

California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly College of Agriculture Professor Receives National Award

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly Irrigation Training and Research Center Director Stuart W. Styles, known in the irrigation industry as an energetic and professional role model, has been named 2004 Person of the Year by the Irrigation Association.

The annual award goes to individuals who make outstanding contributions toward the acceptance of sound irrigation practices. The award will be presented Nov. 15 at the International Irrigation Show in Tampa.

Styles is a BioResource and Agricultural Engineering professor at Cal Poly who is also an engineer and consultant. He has been involved with the irrigation industry for 17 years. He has served on the Irrigation Association board of directors, as chairman of the certification board, and he regularly teaches the IA education course Agricultural Irrigation Specialist. He is credited with establishing the association's Certified Agricultural Irrigation Specialist program.

"His professionalism and work have provided an outstanding contribution to the world of irrigation — to the IA, to students and to the industry," said Cal Poly Professor Charles Burt, ITRC chairman, and Kenneth Solomon, a retired IRTC department head, in nominating Styles for the award.

Styles, a certified irrigation designer and a certified agricultural irrigation specialist, has experience in most aspects of the irrigation industry, including design, applications and consulting. He has worked on a wide variety of irrigation projects, especially with water districts and on flow measurements.

Styles is also known for helping students make the transition into the working world through summer jobs. "He cracks the whip, but makes sure they get real exposure to things. If a person really wants to learn, he really works with them," Burt said.

Susan Rathbun, of Cal West Rain, served on the IA certification board with Styles. She praised his enthusiastic leadership. "He has compassion and listens to others, but stands up for his ideas and standards," Rathbun said. "His mind is constantly looking to improve and promote irrigation education."

"He not only supports the IA with his efforts on the certification board and education, but he promotes the certification programs to our college students and adults," Rathbun said. "I have fellow employees that go to his classes and come back excited and looking forward to being certified and becoming leaders in our industry."

The ITRC, which Styles has directed since 2000, was established by California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, in 1989 to enhance the irrigation teaching program through hands-on, real-world activities in training and research. Find out more about the ITRC at <http://www.itrc.org/>.

About the Irrigation Association

Since 1949, Irrigation Association members have led the advance in water-use efficiencies to create smarter solutions for agricultural, residential and commercial landscape irrigation. The IA is comprised of industry professionals from both public and private sectors — researchers, technicians, manufacturers, distributors, dealers, system designers, consultants, installers, and contractors — all dedicated to developing the irrigation industry.

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