

Irrigation Technology Center

Texas A&M University System

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Irrigation Technology Center Established by Board of Regents

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the creation of the Irrigation Technology Center as a unit within the A&M System on May 24, 2002 at their regularly scheduled meeting in Laredo.

The proposal to create the ITC was presented to the Board by Dr. Ed Hiler, Vice Chancellor for Agricultural and Life Sciences, and was approved on a unanimous vote.

In establishing the ITC, the Regents also approved an expanded mission of the ITC--to coordinate irrigation research and Extension programs

statewide for the A&M System (see story on page 2). In addition, the Regents approved a plan to seek federal, state, and private funding for the ITC.

Organizationally, the Irrigation Technology Center is under the joint administration of Texas Cooperative Extension and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, and was created as a center of the Texas Water Resources Institute.

The complete text of the proposal approved by the Regents is posted on the ITC website: <http://itc.tamu.edu>.



Albritton Tower
in College Station, TX

ITC Feasibility Study Completed

Last year, the firm Beach Ramirez, Inc. of Houston, was contracted to do a feasibility study of the ITC and formulate a business development plan. The firm delivered their final report in February. The study confirmed that there is a pressing need for facilities and programs such as those proposed by the ITC. Since its programs will lead to significant water savings from irrigation, the ITC is expected to be a key in meeting Texas' future water demands, according to the study.

The ITC will also generate revenue from equipment testing through its irrigation and hydraulic labs and outdoor

facilities; other income will include contracts, grants, continuing education courses, and support from stakeholders.

The report includes design concepts, site selection criteria, a budget and plan to develop the center in six phases. The total capital budget of the center is estimated to be between \$26 million and \$30 million, with annual operating costs of about \$3.2 million.

The complete report is available on the ITC website: <http://itc.tamu.edu>.

Irrigation Technology Center *a part of the*

Texas Water Resources Institute
Administrated by:
Texas Cooperative Extension
Texas Agricultural Experiment
Station
Texas A&M University System

ITC Gets Going

An initiative to provide seed money for the ITC will be considered by the Texas Legislature during their session which begins in January 2003. However, the ITC is not waiting for new funding to initiate activities. Goals over the next 9 months include developing standardized protocols for irrigation research and on-farm demonstration programs to be used throughout the A&M System, conducting an irrigation needs assessment to help prioritize future programs and funding, and developing new training programs in drip and pivot irrigation and a CD-based correspondence course for landscape professionals. In addition, efforts are underway to finalize the design of the first sprinkler and flow meter testing lab.

The ITC is seeking advice on its internal organization from scientists and specialists within the A&M System, as well as with external organizations and agencies. Discussions are also underway to better define the proper linkages between the ITC and external organizations, governmental agencies and the irrigation industry.

Formal appointment of Division Directors will occur after this input is carefully considered and is expected during the summer of 2003. Formation of advisory groups and design review team will begin late this year.

ITC's Mission Expanded Statewide

The mission of the ITC has been expanded to include the coordination of irrigation research and Extension programs state-wide. We still plan to construct a new ITC facility in San Antonio on a 500 acre site with 4 testing laboratories, outdoor testing, demonstration and evaluation systems and landscapes.

The new facility in San Antonio will also serve as the administrative headquarters of the ITC Network and will provide invaluable support for A&M's irrigation

programs. Currently, there are 12 research and Extension centers with irrigation programs spread across Texas (see map). As a part of the ITC, these centers, located in all of Texas' ecological zones, will be able to better meet the needs of their individual regions by working together as a unified network, while ensuring that statewide issues and needs are also addressed.

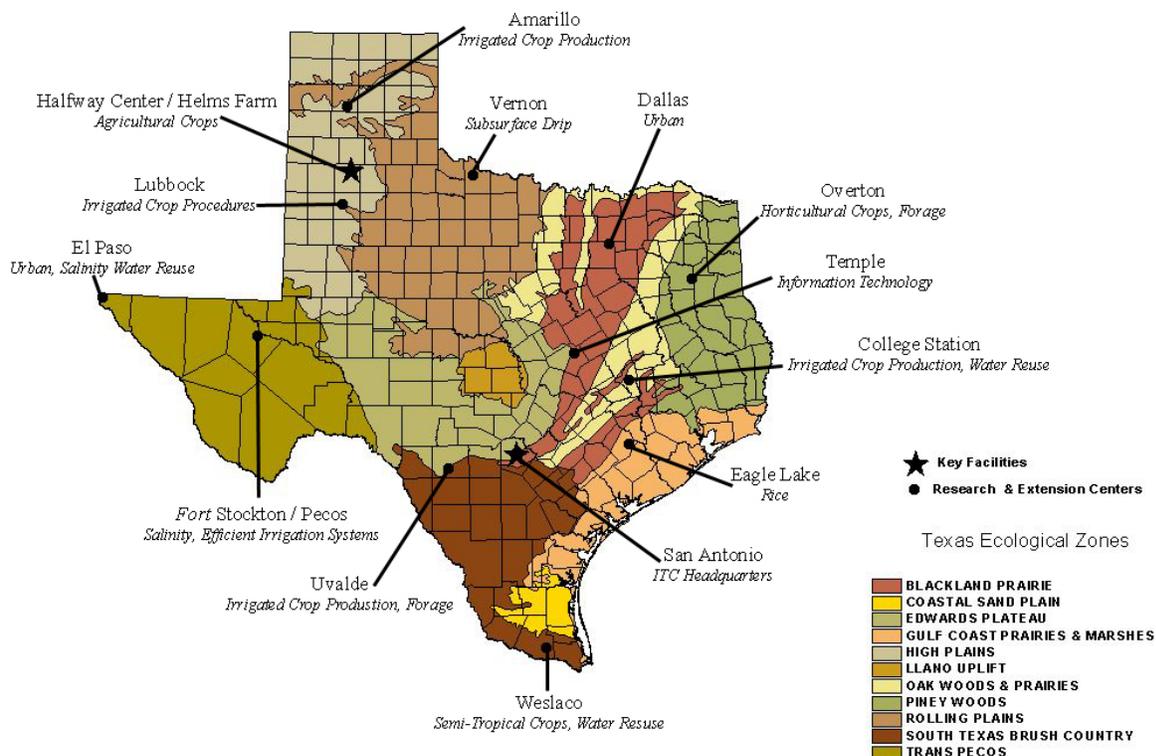
The Missions of the ITC as Approved by the Texas A&M System Board of Regents:

- Provide better coordination and support of irrigation research, Extension, and educational programs
- Develop new and improved agricultural and landscape irrigation technologies, management, and reuse practices.
- Provide training and educational services for irrigators, agency and industry personnel, and the public.
- Establish an equipment testing and certification program.
- Develop design and performance standards for agricultural and landscape irrigation systems.
- Promote opportunities for linkages with undergraduate and graduate academic programs.

The map and chart below illustrate how the irrigation programs of each off campus Texas A&M Research and Extension Center fits into the ITC. Primary coordination of specific programs is expected at the Division level. The vision of the ITC, as a statewide network, still remains the same: to ensure that the full benefits of existing

technologies and management practices are achieved; develop more efficient irrigation products, methods and management strategies; provide unsurpassed educational opportunities for both agricultural and landscape irrigators; and help Texas and the world meet future water needs.

The Irrigation Technology Center Network Major Facilities and Programs



Irrigation Programs of Texas A&M Research & Extension Centers and where they fall within ITC Divisions

<u>Agricultural</u>	<u>Urban</u>	<u>Testing</u>	<u>Waste Reuse</u>	<u>International</u>
Halfway Center/Helms Farm	Dallas	San Antonio	San Antonio	San Antonio
Amarillo	El Paso		Weslaco	College Station
Lubbock	San Antonio		El Paso	
College Station	Overton		College Station	
Beaumont/Eagle Lake				
Uvalde				
Pecos/Fort Stockton				
Temple				



Demonstration canal at ITRC

Treese tours CIT and ITRC

Bryan Treese, Extension Assistant – ITC Coordinator, visited the testing and research facilities of the Center for Irrigation Technology (CIT) at California State University in Fresno and the Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC) at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo in May 2002.

The trip was made in preparation for the design of the ITC’s testing laboratories and facilities. The first sprinkler testing lab is expected to be finalized by January 2003. Treese said he wanted to see how other facilities were designed to ensure that the ITC labs are state-of-the-art and on the cutting edge of technology.

During his visit to CIT located in Fresno, CA, Treese was hosted by Ed Norum, CIT’s long time engineer from whom he learned about CIT’s development, current capabilities, and problems incurred throughout the years of operation. Mr. Norum noted that the add-on construction and lack of space have presented problems

and impacted their programs. Mr. Norum also emphasized the need to be able to offer a wide variety of educational opportunities using such facilities.

At the ITRC, Treese was hosted by Stewart Styles, Lecturer and Irrigation Engineer. Mr. Styles showed Treese ITRC’s research and training facilities which include a linear move system and a canal test section for demonstrations, and discussed the ITRC’s extensive training and educational programs.

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

- The ITC’s design should be flexible so to facilitate modifications and changing needs over time.
- The facility should be designed to help foster industry innovations, while maintaining a link with educational programs.

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A Word from Dr. Fipps

What’s been interesting about the ITC is how its concept and missions have evolved over time through the input of ITC’s many supporters. The expansion of the ITC mission to include coordination of A&M irrigation research and extension programs is a dramatic development.

We say that Texas is like a “whole - nother country.” East to West, we go from 60 inches of rain in the rice growing areas of Beaumont to the Chihuahua desert where an important component of El Paso’s water supply is the recycling of municipal wastewater. North to South, we go from the high plains of large scale pivot irrigation out of the diminishing Ogallala Aquifer, to the semi-tropical Rio Grande Valley and it’s large network of irrigation districts and total reliance on river flow.

Individually, it is difficult for any single region to come up with sufficient resources, or for any single Research and Extension center to effectively address all the irrigation issues of that region.

The state-wide ITC Network coupled with the proposed new facility in San Antonio will give Texas and other regions, the type of capability needed to improve irrigation technology, practices and innovation in order to help meet our future water demands.

Guy Fipps

ITC Program Director
Professor and Extension Agricultural Engineer

We’re on the Web!
<http://itc.tamu.edu>
