

# Water Conservation in Landscape Irrigation

## Making a Difference

### Issues Lead to Water Loss

- ◆ The state of landscape-irrigation design, operation and management in Texas is poor. Approximately 50 percent of irrigation water applied is lost due to inefficiencies and improper operation.
- ◆ The State of Texas, through the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), requires licensing and continuing education for landscape irrigators, irrigation technicians, and inspectors. These requirements are aimed at improving the operational efficiency and management of landscape irrigation.

### Extension's Response

- ◆ Established in 1994 by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the *School of Irrigation* was created to promote landscape-irrigation auditing and management in Texas through training and certification.
- ◆ In conjunction with the school, an ET-based management program was created based on the courses and materials taught by the school.
- ◆ The school provides quality irrigation education through a variety of courses that include: 1) irrigation water management and scheduling; 2) drip irrigation; 3) ET-and sensor-based irrigation controllers; 4) irrigation computer-aided design; 5) and landscape-irrigation auditing and management.
- ◆ The courses educate licensed irrigators and other landscape professionals (including conservation directors) on new irrigation technologies, design, installation and management procedures, and regulatory issues, while meeting TCEQ continuing-education requirements.
- ◆ To date, the *School of Irrigation* has provided continuing-education and irrigation-auditor

certification to more than 4,500 individuals. Since 2008, 1,507 landscape irrigators have received their continuing education through the school.

- ◆ The school also provides valuable professional development to municipal employees, park and grounds managers, and conservation directors of public agencies.

### Economic Impact

- ◆ By providing high-quality landscape-irrigation courses that meet the state's continuing-education requirements, this educational and training effort directly supports 423 jobs in the landscape-irrigation industry, with an estimated annual wage base of \$9 million.
- ◆ The school's certified irrigation auditors conduct an estimated 2,433 landscape-irrigation audits annually for a variety of water users, including schools, churches, businesses, apartments and townhomes, residential homes, and municipalities (parks, esplanades and golf courses).
- ◆ The average water savings resulting from landscape-irrigation audits ranges from 12 percent to more than 30 percent (depending on the type of user), leading to a savings of more than 700 million gallons annually, or 7 billion gallons over 10 years. The estimated value of this water is \$3 million annually based on average municipal water rates.

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