Agricultural Engineering Professor Wins National Award for Work in Irrigation

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- BioResource and Agricultural Engineering Professor Charles Burt, chairman of Cal Poly's Irrigation Training and Research Center (ITRC), has received a national award for his work in irrigation.

Burt was awarded the 2002 Royce J. Tipton Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers, an annual honor given to a member of the society "who has made a definite contribution to the advancement of irrigation and drainage engineering."

Burt was cited for founding the ITRC and for advancements in irrigation efficiency, irrigation district modernization, and a consumer-information project called the Irrigation Consumer Bill of Rights.

The award certificate recognizes Burt's accomplishments in "developing methods of improving irrigation performance that are used worldwide; for teaching, training and research in irrigation; for establishing the Irrigation Training and Research Center; and for disseminating practical irrigation knowledge."

A news release from the engineering society credits the ITRC with providing technical assistance for on-farm irrigation, landscape irrigation and irrigation district modernization throughout the western United States and abroad and helping to build Cal Poly's irrigation program into one of the strongest in the nation.

As the ITRC's original director, Burt led the effort that established the unit in 1989. Last year, to allow more time for teaching, Burt stepped down from the center's director post, but as chairman he still manages several million dollars' worth of the center's contracts.
To help farmers get the irrigation they need, Burt has promoted modernization of irrigation districts and flexibility in water delivery and has developed and implemented canal and pipeline automation projects throughout the Western states. He has promoted processes and techniques that quickly identify the options available for irrigation projects anywhere in the world.

Burt worked with irrigation dealers and manufacturers in California to develop the Irrigation Consumer Bill of Rights, a list of questions that a farmer should ask a dealer before buying an irrigation system. The program was adopted by the national Irrigation Association.

- 30 -