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Spring 2011

# PIPELINE

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# **PIPELINE**

**Volume 8, Issue 2: Spring 2011**

## **FEATURES**

- 10 Increase Sales with Drip Irrigation**
- 16 Step By Step Guide to Convert Spray Beds to Water-Saving Dripperlines**
- 24 Professional Credentials: A Step Forward for Business Owners & Employees**
- 28 Florida Irrigation Society's 2011 Florida Water Summit**

## **DEPARTMENTS**

- 4 PRESIDENT MESSAGE**
- 6 INDUSTRY NEWS**
- 9 UPCOMING EVENTS**
- 32 SALES & MARKETING**
- 34 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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## The Green Industry: Change and Opportunity



Many of the people I speak with in our industry have seen a marked increase in their business as compared to a couple of years ago. Much of this business is the result of customers paying the price for deferred maintenance as well as the extended dry weather taking its toll on subpar systems constructed during the boom years. Renovating and maintaining existing projects is big business. Companies that generated most of their revenue from new construction just three years ago now receive 70%, or even more, from maintenance and renovation work. Florida is starting to grow again. However, as a percentage, new development is relatively small with the exception in areas with large tracts of vacant land.

It is increasingly difficult to keep built landscapes viable and attractive due to tight budgets, limited water resources and restrictions on water use. The relatively inexpensive water resources throughout the state have already been claimed and allocated. Going forward, the water management districts are telling us to look for alternative water supplies that are often expensive or unavailable, and to reduce water consumption.

This presents a great opportunity for everyone in the green industry. Consultants, manufacturers, distributors and contractors can position themselves in the market to gain business retooling irrigation systems and landscapes. There is still time to be part of the movement to do more with less. Better, cheaper and faster (and profitable) has been the mantra of the computer industry for years. Our industry now has a plethora of relatively inexpensive products and services that allow us to install and update irrigation systems and landscapes that are water thrifty and manage them with significantly less labor, energy and petroleum based products.

Change is necessary to stay relevant. Trying new approaches may mean learning new techniques, pushing ones self and taking chances. The Florida Irrigation Society is here to help you change and move your business in the direction of growth and profitability. This edition of the Pipeline is a perfect example of that help. The articles on using and converting irrigation systems to low volume, the article on branding your business to stand out from your competition, and the article on the importance of training and certification classes brought to you by the society will help you determine ways to stay relevant in this changing market.

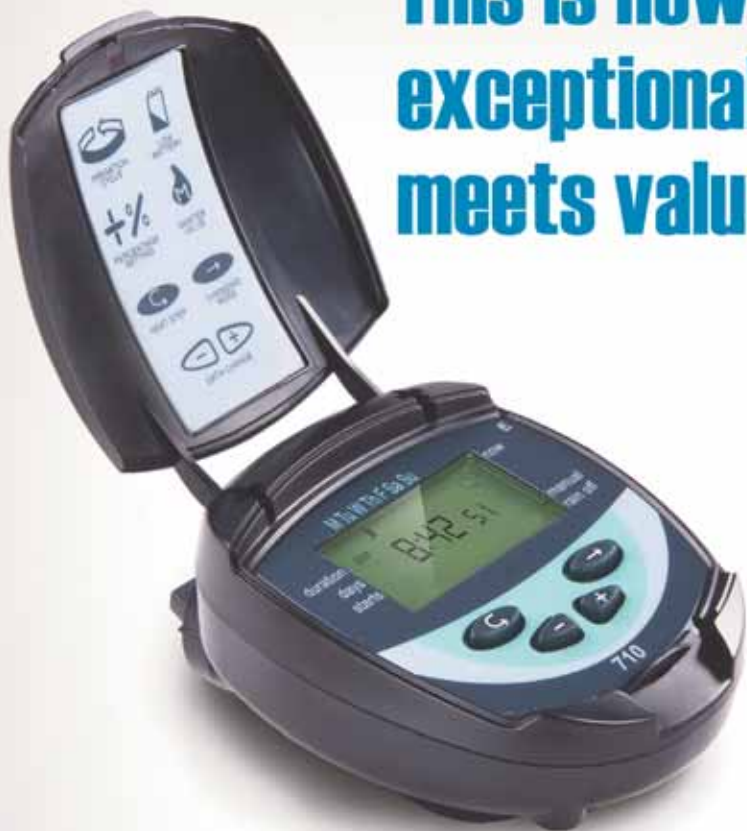
Like many business owners and managers you have probably hunkered down the past couple of years due to the challenging economy. Now is the time to invest in yourself and your business and to try new approaches for improved customer value. The Florida Irrigation Society's board of directors is working hard to provide programs and services that will make it easier for you to be successful.

I invite you to attend the society's Water Summit the first week of August at the beautiful Omni ChampionsGate Resort just south of Orlando. Come hear what your colleagues are doing in the market, meet industry leaders, get first hand explanations of new regulations from the officials that create policy, and see what new products and services manufacturers and distributors offer.

I invite you to come and get involved in the new direction we are headed in, as an industry and organization. Review the Water Summit agenda in this issue of the Pipeline and mark your calendar. I look forward to seeing you in early August!

*Kevin Cavaioli*

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# Annual Landscape Challenge Winners




FNGLA and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) crowned a new "Ruling Water Champion" for 2011 at the Landscape Challenge on April 22 at Halpatokee Park in Stuart, FL.

Congratulations to Pinder's Nursery of Palm City and its teammates: Terri Pinder, FCHP, Alice Nicholl, FCHP, Ann Marie Gray and Holly McCartney. This team scored highest in a fun, competitive and educational demonstration of landscape management skills that incorporated Florida-Friendly Best Management Practices. The four areas of competition focused on right plant/right place, fertilization, irrigation and spill containment.

## NE Fall Fishing Tourney: Be There!

The Northeast Florida Chapter will host the 3rd Annual "Creek Wars" Fishing tournament on October 15, 2011. A website is being developed specifically for the tournament. The Chapter will soon install an irrigation system at the local extension office in the area as well.

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## Southwest Chapter Golf Tournament



On April 30th the Southwest Florida Chapter held their 4th Annual Golf Tournament at the Westminster Golf Club in Lehigh Acres. With the great support of over 80- golfers and Sponsors we were

able to raise enough money to help fund our Scholarship Fund and Legislative Funds, we would like to thank all of those that were able to participate and support our organization.

## Save The Date For Emma's 3rd Annual Fishing Tournament

Emma Faith Hall was diagnosed with a brain tumor at three months of age and has been fighting the setbacks since. The doctors did not give her much of a chance and thought she would not make it to the age of one. Today, she is eight years old and learning to walk, speak and read Braille! Please join us on October 8, 2011 at Mullock Creek Marina in Ft. Myers for a fun day and support for Emma to continue her costly therapy programs! For information, visit [emma.faith.hall@facebook.com](mailto:emma.faith.hall@facebook.com).

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# Tampa Chapter Annual Golf Outing



The Florida Irrigation Society Tampa Bay Chapter held their 16th Annual Golf Tournament on April 9, 2011 at the Eagles Golf Course and had 89 golfers participate.

Thank you to those "behind the scenes" people who made this such a successful event: Jim and Jan Serina for handling the registration for the event, Dave Marquette and Dave Martin for sitting out on the Hole in One and passing out peanuts, prizes and selling raffle tickets, Dera Nolan, Rob Hill, Donna Vento and Brian Werner for

assisting with the sign-in and passing out golf towels, and Jan Serina and Donna Vento for the Hole sponsor pictures and team pictures.

There were three \$250 cash 50/50 drawing winners. The Chapter would like to thank Hunter Industries, Toro/Irritrol, Rain Bird, Ditch Witch of Central and South Florida, Jeff Davidson, Dave Marquette and Larry Lentz for their donations and to all the hole and beer cart sponsors. Next year's 17th Annual Golf Tournament will be held on April 14, 2012.

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**JULY 2011**

**July 5**

Tampa Bay Chapter Meeting  
CDB's Southside, Tampa

**July 12**

Northwest Florida Chapter Meeting  
Ed's Legendary Seafood & Steaks,  
Niceville

Palm Beach Martin County Chapter  
Meeting  
Duffy's Sports Grill, North Palm Beach

Volusia Chapter Meeting  
Clubhouse Restaurant, Daytona Beach

**July 13**

Central Florida Chapter Meeting  
International House of Pancakes,  
Orlando

**July 20**

Northeast Florida Chapter Meeting  
Location TBA

Southwest Florida Chapter Meeting  
MacDaddy's, Fort Myers

**AUGUST 2011**

**August 2**

Tampa Bay Chapter Meeting  
CDB's Southside, Tampa

**August 3**

FIS Florida Water Summit  
Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate,  
Orlando

**August 4**

FIS Florida Water Summit  
Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate,  
Orlando

**August 5**

FIS Florida Water Summit  
Omni Orlando at ChampionsGate,  
Orlando

**August 9**

Northwest Florida Chapter Meeting  
Ed's Legendary Seafood & Steaks,  
Niceville

Palm Beach Martin County Chapter  
Meeting  
Duffy's Sports Grill, North Palm Beach

Volusia Chapter Meeting  
Clubhouse Restaurant, Daytona Beach

**August 10**

Central Florida Chapter Meeting  
International House of Pancakes,  
Orlando

**August 17**

Northeast Florida Chapter Meeting  
Location TBA

Southwest Florida Chapter Meeting  
MacDaddy's, Fort Myers

*For more information, please visit  
[www.fisstate.org](http://www.fisstate.org) or call Jennifer  
Amarosa at 813-839-4601.*

The Florida Irrigation Society will host its Annual Winter Meeting,  
December 2, 2011 at the Historic Dubsread Golf Course in Orlando.



# increase sales with **D RIP** **IRRIGATION**

By Benjamin Raines, DIG Corporation Marketing Manager

**Due to the current state of the economy, the landscaping industry is being forced to step back from typical business practices and start to think outside the box. How can you make your business more profitable in a relatively stagnant market and increase sales? Both potential and existing customers are just as effected in this market, and it is becoming increasingly more difficult to offer new services in which they will part with their hard earned money.**

**A**n important factor to consider is that water restrictions are becoming increasingly prevalent nationwide and more focus needs to be directed to water efficiency and conservation practices. Drought ordinances are being adopted in many regions as a response to the insufficient amount of water supply along with restricted watering schedules and, in some cases, irrigation is restricted entirely.

Along with water restrictions, the cost of water is going to be greatly increased if it hasn't been already in your area. Being proactive by educat-

ing and offering your clients valid solutions to these predicaments can easily be translated to profit. Installing drip irrigation in all non-turf areas is a great place to start.

Drip irrigation (aka low volume/micro irrigation) when installed correctly can save up to 60% or more water over conventional sprinkler systems. Many other benefits that are associated with drip irrigation include eliminating overspray (no more watering sidewalks), no loss of water from run-off (due to the slow application of water), less weed growth (water is focused on a specific plant's root zone unlike typical overhead sprays). All of these factors result in



healthier plants. In addition, water restriction laws are typically bypassed when drip irrigation is used allowing customers to irrigate even on non-watering days. This opens up a great opportunity to increase sales.

When first looking into drip irrigation, it can tend to be a little overwhelming since there are many options available to achieve a functioning drip system. Once you understand the basic and necessary components you'll find that assembly and installation are fairly simple.

There are multiple ways to install an efficient, water conserving drip system. For first-time new installations and even for retrofitting existing systems, it is important to start the system correctly with a proper head assembly. A drip zone head assembly will include a valve followed by a filter then a pressure regulator. Probably the most important part of a correctly operating drip system is the pressure regulator.

Drip systems must have a low-pressure range (25-35 psi) or they will not function properly. A correct pressure range can insure that each drip emitter

**“There are multiple ways to install efficient, water conserving drip system. For first-time installations and even for retrofitting existing systems, it is important to start the system correctly with a proper head assembly.”**

is producing the gallon per hour (GPH) that it states. Therefore, installation of a pressure regulator prior to installation of a drip system is essential. Systems installed without a pressure regulator will result in flow rate inconsistencies and emitters popping off the mainline.

Starting at the water source, run poly tubing throughout the areas that will be irrigated with drip. Poly tubing (avail-

able in half-, three-quarter- and one-inch diameters) is considered your primary lateral line with drip irrigation. The poly tubing allows the ability to insert drip emitters directly into the poly tubing with a small hand held punch or branch off to plants using one-quarter inch micro tubing. Poly tubing can be buried or left on the surface depending on your aesthetic preference and can be cut with scissors or pruning shears.

If left in the sun for a few minutes, the poly tubing becomes more pliable and easy to work with. UV inhibitors within the poly tubing materials protect it from direct sun exposure so that its durability is ensured whether or not you decide to bury it. After the desired length of poly tubing has been run, close off the end of the line using a figure 8-end closure or a compression end cap leaving the end of the poly tubing above ground. This will enable periodic flushing to remove debris from installed drippers.



Point source drip emitters are most commonly used in a drip irrigation system. There are many different types of drip emitters available to choose from with



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multiple flow rates, though the most popular are the pressure compensating (PC). PC emitters contain internal diaphragms that are self-cleaning and that regulate the specific flow rate stated. Installing PC emitters can be beneficial for long runs and uneven landscapes because they will consistently provide an accurate flow rate.

Soil type should be considered when installing drip irrigation. Emitter flow rates should be chosen based on how well the soil absorbs water. Select drip-per flow rates based upon the site soil type. With heavier clay soils, use half or one GPH emitters, with lighter, sandy soils, go with 2 or 4 GPH emitters.

Existing sprinkler systems can be easily converted into multi-outlet drip systems. Retrofit drip manifolds mount directly onto half-inch risers, in place of existing sprinkler heads, and are available in 4 to 12 outlets. Drip manifolds come with pre-set and adjustable flow rates (1/2-20 GPH) and do not require an inline pressure regulator if your existing pressure is at or below 60 PSI. One quarter-inch poly or vinyl micro tubing is used to run from to the drip manifold to the plant in lengths up to 25 feet. Also used for new installations, drip manifolds are typically set within plant groupings and placed below the surface inside six-inch valve boxes.

Emitter line (aka dripline) is another method of installing drip irrigation. Drip

emitters come pre-installed within the poly tubing and are easily rolled out along the desired area to be irrigated. With multiple flow rates and various dripper spacing, dripline is an uncomplicated installation that is perfect for row plantings and densely planted areas. The pre-installed drip emitters are self-flushing and typically contain two outlets per drippers in order to minimize clogging. In addition, the dripline is available with pressure compensating drip emitters to ensure consistent flow rates.

Drip irrigation systems use compression fittings that require no glue. A hand punch tool for installing drip emitters is the only drip specific tool necessary. This makes for simple repairs and modifications due to changes in the layout of your landscape. To change the location of a drip emitter, simply pull out the emitter, insert a goof plug, and use a punch to install in a new location.

Drip irrigation is not just an option to save water therefore becoming more "green" focused but has the potential to save your clients money as well. This method of irrigation can become a valuable sales tool that could allow you to promote your business. All of the incentives drip irrigation offers can produce fantastic sales opportunities in addition to creating a new strategy to expand and remarket your business. 💧

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# STEP-BY-STEP

## Guide to Convert Spray Beds to Water-Saving

# DRIPPERLINES

By **David Hammond**, Netafim USA, Southeastern Region District Sales Manager

One of the most visible signs of wasteful water use and one of the easiest to remedy is a bed or shrub area with overhead sprays throwing water on walkways, driveways, buildings and cars. Converting these spray heads to drip irrigation is a practical way to help clients conserve water while still maintaining a beautiful landscape.

**A**s plants mature and spread, they obstruct the original spray pattern, requiring that heads be adjusted or raised above the shrubs and plants, which

can be a hazard. Overspray also contributes to run-off and erosion, creates slippery pavements and sends soil amendments, fertilizers and other chemicals down storm drains.

When these deficiencies are brought to the attention of a homeowner or property manager, the benefits of a low volume replacement system become a relatively easy sell, and a lucrative new business niche for irrigation contractors. In addition, a replacement drip system is easier to maintain and delivers more uniform coverage, improving the aesthetics of the landscape.



*Converting spray heads to drip irrigation in a shrub or bedding area is a sustainable solution to maintaining an attractive landscape while still conserving water.*

### **SMALLER, MORE FLEXIBLE DRIP LINE**

Just recently, smaller 12mm-wide dripperline has entered the market as an alternative to sprays in bedding areas – and





*Manual flush valve is installed at the furthest point from the water source.*

converting these sites can be a fast, easy and profitable job. Because drip irrigation conserves water, some sites may also be exempt from watering restrictions and bans. (Check local regulations on this.)

Lightweight and easy to handle, 12mm tubing is designed to lay flat on the ground in a single looped pattern

within a 50 square feet to 1,800 square feet area. With the addition of a couple fittings, the new on-surface system can be installed in very little time. And, by pricing the system as an overall project, per zone or on a square foot basis, this fast and easy switch-out translates into increased profits.



*New 12mm-wide on-surface dripperline allows more creativity in garden design. Lightweight and flexible, it can be installed in curved bedding areas, side strips and in decorative “channels” between hardscape.*

**“The versatile tubing also works well in curved and angled beds, side strips and narrow decorative “channels” that run between hardscape surfaces.”**

The flexibility of lightweight tubing has also encouraged more creativity in garden design. Contractors are installing 12mm dripperline in raised planters, rooftop gardens, green walls and trellises. The versatile tubing also works well in curved and angled beds, side strips and narrow decorative “channels” that run between hardscape surfaces.

Clients will also see financial benefits, including lower water costs; reduced liability in high traffic areas; no asphalt damage from run-off; and less vandalism.

As agronomists often point out, drip irrigation not only saves water, it delivers healthier, more robust plants. That’s because drip tubing is designed to irrigate the landscape at low pressure, with a slow and steady application of water to the root zone.

In fact, with drip you can match the amount of water applied to the specific needs of the plant material. Additionally, drip systems are always installed with pressure regulators, rarely the

case with spray heads. Without pressure regulation, spray systems will mist and fog, causing evaporation and longer run times and wasted water.

With new technical advantages, drip irrigation has been shown to be more than 90 percent efficient in water use, while spray heads in shrub beds often operate only up to 60 percent efficiency.

### **NEW DRIPPERLINE FEATURES**

New 12mm dripperline is designed with emitters placed every 6”, 12” or 18” inside the tubing. This integral dripperline is easier to handle and less likely to be damaged than inline “button type” emitters. Integral dripperline, especially with pressure compensation, is also considered a “professional grade” product.

Dripper flow rates of 0.26, 0.4, 0.6 and 0.9 GPH are available. With these low flow rates, water is applied slowly, evenly and less is required. By applying water in this way, the system becomes very efficient, though you may need to

irrigate for a longer period to apply the desired amount.

The actual emitter spacing and flow rates that you use will depend on plant types and soil conditions. In general, a wider spacing and less flow are required for heavier clay soil and drought-tolerant plants, while higher flow and closer spacing is needed for sandy soil and water-loving plants. In clay soil, it is better to design your system around 0.26 and 0.4 GPH emitters and adjust the spacing for the desired application rate.

The 12mm tubing is also pressure compensating and continuously self-flushing. Pressure compensation makes certain that the emitters at the start of the line will flow at the same rate as the emitters at the end of the system. This guarantees an even, uniform application rate throughout the irrigated area. The self-flushing feature flushes out any dirt and debris that may collect in the line.



*Drip manufacturers now provide pre-assembled Control Zone Kits with a pressure regulator, valve and filter than can be installed quickly.*

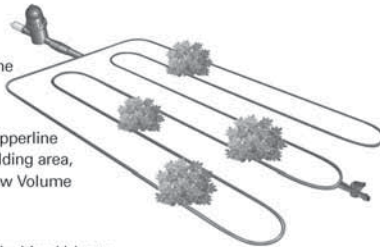
Several other benefits to share with homeowners and property managers are the "camouflage" and "recycling" properties of 12mm dripperline. Smaller tubing disappears into the landscape when covered with mulch, gravel or ground

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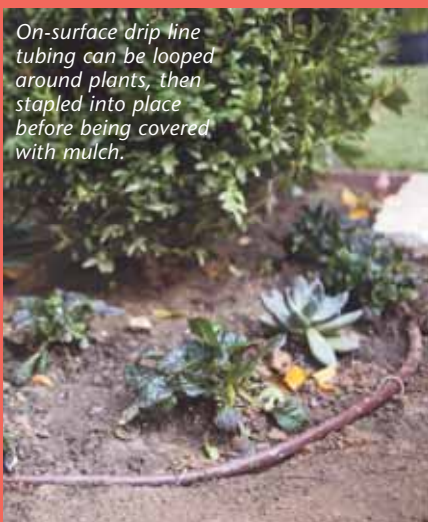


*Small beds or shrub areas can easily be converted to dripper line with just one roll and two fittings. Use the same controller, valve and existing irrigation lines.*

cover...and recycled materials contribute to a sustainable environment.

## CONVERTING A SPRAY BED: STEP-BY-STEP

**1** The first steps in converting a spray bed to on-surface drip irrigation is to determine the square footage of the area,



*On-surface drip line tubing can be looped around plants, then stapled into place before being covered with mulch.*

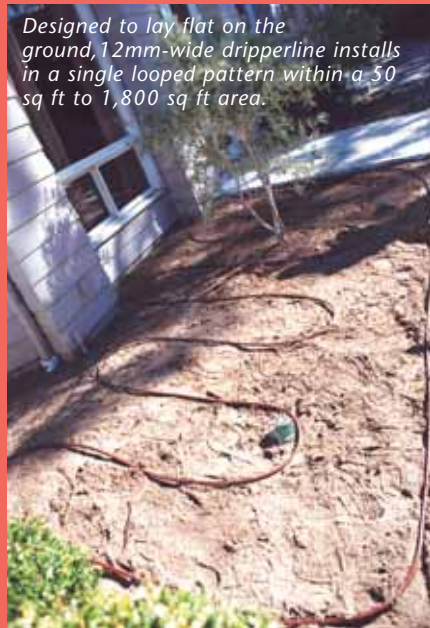
the soil type and the system pressure. This will help you figure the flow rate, the spacing and the lateral row spacing of the on-surface dripperline. The soil will not require any special preparation.

**2** You can often use the same controller and valve that were operating the spray heads as long as the valve is large enough for the total GPM of the new system – and in most cases it will be as a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" valve is usually more than you need for smaller zones.

**3** The existing irrigation lines running to the site can also be utilized as long as the PVC is large enough for the total GPM of the system, which, again, in most cases you will have  $\frac{3}{4}$ " or 1" PVC to work with. A friction loss chart can be helpful to reference if you have a large zone.

**4** Existing plants or shrubs can remain in place. On-surface dripperline is very flexible and you will have a variety of fittings to work with so you can run the tubing alongside the pre-existing plant material.

**“The first steps in converting a spray bed to on-surface drip irrigation is to determine the square footage of the area, the soil type and the system pressure.”**



*Designed to lay flat on the ground, 12mm-wide dripperline installs in a single looped pattern within a 50 sq ft to 1,800 sq ft area.*

**5** If you are installing new shrubs and flowers, 1-gallon plants should be put in after the on-surface tubing is in place. If you are adding larger 5-gallon or 15-gallon plants or boxed trees, however, you would plant them first and then lay down the looped tubing.

**6** To start, cap off or remove all of the spray sprinkler heads.

**7** Connect to the water source. Drip irrigation can be connected to a hose bib or one of the nipples that the sprinklers heads were previously connected to by using a combo “T” that reduces from threads to insert. Typically most contractors begin by connecting the drip system straight after the valve, filter, pressure regulator combo. In retrofit applications, though, existing sidewalks and other hardscapes may not allow this, therefore connecting to the existing PVC laterals through one of the before mentioned nipples is an easy alternative. Also the filter and pressure regulator do not have to be right next to the valve.

They can be farther down stream as long as they are installed in a valve box before you start your tubing run.

**8** Next, choose the appropriately-sized pressure regulator. Typically a regulator with a range from 20 to 45 psi will work fine. The higher the psi on the regulator the more tubing you can install. Then connect a valve, filter and pressure regulator kit before the tubing. Drip manufacturers now provide pre-assembled Control Zone Kits with a pressure regulator, valve and filter that can be installed quickly without guesswork.

**9** Connect the drip line with a combo “T”. After it is connected, start-



ing at the “T,” loop the drip tubing around the plants or bed using evenly spaced rows 16 to 24” apart. Use fittings to add rows and keep the outside rows about 2” to 4” away from edges of the hardscape or adjacent planters that are on another valve or zone. Complete the looping and return the tubing back to the “T.” Note: Manufacturers often show a typical system layout on the drip tubing labels. The labels illustrate what a loop design looks like and can help you determine how much tubing you will need to cover the square footage and how long to run the controller for each valve.

**110** Secure the tubing to the ground. Drip line staples should be placed every 3’ to 5’. If the soil is soft the staples can be pushed in by hand. Otherwise, use a hammer, rubber mallet or a smooth rock to anchor the staples into harder soil. Use staples that are curved at the top so they do not pinch the tubing.

**111** Add a manual flush valve. A manual flush valve will need to be installed in the middle of the looped system at the location farthest from

the water source and towards the lowest point. Its function is to periodically clean or flush the system; however, it only needs to be flushed a few times a year.

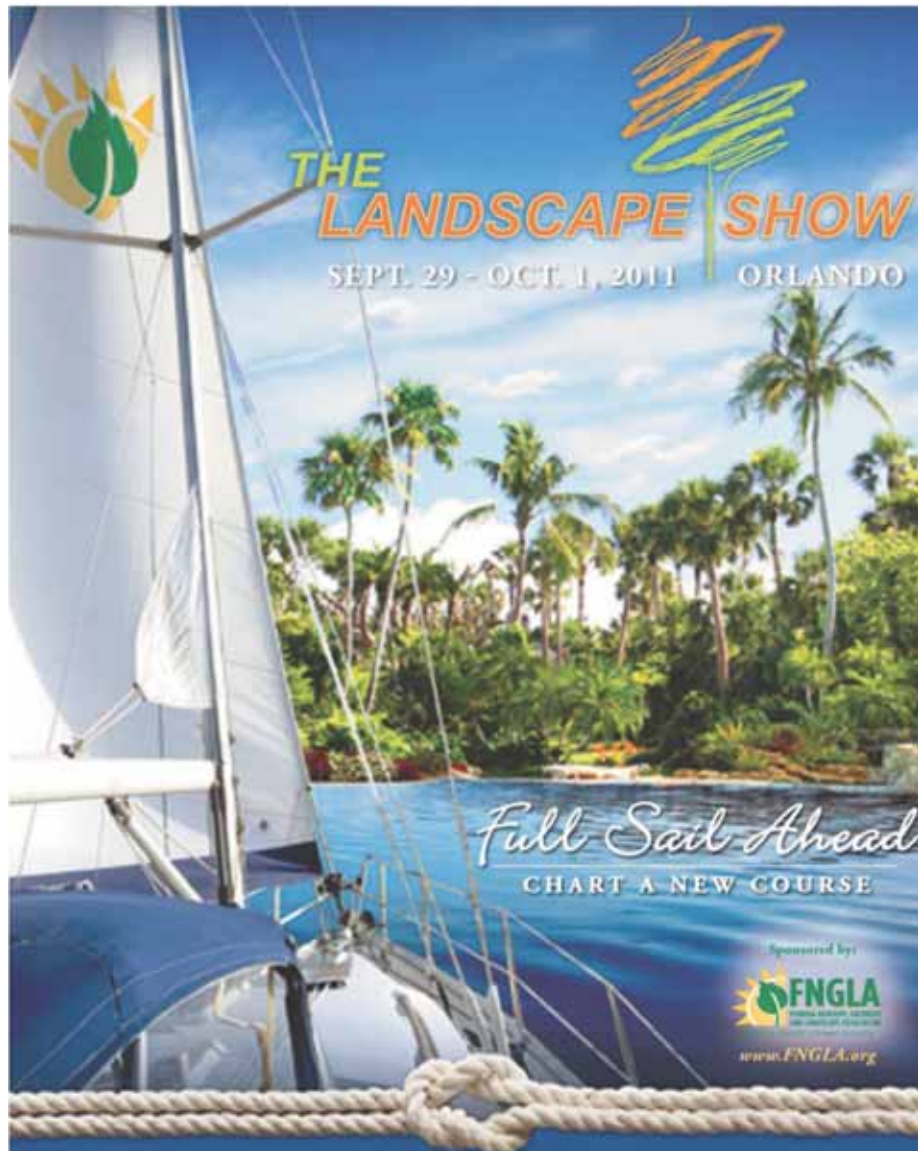
**112** Test the system. Before covering the tubing with mulch, turn on the water and time how long it takes for the soil to become saturated and for water to move from one lateral line to the next. Make sure there are no leaks at your connections.

**113** Cover with mulch. Once you have turned on the system and tested the connections, you can cover the drip tubing with mulch or ground cover if desired. When covered with mulch, on-surface drip tubing disappears into the landscape, yet is still easily accessible.

**114** Maintenance. Most contractors find it is a good idea is to flush the system during routine servicing when you clean the filter. This should be scheduled once a quarter. If the site is on city water and you are using a manufacturer’s disk filters, it will be rare that any dirt and debris gets past them! 💧



*Small beds or shrub areas can be converted to 12mm dripperline with just one roll of tubing and two fittings.*



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# PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS:

## A Step Forward for Business Owners & Employees

By **Kurt Thompson**, K. Thompson & Associates, LLC

**T**he benefits of investing in improving your company's professional status can sometimes be elusive, especially when there are economic pressures like those that exist in today's business climate. The decision can often seem to hinge on the proverbial "chicken or egg" perspective of investing now to increase profitability later or waiting until times get better before investing.

Here in Florida, waiting for some outside condition to improve in order to advance your company financially is probably a good choice if you believe that the best place for your savings is under your mattress. Taking control over your company's financial future by proactively acting now is clearly the best choice for most businesses and industry professionals.

Whether you are an owner of a business trying to gain an advantage in your marketplace or an employee looking to increase your value to your employer, one of the best ways to get started is to work on elevating your professional status. This goes beyond just taking courses. This means obtaining a professional credential to show your accomplishment to the world in a tangible form.

In the irrigation industry, professional credentials are either a certification or a license. Since there is not yet a Florida state irrigation contractor license, the best credentials are the nationally recognized certifications established by the Irrigation Association (IA).

Holding a current IA certification has direct and tangible benefits to a company or employee as a professional credential. IA certification carries with it the ability to:

- Separate yourself or your company from the rest of the competition in a way that increases value and therefore increases profitability.
- Hold a professional credential that has national recognition as well as Florida implications.
- Qualify to install irrigation for specific Florida entities requiring IA certification (Toho Water Authority, Miami-Dade School District, etc.)
- Become an EPA WaterSense® Partner.
- Obtain the critical knowledge needed for meeting the future Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> program requirements.



In the irrigation industry, there are seven certifications established by the Irrigation Association that are nationally recognized. The Florida Irrigation Society, like many of the state irrigation trade associations, is a proud affiliate association of the IA and works closely with them on issues that affect all irrigation businesses in Florida.

The IA certifications are Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor (CLIA), Certified Irrigation Contractor (CIC), Certified Irrigation Designer – Residential (CID-R), Certified Irrigation Designer – Commercial (CID-C), Certified Irrigation Designer - Golf Irrigation (CID-G), Certified Golf Irrigation Auditor (CGIA), and Certified Water Conservation Manager – Landscape (CWCM-L).

**“Whether they had been in the industry three years or 30 years, past students have said how much they have benefited from this knowledge.”**

### **EPA WaterSense® Program**

Becoming a WaterSense® Partner is important for irrigation contractors in Florida for a number of reasons. Many national and regional builders and developers want to have their projects designated with the WaterSense® label to add value as environmentally responsible. In order for a project to be EPA WaterSense labeled, it must be designed and installed by WaterSense® Partners, using WaterSense labeled products (as the product labeling process evolves). Also, the home must have an irrigation audit performed by a WaterSense partner.

This could provide significant opportunities for contractors who are WaterSense® Partners. To become a WaterSense® Partner, a contractor or specifier must obtain and keep current one certification from the Irrigation Association or other WaterSense® labeled certification program. All IA certifications (except the CWCM-L) are recognized by the EPA as WaterSense® Labeled Certifications.

### **Florida Water StarSM Program**

Florida Water StarSM is primarily a voluntary certification program for new and existing residential and commercial developments that encourages water efficiency in household appliances, plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems, and landscapes.

The Toho Water Authority in Central Florida requires builders to secure Florida Water StarSM certification for all new projects. A property using a Water StarSM Authorized Provider for the design and installation can earn additional points towards the qualification. Additionally, IA certified individuals will be farther along in the knowledge and understanding of the principles behind Water StarSM criteria.

### **Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor**

In considering which of the IA certifications with which to start, the landscape irrigation auditor (CLIA) certification has proven to be the best. Not only will you learn how and why plants use water, how the soil stores it and the elements that affect distributing water uniformly and how to measure it, you will also learn how to turn this knowledge into business activities that can increase your profitability.

Whether they had been in the industry three years or 30 years, past students have said how much they have benefited from this knowledge. The optional exam review training course is a terrific learning opportunity for any professional who sets up or manages an irrigation system, whether they intend to take a certification exam or not.

All testing for IA certification is managed by an independent professional testing company. It is now done electronically and is referred to as “online testing”. No longer will you have to conform to a

predetermined testing schedule and have to travel to some distant location. In Florida, virtually every community or technical college has a testing center where you may take any IA certification exam.

And the exam date is set to your individual schedule. So you can now take as much time as you need after taking an exam review training course before you take the exam and schedule the exam at a community college closest to you.

The process for becoming a certified irrigation auditor is simple and easy:

- 1 Register for the exam review training course with the Florida Irrigation Society (The course is optional, but highly recommended). You DO NOT have to apply to the IA certification program or register for the exam in order to attend the review course.
- 2 Order the training manual and begin reviewing prior to attending the training course.
- 3 Apply to the program and register for exam with the IA. If you're an IA Member, register online. For FIS members, download paper form (to get IA member pricing), complete and return to the IA with a copy of your FIS member certificate for validation.
- 4 Once you have been approved for the program, the IA will send you information for selecting the actual site and to set a specific date for taking the exam electronically.
- 5 After passing the exam, perform the required practical field audits (verified by an existing CLIA) and submit the paperwork to the IA.
- 6 Receive your certificate and certification number.
- 7 Maintain your certification by completing and submitting the continuing education units (CEU's) for the specific IA certification.

### FIS Membership Gives Educational Options

A terrific way to reduce the cost of acquiring an IA certification is by becoming

an FIS member. All FIS members receive special IA Member pricing that gives substantial discounts on review courses, manuals and other educational materials, exam fees, and continuing education courses. It is typical to save \$250 to \$350 just in getting one certificate. An FIS membership will continue to pay for itself through savings on other FIS-sponsored education and events. It also supports the FIS in representing you and the irrigation industry in Tallahassee and in front of local water regulators.

You do not have to be a member of either the IA or the FIS to become a Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor. The IA does require an annual certification fee based on the number of certifications you hold. With the fee, you are listed on the IA national database where your customers may find you, the IA sends verification to the EPA WaterSense® Partner program that you meet their requirements for certification, and they record and process the CEU point needed to maintain the certification.

An exam review training course for the CLIA program is scheduled in conjunction with this year's FIS Summer Meeting near Orlando in Champions Gate Resort, in August. This is a two-day training session that includes actual field audits and is loaded with practical examples. The course is being taught by one of the industry's leading professional trainers and the original IA auditor training instructor, Kurt Thompson.

Registration for this review course is now open. Go to [www.fisstate.org](http://www.fisstate.org) for all of the details and registration forms. You can order the training manual at the time you sign up for the course and receive it in time to review before coming to the class.

The time to make an investment in yourself or your company is now. Do not let another year go by without taking control of your own future! 💧

*For answers to specific questions regarding this or any IA certification, contact [shrie@irrigation.org](mailto:shrie@irrigation.org) or 703-536-7080; for WaterSense® contact [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense); for Florida Water StarSM contact [www.fisstate.org](http://www.fisstate.org). You can also contact author Kurt Thompson with questions at [kurt@kthompsonassociates.com](mailto:kurt@kthompsonassociates.com) or by calling 850-637-6650.*

# TOP 10 REASONS TO BECOME IA CERTIFIED IN FLORIDA

## 1. EPA WaterSense®

The EPA program is fast becoming recognized by agencies all across the United States as the benchmark for products and service providers. There exists a high potential for local agencies to adopt EPA guidelines as their own. IA Certification is one way to become an EPA WaterSense® Partner.

## 2. Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup>

Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> is a voluntary certification program for new and existing residential and commercial developments that encourages water efficiency in household appliances, plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems, and landscapes. A property using a Water Star<sup>SM</sup> Authorized Provider for the design and installation can earn additional points towards the qualification. IA certified individuals will be farther along in the knowledge and understanding of the principles behind Water Star<sup>SM</sup> criteria.

## 3. Save \$\$\$ With A Special Rate

FIS members pay the IA member rate for the program applications, the review classes and the exams. The savings range from \$250 to \$350! Becoming IA certified involves a couple of steps: Complete the IA program application so the IA can verify your credentials required to become certified, and IA registration form to take the exam. Sign up for a review class with the FIS to prepare for the exam. All three are available to FIS members at the IA membership rate.

## 4. Florida Agencies Now Require IA Certification

A growing list of city, county and state organizations are requiring or preferring that contractors have an IA certification to perform work for their agency, such as Miami-Dade County Schools and Toho Water Authority. With the pressure to conserve water resources, the list is sure to grow quickly.

## 5. Become "Green" Through Water Resource Conservation

People throughout the state of Florida are turning their support to companies who are

part of the solution to environmental concerns. IA Certification proves that you are doing your part.

## 6. Makes You More Valuable to an Employer or Customer

Competition is tough enough because of the economy. Whether as an individual or a company, every advantage is needed to be a success today. IA Certification provides your employer or customer a verifiable means to judge you as a credentialed professional.

## 7. National Recognition

Many states outside Florida require or give preferred standing to contractors with IA certifications. In states such as North Carolina and New Jersey, contractors with the IA certifications were allowed "grandfather" status that waived the exam when obtaining the newly required state irrigator's license.

## 8. Florida Has Reached Its Water Limit

The Florida state water management districts have a limit to the amount of water that can be used. As the population continues growing, water conservation is no longer voluntary. Installing and managing irrigation will not be a casual career much longer. It will be limited to credentialed professionals.

## 9. Invest in Your Employees

What better way to retain and inspire your employees that to invest in their professional development? You would invest in a new piece of equipment if you thought it would improve your company. Employee development improves your company.

## 10. Work Smarter - You Have The Time

Even though it seems that the business climate forces you to work more hours just to keep up, less business allows time to acquire the tools to work smarter. IA certification is the tool that enhances you or your company, which opens doors that might otherwise be closed.

# Florida Irrigation Society

Managing Every Drop™

# FLORIDA WATER



The Florida Irrigation Society will hold their 2011 Florida Water Summit at the Omni Orlando Resort at ChampionsGate on Wednesday, August 3, 2011 to Friday, August 5, 2011. The FIS has been able to obtain a special room rate of \$109.00 per night for attendees, and the resort and parking fee will be waived for guests staying at the resort. Make your reservation today by calling 1-800-THE-OMNI as this rate is only

guaranteed until July 1, 2011 and the number of rooms is limited.

The 2011 Florida Water Summit conference will begin on Wednesday, August 3, 2011 with the Irrigation Association Certified Irrigation Auditor (CLIA) Review Course, which will be the first of two 8 class days. The Certified Irrigation Auditor (CLIA) Review Course will assist candidates secure a professional credential that is nationally recognized and qualifies them to bid work for specific Florida entities that require IA certification, become an EPA WaterSense® Partner, and obtain critical knowledge needed for meeting the future Florida Water Star program requirements. In addition, on Wednesday, August 3, 2011 a Landscape Irrigation Rules and Regulations Course will be held for Contractors and Landscape Architects that wish to gain further knowledge of Landscape



# WATER SUMMIT 2011

**OMNI ORLANDO RESORT AT CHAMPIONSGATE AUGUST 3-5**

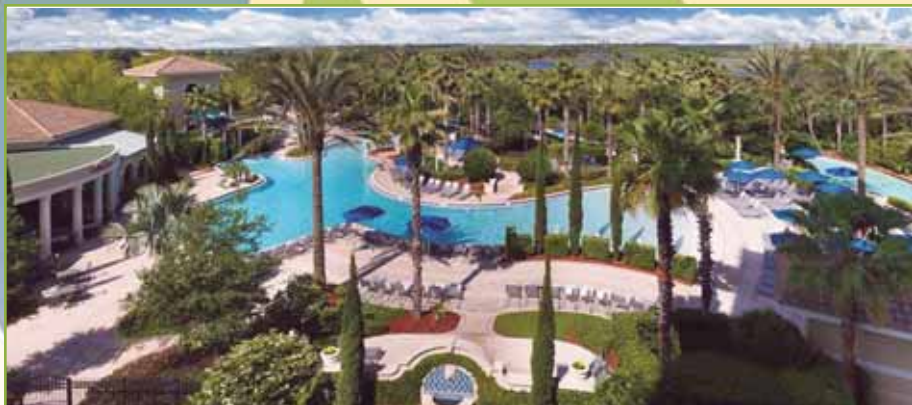
Irrigation Rules and Regulations as applied through Regional, State, and National Rules and Regulations. This course has been approved by Volusia County for CEU's as well as the Board of Landscape Architects for 2 CEC's for Laws and Rules and 2 optional CEC's (Florida Irrigation Society Provider #PVD71, Course # 0008892). Later in the afternoon the Florida Irrigation Society Board of Directors will hold a special Irrigation Contractor Licensing Workshop. This workshop will assist the Executive Board as well as the steering Committee in our endeavor to achieve Statewide Irrigation Contractor Licensing.



Thursday's schedule will offer a continuation of the Irrigation Association Certified Irrigation Auditor (CLIA) Review Course, and a Two Wire Controller Instal-

lation and Maintenance Class offered by Paige Electric. For those wishing to seek out an adventurous day there will be a fund raising Golf Tournament that is cosponsored by the Florida Irrigation

Society Central Florida Chapter. This Golf Tournament will be held on the National Course at ChampionsGate, and a balance of the proceeds will assist in our effort to obtain Statewide Irrigation Contractor Licensing and with other Governmental Affairs issues. An Exhibitor Recep-



tion will be held in the afternoon and is the perfect opportunity to learn firsthand about new products on display by the exhibitors and to meet the new members of the FIS Board of Directors as well as our membership.

Friday's conference will begin with a continental breakfast with the Exhibitors that will be followed by the Florida Irrigation Society Members Business Meeting. The schedule for the remainder of

the day will be full of information you need to know from water conservation applications to emerging regulations.

For further information and questions about any of the scheduled classes, golf tournament, becoming an exhibitor or event pricing, please contact Jennifer Amarosa at 1-800-441-5341. Watch for Registration information coming soon in your mail.

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# USE "POSITIONING" TO HELP YOUR COMPANY STAND OUT

**By Jeff Carowitz,**  
Strategic Force Marketing





**H**ow do you make your company stand-out in a crowded field of look-alike competitors? Why should somebody choose you or pay extra for the value you bring?

Thirty years ago, the book *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind* was published and quickly became a marketing classic. As we face a landscape industry marketplace often characterized by too many suppliers chasing too few customers, it's time to revisit the book's simple but powerful lessons.

The authors put forth a compelling concept: a brand must take a unique position in a prospect's mind. It must stand for something to rise above the noise of a crowded marketplace and look-alike competitors. At its core, positioning is image building around a brand's unique value to a customer.

By owning a specific message or reputation, a company's brand creates an immediate connection with customers.

Well-positioned brands are distinct from others in their marketplace and are magnetic to specific buyers. They stand out as unique and compelling. Tiffany is luxury. Apple is innovative. Volvo is safety.

The Stanley Black and Decker Company makes power tools. They have positioned their bright yellow DeWalt line as "contractor grade" while positioning their orange Black and Decker brand for "homeowner do-it-yourselfers". There's a clear difference in audience, message, packaging, price and value!

Building a powerful position requires two important aspects: 1) deciding on

what your brand uniquely stands for (your message/position) and 2) communicating your message clearly, succinctly and repeatedly to customers and prospects. If you want to succeed in capturing "share of mind", you can't do one without the other.

Positioning strategy begins with analyzing where you stand versus your competitors. What makes you different from them? What aspects or features of your products or services provide unmatched value? What steps do you take to provide a higher level of service to clients? What's memorable about working with your company? What surprises or delights your customers in

unique ways that stand apart?

Focus on the differences that are most valued by customers. Clients don't care if your delivery trucks are red or blue, but they really care whether you're on time and bringing the right stuff.

The second aspect is how you communicate your position and deliv-

er on its promise. Do your website, printed material and other marketing tools clearly communicate your position? Does your image match with the message you seek to project? If you boast about good service, do you actually provide it? Is the message you're delivering consistently building your reputation?

If your customers think that everyone is the same and price should be the only determinant, it may be time to leverage the power of positioning. 💧

*Jeff Carowitz leads a landscape industry marketing agency. Network with him on LinkedIn or e-mail comments to [Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com](mailto:Jeff@StrategicForceMarketing.com)*

## "POSITIONING STRATEGY BEGINS WITH ANALYZING WHERE YOU STAND VERSUS YOUR COMPETITORS. WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT FROM THEM?"

## APPLICATION FOR 2011 MEMBERSHIP

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Person to be designated as Voting Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Name/Company of FIS Member Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</u></b>	<b><u>DUES</u></b>	<b><u>AMOUNT ENCLOSED</u></b>
A. Manufacturer	\$330	_____
B. Distributor, Dealer, Mfg. Rep.	\$275	_____
C. Contractor	\$200	_____
D. Consultant, P.E., L.A.	\$200	_____
E. Irrigation System Operator	\$200	_____
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED</b>		<b>\$ _____</b>

**THE FIS ALSO HAS MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES FOR SUPPORTING, ASSOCIATE, TECHNICAL, AND STUDENT MEMBERS. IF YOU FEEL THAT ONE OF THESE CATEGORIES IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOU PLEASE CONTACT THE FIS AT (800) 441-5341.**

**PLEASE MARK THE APPROPRIATE CLASSIFICATION(S) FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Installer of irrigation systems     | 9. Registered Landscape Architect  |
| 2. Dealer in irrigation equipment      | 10. Certified IA Designer          |
| 3. Distributor in irrigation equipment | 11. Operator of irrigation systems |
| 4. Irrigation system design only       | 12. Certified Water Evaluator      |
| 5. Manufacturer                        | 13. List Other Certifications:     |
| 6. Manufacturer's Rep                  | _____                              |
| 7. Well Driller                        | _____                              |
| 8. Registered Professional Engineer    |                                    |

As a membership benefit, FIS will publish licensed contractor members (from counties that require testing) in the Membership Directory and on our Web Site ([www.fisstate.org](http://www.fisstate.org)). If your business is located in a county that requires an irrigation contractor license through testing and you wish to be included in this listing, please provide us with your license number and county.

LICENSE # \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_\_\_

Have you or your company ever been a member of the FIS before? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, when and how was the membership listed? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of an FIS Chapter? If so, please name chapter. \_\_\_\_\_

*If application for membership is accepted, the undersigned agrees to comply with the bylaws and minimum standards and specifications of the Florida Irrigation Society.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
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