

Smart Irrigation Month ramps up

Manufacturers lend support for the annual initiative with month-long promotions. **BY BETH GERACI**

Irrigation companies are ramping up their water conservation messages again this July in honor of Smart Irrigation Month, an annual Irrigation Association (IA) initiative launched in 2005 to tout the benefits of efficient water use during the heart of summer.

The association encourages companies in every sector of the industry, including manufacturers, dealers, distributors and contractors, to educate customers about efficient water use and offer solutions to today's water challenges.

Smart Irrigation Month "provides a platform for the entire industry to promote the importance of smart irrigation products, practices and services and grow demand for them," said Kathleen Markey, marketing director for the IA. "It's important for us to increase public awareness of water use efficiency, especially during the summer but also year-round."

Irrigation equipment suppliers are on board for the initiative again this year, including Ewing Irrigation, which has created sales tools to enable contractors to engage clients in conversations about smart irrigation. The tools include a flyer

showing property owners how to reduce their outdoor water use; an irrigation inspection form; and a proposal form. The customizable forms are free to download on Ewing's website, www.Ewing1.com.

The company also is commemorating the month with an irrigation photo contest and Monday deals on water-saving products.

Hunter Industries is hosting a Smart Irrigation Month promo because "we are strong supporters of the Smart Irrigation Month initiative, and our goal at Hunter is to help raise awareness of smart watering practices," said Troy Leezy, marketing manager for Hunter Industries and a Smart Irrigation Month committee member.

Log on to www.HunterIndustries.com for a collection of educational resources about intelligent water use, or upload a photo showing how you're marketing Smart Irrigation Month for a chance to win a weekly prize of \$250—or a trip to the Irrigation Association show in Austin, Texas (Nov. 4-8).



Ewing Irrigation offers a slew of smart irrigation downloads for contractors.

NHLA swears in 2013-2014 board

The National Hispanic Leadership Alliance (NHLA) has officially named its new board of directors, which the organization said was chosen to represent the Hispanic community's diversity.

Replacing Jesus "Chuy" Medrano as president is Raul Berrios, president of Rulyscapes in Centreville, Va.

A founding member of the NHLA, Berrios has concrete plans for his two-year tenure. "Our members are the backbone of the organization," he said. "So the main goal will be to increase the number of members as much as I can."



Berrios also will focus on improving the access members have to job training, whether it be through on-site support, webinars or group classes. "I've been part of the association for a long time, and I'm especially excited about focusing on workforce development for our members and their organizations," he said.

Rounding out the new board are past president Medrano; president-elect Juan Torres; secretary Pam Berrios; and treasurer Veronica de Hoyos. Joining the board of directors later this year are Arnulfo Lopez of Nature Safe Landcare, Gresham, Ore., and Jose Cantu of Saw House Inc. in Houston.

Rain Bird is getting in on the action, as well, with an initiative called "Project PRS" to build awareness about the water-saving benefits of pressure-regulating sprays and rotors. High or fluctuating water pressure is a common problem, the company states, and one that can waste water (and money) by increasing an irrigation system's flow rate. Log on to www.facebook.com/RainBirdCorp to learn more and keep up with the company's July promotions.

Also showing support for the month-long initiative are state governments. Markey is encouraged by the growing number of them promoting July as Smart Irrigation Month through official proclamations—the number stands at seven today, with cities such as Denver and Oklahoma City participating, as well.

"The fact that we have these state governments supporting smart irrigation highlights its importance," Markey said.

MAILBOX



Taking it slow

I noticed Beth Geraci's article about Cinque Terre. ["Hear Me Out," June]. I spent a few days there on our trip to Italy two weeks ago, so the timing of your article was an interesting coincidence ... Unfortunately, stopping to "smell the roses" is not the American way but I won't soon forget the trip and how nice it was to be in a place where things move just a little bit slower.

John Butts

*Siesta Key Landscape, Inc.
Sarasota, Fla.*



Aspire to inspire

I just read "B the change" [May cover story] on [landscape management.net](http://landscapemanagement.net) ... It's very inspiring!

Lisa Bailey

*Owner, BayLeaf Studio
Maynard, Mass.
via LinkedIn*

Thumbs up

I think you're doing a great job with the magazine.

Rick Girard

*CEO, Girard Environmental Services
Sanford, Fla.*

Share your thoughts by emailing mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.

Immigration reform passes Senate

But will the House take up the legislation? BY BETH GERACI

The U.S. Senate on June 27 passed bipartisan, comprehensive immigration reform by a vote of 68-32. And if the legislation ever sees the light of day, it will impact the landscaping industry.

The long-debated Senate provisions would create a path to citizenship for the estimated 11 million individuals living illegally in the U.S., add 20,000 border security agents at the U.S.-Mexico border, create a mandatory E-verify system and make minor changes to the H-2B guest-worker visa program, among other things. H-2B changes would make returning H-2B workers exempt from the program's 66,000 annual cap through 2018, require employers to pay incoming and outgoing transportation costs for workers, change the way wages are calculated and require employers to pay a new \$500 processing fee.

But immigration reform is slow to be entertained by House leaders, who've said they will not take up the Senate bill at all. "Getting a bill through the Republican-controlled House will be a challenge," said Gregg Robertson, government relations consultant for the Pennsylvania Nursery & Landscape Association. "No House Republican has taken up [immigration reform] as Sen. Rubio and Sen. John McCain have done."

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