turfgrass Irrigation Association; Underground Water Conservation Districts and Irrigation Districts

Cooperators: Texas Department of Agriculture; Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board; Texas Water Development Board; U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Financial Impact:

At this time, Texas A&M University System is completing an impact statement.

The impact statement is being completed by the Texas A&M University System's Office of Economic and Community Development. The impact statement will be completed by the end of the year. The impact statement will be available to the public. The impact statement will be available to the public. The impact statement will be available to the public.

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