



AMTOPP News



Spring 202

Looking Forward To Spring Field Day

By: Lydia Heser
Director

To coincide with better timing of fertilization and insect and disease treatments, the AMTOPP Field Day will be earlier than the usual summer month again this year. Traveling back to the east side of the state, our Spring Field Day will be Saturday, May 7, at the State Veterans Cemetery in Miles City.

The Board of Directors would like to invite you and encourage you to come and participate in this event. If you cannot make the trip, donations of material (fertilizer, mulch, or trees) would be a great way to offer your service. With a limited budget and staff of one, he cannot possibly accomplish what our group can in such a short time and with the results we offer. The work AMTOPP provides makes a difference. Also, through some of the work, educational opportunities arise either through properly pruning newly planted trees, inspecting root systems on removed trees, insect damage, etc.

The work we will be looking to accomplish includes:

- Pruning some mature trees.
- Structural pruning on 30 young trees.
- Removing some trees
- Planting up to six trees
- Fertilize lawn area
- Mulch application



Additionally, there is a row of spruces that we will be using an air spade on to help with some soil concerns. So if you are not familiar with an air spade and how it works, here is an educational time.

Many hands make short work. Make it a long weekend, enjoy Miles City and surrounding areas, and offer your time and expertise for a short time to help beautify the resting place of our fallen soldiers. There is plenty of work for all, so come and join us in Miles City for a fun day of helping our veterans.

If you have any questions, or if you have any material to provide, please contact the AMTOPP office (406) 204-0100; email: amtopp@amtopp.org; or Lydia Heser, email: clheser@gmail.com.

Reflecting Back On The Conference

By: Cooper Elwood
Past President

Thank you to all of our sponsors and members for a great conference this past January!

Suffice to say, I believe that we were all looking forward to getting together this year, and thanks to all of our sponsors, members, and other conference participants, we were able to have a great conference!

Even though we were coming off a pretty difficult year or two, AMTOPP's participation was better than I could've hoped. With 155 participants this year, we won't be breaking any record numbers – but we are well on our way to having those numbers in the next few years. I want to encourage all of us to continue bringing in our peers and new sponsors – with any luck, next year will be the highest participation year we have ever had.

I believe that we had some of the best speakers we have had in years at this conference. Tom Sholtzberger was a great keynote



speaker for us. I also had the opportunity to participate in talks by Dr. John Ball, Linda Chalker-Scott, Abi Saeed, and Larry Treleven, all of whom were amazing. My



only regret from this conference is that I could not attend all the other great speakers we had as well!

In the last few years, the most constructive feedback we have heard is that people can't attend as many speakers as they would like. Unfortunately, when we have as many great speakers as we do, it can lead to some difficult decisions about which classes to attend! I view this dilemma as an excellent sign that we are heading in the right direction. As hard as it can be to decide which classes to attend, it shows that we have an abundance of speakers and resources available to our membership!

As we advance, we cannot be complacent in our successes, just as we can't wallow in our shortcomings. I am proud to say that I was able to help with this conference with everyone else on the board,

See Conference page 9

President's Message



Spring is quickly upon us, and the phone is once again ringing off the hook. This is a good time to think about why we do the things we do. Working in the Landscape Industry is extremely rewarding. We not only make the world a better place, but we are in the make people happy business. Having respect for ourselves, our crews and our clients is key to making each day a positive experience. One of the things I really enjoy about being in this line of work is constantly learning new stuff.

The steady challenge of being a better business person can be daunting and heady at the same time.

At our last BOD meeting the topic came up with "What does AMTOPP do for my company?" I felt this was a valid question and deserved some thought. Organizations like ISA, TCIA, Dept. of AG, IA all give out credentials to show achievements of its members. Certified Arborist, Certified Tree Climber, Certified Applicator, Certified Irrigation Installer. These are tangible milestones that are achieved with experience, education and dedication to the industry. Sometimes having these credentials actually puts you at the head of the line for contracts but mostly not. They will give one more understanding of the technical side of the industry and make you better at what you do. Better at passing this information on to your crews and clients. Better at bolstering your reputation and sometimes ego.

To answer the question of what AMTOPP does for me, I looked no further than our brochure to perspective new members. AMTOPP

provides annual conferences for both CEU's and hobnobbing with professionals outside of our usual circle of expertise. It serves as a liaison between regulatory agencies concerning our industry. Works with legislative groups regarding matters affecting the industry. Provides opportunities for networking. Offers discounts for classes. Is affiliated with national and state trade associations. Works with government and educational authorities. Advertising opportunities. Provides for a day, or several days to volunteer at Veterans Homes/ Cemeteries which includes Arlington Cemetery in Washington D.C. And very importantly, AMTOPP promotes the green industry to the youth of your community.

Yes, these can be intangible benefits. But in the long run they are both fulfilling and critical to the success of our industry. We need to stay at the crest of the wave in order to be the best we can be. There are certificates to be had out there and they are important. But it is these intangibles and others not listed that will make our industry critical for the future. Raising the collective level of our partners in the industry is only going to raise the level for ourselves. AMTOPP is a critical player for the future of the industry. As an organization we have a diverse, hard working and intelligent membership. I learn something new at every meeting.

Dudley Marburger
2022 President



Friday, May 6 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Miles City, Airport Inn, Yellowstone Hill 153 MT Hwy 59N, 10 AM

Saturday, May 7 - Spring Field Day - Eastern Montana State Veterans' Cemetery, Miles City - 8:30 AM

Friday, July 29 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Inez Lake Cabin - more info coming - 10AM

Friday, October 28 - Quarterly Board Meeting - Great Falls, venue to be determine - 10AM

February 1, 2023 - Pre Conference Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - 1500 Fairmont Rd, Fairmont - 5PM


February 3, 2023 - Post Conference Board Meeting - Fairmont Hot Springs Resort - 1500 Fairmont Rd., Fairmont - 3PM - (this time subject to change (early or later) due to conference wrap up.)

All are welcome to attend.


Zoom participation will be available and information sent out prior to each meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the AMTOPP office or one of the Board members.






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Recap Of Board Meetings

March 11

The AMTOPP Board met in Big Timber at The Grand Hotel on March 3rd.

The board discussed upcoming legislative concerns which Dudley, Jason, and Lydia had worked with NALP through a Zoom call with Senator Daines and Senator Tester. The Zoom call consisted of talking to their aides. We were able to bring up some concerns we had heard from our membership such as getting people back to work and rising costs. We were able to get some contact information for further discussion.

The board discussed the need to be in communication with our legislature concerning the EPA's directions to the States, that will create stricter regulations for training applicators with regard to working under someone else's license, when using restricted use pesticides.

Plans were made to finalize details for the Field Day that will be in Miles City, at the Eastern Montana State Veterans' Cemetery on Saturday, May .

Moving on to Renewal and Remembrance Day, hosted by NALP, in Washington D.C.; Dudley is going to work on making a final decision on attending.

There are still concerns about the level of restrictions in Washington DC.

Questions were explored about how to bring in more groups that would help the membership. For example, financial investors to help business owners set up retirement funds; Insurance professionals and business consultants to help our small business owners in learning how to be more efficient.

The board finished up the meeting with gathering ideas for next year's conference. It is looking like a great lineup so far. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.

January 28

The Board of Directors met after the conference on, Friday, Jan 28. First and foremost on everyone's mind were the evaluations from the Conference. Each person had a chance to look over them before discussion.

Moving on, new committee members were chosen and dates for quarterly board meetings were set.

Topics of other discussion included Summer Field Day and Saluting Branches. This year it was decided to travel to Miles City, for Summer Field Day, but move it to May.

Also up for discussions was the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP), Legislative Day on the Hill and Renewal and Remembrance. NALP has separated them into two events,

with Day on the Hill in February and Renewal and Remembrance in July. With Day on the Hill being in February, and COVID restrictions it was decided not to attend in Washington, but try and get appoints on our own with our Legislators. More discussion to take place at the March Board meeting, for Renewal and Remembrance attendance.

Moving on to conference planning, it was decided plan out two years for our conference, as speakers are booked a year in advance.

Meeting ended.

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From Our Affiliates

Stink Bug Making a Presence

By: Laurie Kerzicnik, PhD
Associate Extension Specialist II;
Arthropod Diagnostician

US in the late 90's and was recently detected in Billings, MT in January of 2021. It has since been confirmed in Kalispell and Hamilton. These bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts and can damage several fruits and vegetables. In the mid-Atlantic states, it has been a devastating pest to tree fruits. They are also nuisance invaders and frequently enter homes and structures in the fall.

The bugs emerge from overwintering sites in the spring and

The brown marmorated stink bug is an invasive insect from Asia that entered the

start to feed on the reproductive structures of several trees and shrubs. Some potentially high-risk crops in Montana include apples, pears, peppers, corn, grapes, and tomatoes. However, so far, it has been a nuisance pest in several homes and is not yet known to cause economic damage to any crops.

We have several native stink bugs in Montana, and some

are beneficial. The brown marmorated stink bug is distinctive because it has antennae with white stripes, rounded "shoulders" on its thorax or 2nd segment, and five white stripes along its last segment (abdomen).

Several agencies are monitoring for the pest in nurseries (Montana Department of Agriculture), specialty crops (Western Agricultural Research Center, MSU), and around urban homes and gardens (MSU Extension IPM Program) to assess its impact across the state. We expect it to spread within the state.



Brown marmorated stink bug adult.

Photo by
M. El Damir, Bugwood.



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Raffle and Door Prize Winners and Newly Elected Directors For 2022

Raffle Drawing Winners

Congratulations to all the winners! Thank you for supporting the Scholarship Fund.

Winner for the \$700 Cabela's Gift Certificate - Shan Kuntz of Forsyth and was not present.



Victor Gust of Warne Chemical and Equipment Company won the night at Fairmont with a \$50 Gift Card

Presenting the winning item, AMTOPP's 2022 President, Dudley Marburger

Winner for the \$300 Scheels Gift Certificate - Stone Tihista of ST Lawn & Mosquito Care, Nashua, MT.

Presenting the winning item, AMTOPP's 2022 President, Dudley Marburger



Larry Treleven was the luck winner of the door prize - STIHL MSA160IT-Battery powdered top handle saw with charger and case; donated by STIHL and RDO Equipment, Missoula.

President 2022



President for 2022 - Dudley Marburger, Dudley's Trees Inc. Kalispell



Jason Stringer, Tree Amigos Tree Service, in Great Falls, returns for another round of service.



New to AMTOPP and the Board, Owen Nickol with Oxen Tree Service, out of Ronan.



Steve Jonas, of Jonas Sprinklers and Fertilizer, Great Falls is also returning for another round of service. He has more work on establishing the irrigation side of AMTOPPP.

Secretary/Treasurer for 2022



After spending three years as a Directory, Lydia Heser, of Hesser Tree Service in Forsyth will serve as Secretary/Treasurer for 2022.



James Roberts is new to AMTOPP and the Board. He is with TruGreen in Billings, who is a long standing member.

Service Awards

Welcome New Members

Associate Member

Circle B Saw and Tree LLC
Rolland Heagy
Fairfield

Flathead Tree and Landscape
Skyler Doak
Big Fork

Regular Member

City of Havre Parks Department
Joel Miller
Havre

Kootenai Service LLC
Jenny Ressler
Rexford

Okamoto Arbor Care, LLC
Brian Okamoto
Kalispell

SavATree
Nolan Broden
Bozeman

Weed Man
Tyler Hollenbeck
Billings

Corporate Member

Rainbow Ecoscience
Toni Smith
Denver, CO

Ten Year Service Awards



*Jason Stringer
Tree Amigos Tree Service
Great Falls*

*Not present but also reaching
Ten Year milestone were:
Mandy Iribeck
Mandy's Tree Care & Landscape
Maintenance
Bozeman*

*Brady Stone
City of Miles City
Miles City*

Fifteen Year Service Awards



*Billy Flesch
Bozeman Arborcare
Belgrade*



*City of Great Falls, accepting
on their behalf, Ken Roberts*

Five Year Service Awards



*Cooper Elwood,
Mountain Tree
Service, Missoula*



*Ken Roberts,
Master Gardener,
Great Falls*



*Tom Molitor,
Big Twig Tree Service,
Belgrade*



*Chris Galanti,
Galanti Lawn & Landscape
Missoula*

*Not Present:
Ron Liljedahl
Landscape Horticulture & Plant
Science Specialist
Livingston*

Twenty Year Service Awards



*Rob Dillon
Robert Dillon Tree Care
Clinton*



*Dennis Roberts
TurGreen Missoula
Missoula*

Traveling Trophy Award for 2021

**Goes to Ron Konesky
Frontier Lawn and Landscaping,**

Each year as you know, through the Silent Auction the Traveling Trophy finds a new home or sometimes returns to the home from the previous year. Even though we were not able to host a conference in 2021, therefore no Silent Auction for the Traveling Trophy - it prevailed above COVID. Thanks to Ron Konesky, of Frontier Lawn and Landscaping, the famous Traveling Trophy made its way from Miles City to Havre for 2021; the tradition continues.



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Meet Two New Directors



I probably view trees differently than most people. While some people may seek solitude on shores of lakes, banks of rivers/streams, even going high in the mountains, I find my solitude around trees.

As a young boy, I enjoyed the challenge of climbing trees, and once I got up high enough, I would sit and take in all that I could see. My grandpa taught

me how to care for trees through pruning, watering, and proper maintenance around them. I honed my skills working for him on the 15 acres of trees and shrubs on his property. He explained that trees have a place in the world, just like the wheat and barley we grow.

My name is Owen Nickol, owner, and operator of Oxen Tree Service. I live in Ronan with my two children, Sabra(14) and Cyrus(7), where we enjoy camping, fishing, power sports, hiking, and exploring all Montana offers.

I spent 11 years in the excavation industry, working mainly in new construction and site development. Working for a small company allowed me to work in all phases of the business, from small tasks to larger ones and even into human relations.

New opportunities arose from life changes that brought me back to the thing I loved doing as a child, working around trees. I sought solitude again to help me through the changes I faced, and it was through that Oxen Tree Service was born.

I knew I needed more education about tree care and immersed myself in books and videos, even going as far as practicing on my trees. I had the climbing part down; now, I needed to get the education.

I took on a job that proved to be more complex than I had considered. However, I met Rick Jennison of Jennison Tree Service because of the job. He not only offered to help, but gave me several pieces of advice, not just for the job before me, but for business and education going forward. This advice was to join AMTOPP. I did not know what AMTOPP was, nor had I heard of it. I figured if joining AMTOPP could help me achieve Rick's level of knowledge and professionalism; I wanted in.

I joined in 2020 and attended my first conference this year. After the conference, I wish I had joined earlier. Wanting more, I put my name in the pool for new Board Members and was voted in.

I look forward to serving on the AMTOPP board and being surrounded by a group of people who share their knowledge of the industry while working together to bring more educational opportunities, which helps raise the knowledge and standards in the green industry.



My name is James Roberts. I am currently the Sales and Service Manager for Trugreen branches across Montana, with my home office being in Billings. I live with my wife, three kids, and our dog. I enjoy spending my time outdoors whether it's camping, fly fishing, playing golf, or spending time with my wife and kids.

I have been in the lawn care industry with Trugreen for the past 15 years and am going into my 8th season serving in my current role. I

have experience working in multiple cities and have a good sense of the issues and climates affecting our lawns, landscapes, and businesses throughout the state. I enjoy my job because I get the chance to work outside and interact with customers in the communities we service. I find satisfaction in the fact that our industry genuinely brings value to our customer's properties.

As a new AMTOPP Director, I look forward to serving the board, our members, and the green industry as we continue to grow.

Existing Directors who agreed to throw their hat into the ring for re-election are:

Steve Jonas
Jonas Sprinklers and Fertilizer
Great Falls



Jason Stringer
Tree Amigos Tree Service
Great Falls



Irrigation Corner

Irrigation Tips

**By Steve Jonas
Director**

As AMTOPP continues to build an irrigation tract, I ask distributors what their customers need and want, and the answer is education. In the past and into the future, AMTOPP will continue to provide this education through top-notch educators from Rainbird Corporation and the Irrigation Association. The feedback we receive from AMTOPP members is critical when communicating about specific topics for speakers to present. To assist in bringing more education on irrigation, we are incorporating various irrigation topics in the Newsletters throughout the year.

With Spring upon us, it is an excellent time to address design ideas. Any building project requires a solid foundation and irrigation design is no exception. We will address five primary design areas that should be the foundation of every design.

To start a design, one needs to know flow “GPM” and static pressure, the pressure with no water flowing. Determining the water capacity on a job site can be measured in three ways; a pressure gauge that attaches to the spigot, the old-fashioned bucket test, and some basic number crunching. I use the bucket test to determine flow, placing a two-gallon bucket under the spigot; if your bucket fills in ten seconds, you have 12 GPM (60 seconds divided by ten equals six). Multiplying six by two (gallons) equals 12 gallons per minute. If the bucket fills up in 12 seconds, the flow is 10 gallons per minute. The pressure gauges tell you what the static pressure is. The best range of pressure is between 55psi and 75psi. Sprinkler components use pressure or take pressure from your static pressure, and you need enough at the end, so your system runs effectively and efficiently. Catalogs from suppliers are essential when designing a system since they list all the specifications for various materials required for the job.

Plan for expansion, If the flow is 12 gallons per minute through your bucket test, design the system around 10 gallons per minute. In the future, if the homeowner wants to expand or change the landscape, the capacity is there. Properly sizing a mainline, if used, is critical for a proper working system now, bearing in mind the possibility of expansion. In planning a system always design for future additions, running extra wire now is much more cost-effective than later. Designing for the future requires a small investment from the client upfront, therefore saving them a more significant expense if and when their systems need

expansion.

It is time to dig the system into the ground. After the plans are complete and before the digging starts, the first step is to call 811 or “call the local call before you dig site.” The number of utilities varies from location to location; with the expense of repairs, it is well worth the 48 hours needed before you dig. There are two typical ways to get the pipe into the ground trenching or a vibrator plow. When working with an established landscape, the goal is for your work to be as undetectable as possible, disturbing as little as possible. Some areas might require hand digging, and where feasible, a vibrating plow to pull the pipe in the ground. Depth is also significant as the pipe needs to be deep enough so aeration can occur without hitting the pipe, and normal expansion and contraction of soils do not lift the pipe. A typical depth would be between eight and 12 inches in a residential application.

These design tips are the first of “Irrigation Tips,” hopefully, you will find them helpful to you or your employees.

Look for more tips in the upcoming Newsletters.

Invest in your business, take advantage of what AMTOPP has to offer. We will continue to provide irrigation classes that will help you be successful in your irrigation business and hopefully teach you the Best Irrigation Practices. Rise above the competition through constant training and education, which will bring more professionalism into the irrigation industry.



Conference continued from page 1

and I am pleased to serve in the next few years. I want to encourage all of us to try and bring in one additional participant to next year's conference, and I know that we can have the largest and best conference we have ever had. With this group, anything is possible, and reaching the next level is within our grasp!

Thanks again for a great conference, and we will see you before you know it.



Accidents don't always happen in nice warm weather, neither does Aerial Rescue Training. Below zero temperatures made it slow going, but the group made it through.



Sustainable Sprinklers

Compare the industry's sprinklers and meet new state water regulations.

By: **MCKENNA CORSON**
Digital Content Editor
Irrigation & Lighting

grow and states crack down on pressure regulation. Add record-level landscape irrigation demand brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and buying efficient sprinklers can suddenly feel daunting and unfamiliar.

Feeling the pressure

One of the biggest changes in sprinklers is this recent movement of replacing traditional sprinkler systems with water pressure-regulated models.

Pressure-regulating sprinklers manage the water pressure flowing from a sprinkler to maintain consistency throughout the overarching system. Pressure-regulating spray body sprinklers make sure the water pressure at the nozzle is either at 30 psi for standard spray nozzles or 40 to 45 psi for rotary spray nozzles, says Jack York, director of product line management at Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply, Phoenix, Arizona.

Sprinkler spray heads that run with a pressure above 45 to 50 psi run into fogging issues, where the water is misted into the air and doesn't reach the intended plant material.

Purchasing efficient changing process. Technology improves, land changes, water conservancy movements

By operating nozzles at their ideal pressure, York says sprinklers produce consistent water application for healthier lawns, last longer and use less water than nonpressure-regulating sprinklers in most applications.



"This leads to water

bill savings for the property owner, a huge benefit to using these pressure-regulating sprinklers," York says.

States across the U.S. are enacting pressure regulation requirements for irrigation spray bodies to maximize water-use efficiency. This means states with related legislation prohibit distributors and retailers from selling irrigation equipment that doesn't have a pressure-regulation system.

"We continue to see states pass laws that require spray sprinkler bodies contain pressure-regulating stems," says Jessica Case, senior product manager at Rain Bird, Azusa, California. "We know (pressure regulation) saves water; it's a technology that reduces water pressure and flow with measurable water savings."

Vermont; California; Colorado; Hawaii; Maine; Massachusetts; Washington and Washington, D.C., have all introduced pressure regulation requirements. Frank Salamone, marketing manager at K-Rain Manufacturing, Riviera Beach, Florida, says additional states like Rhode Island and Maine are set to join that list in 2023.

"This will continue to expand," Salamone says.

Chris Davey, product manager at The Toro Company, Bloomington, Minnesota, has a similar outlook on the future of pressure regulation.

"We are seeing greatly increased demand for pressure-regulated spray heads," Davey says. "The increase in demand is due to several state ordinances requiring this feature, and there are more states adopting such ordinances in the following years."

But even if a homeowner or contractor's state doesn't require pressure regulation, Case urges they still do some research and check out its benefits.

"Change can be overwhelming, but it's also an opportunity to try something new — to see how a product you've never used might save you time, water and money," Case says.

Sprinkler type trends

While this increased need for pressure regulation drives sprinkler design trends upward, irrigation contractor purchases are also in the front seat, says Kelsey Jacquard, mechanical irrigation products manager at Hunter Industries, San Marcos, California.

When it comes to trends in sprinklers, the industry is seeing a shift in pop-up heights. Most pop-up sprinkler head heights come in shrub, 2, 3, 4, 6 or 12 inches. Four-inch pop-ups remain the most popular option, Jacquard says, but there's a shift toward 6-inch pop-ups for both spray bodies and rotors.

"Contractors want taller pop-ups as a benefit to clearing taller turfgrass and to prevent sprinklers from settling over time in the ground," Jacquard says.



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Sprinklers continued from page 10

There's also a continued move toward low precipitation rate, high uniformity nozzles as more states require pressure-regulated spray sprinklers to reduce water flows and optimize system efficiency.

"Low precipitation rate, high-uniformity nozzles help contractors maximize system efficiency and eliminate runoff while allowing more heads per zone for less trenching," Jacquard says. "Low-precipitation-rate rotary nozzles come in spray nozzle distances to short-radius rotor distances, all with low flows to ensure less pressure loss through the system."

Sprinkler types are also seeing new trends, particularly highlighted by a movement toward sprinklers better suited for less surface area, says Brodie Bruner, executive vice president of Weathermatic, Garland, Texas.

"The increasing cost of land is driving developers to create smaller lots sizes, which has a direct impact on the type of sprinklers being used: less rotors and more sprays and drip irrigation," Bruner says.

On top of sprinkler design and type trends, Bruner says sprinklers are seeing an increased focus on water conservation driven by consumer demand, regulations and rebates. Especially in water-starved areas, Bruner notes a shift is underway in buying behavior from "good enough quality at a low price" to "a higher standard of water use efficiency and performance providing a lower, more sustainable cost of system ownership."

"Irrigation contractors are more frequently being driven by customer demand for water conservation and building code requirements," Bruner says. "Therefore, professionals are upgrading traditional sprinkler purchases to more full-featured models with pressure regulation,

States across the nation are introducing water pressure regulation requirements for irrigation spray bodies. Experts in the irrigation industry predict legislation of this nature to increase as water conservancy efforts only grow. (Photo: Ewing Irrigation & Landscape Supply)



check valves and low volume drip irrigation and microsprays."

But as the world witnesses growing water costs and supply and labor shortages, Bruner says that putting in new water-conserving systems can alleviate installation and maintenance prices.

"As inflation is driving up the cost of materials and labor, the increased water use efficiency provided by progressive irrigation contractors is helping add value that justifies increased prices when viewed in context of rising water costs," Bruner says.

Also impacted by the shortage in supplies and work force is how contractors schedule and go about their work, Case says.

"Increased demand for irrigation products and supply chain challenges generally have irrigation contractors planning projects further in the future," says Case.

Homeowner trends

With the onset of COVID-19 in early 2020, Americans found themselves spending a majority of their days in their homes. As a result, home-related projects like updating aging irrigation systems or installing irrigation for the first time skyrocketed.

"COVID-19 significantly increased interest in outdoor gatherings and events, which highlights the role the irrigation industry plays in creating/maintaining communal spaces that bring people together," Case says.

By doing these home irrigation projects, Case says homeowners became more knowledgeable on the problems plaguing irrigation and landscape.

A promising future

While the pandemic unleashed a bevy of negatives, the irrigation industry found a renewed, possibly long-lasting niche.

"Declared an essential industry, the irrigation industry as a whole continued and continues to work during the pandemic," Salamone says. "And considering that there is money in the economy being spent on commercial construction and in the housing market, with that comes new installation as well as upgrading and repairing existing systems."

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