



Texas Irrigation Expo | 2010

Students Win Science Contest for Water Conservation

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Two local high school students won cash prizes of \$1,500 and \$1,000 for participating in a science contest that was part of the 2010 Texas Irrigation Expo, held last month at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Grounds in Mercedes. The Expo attracted more than 200 people over the course of 2 ½ days, and featured nearly 60 exhibitors, presentations on agricultural water conservation, and tours of local farms that are testing water-saving irrigation measures.

Ruben Saldana, Jr. of Weslaco won 1st place for his study of the Arroyo Colorado, earning him a \$1,500 check from the Expo.

Billie Ann Martinez of Harlingen won 2nd place and a check for \$1,000 for her science experiment.

The checks were presented to the winners by Shad Nelson, Ph.D. of Texas A&M University-Kingsville during the opening night reception of the Irrigation Expo. Dr. Nelson is an associate professor and serves as the chair of the Department of Agronomy and Resource Sciences.

The Texas Irrigation Expo was organized to draw attention to a water conservation program for agriculture that's been ongoing in the Rio Grande Valley for the past five years. The Agricultural Water Conservation Demonstration Initiative (ADI Program) is a 10-year study of on-farm conservation methods that's funded by a grant from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to the Harlingen Irrigation District (HID).

"We think encouraging young people to think about how to conserve water will pay huge dividends for the entire state of Texas someday," said HID general manager Wayne Halbert. "As the state grows, so will our need for water. It's not too soon to start putting bright young minds to work on this problem."

Plans are underway for another Texas Irrigation Expo in 2011.

To view photos and presentations from the Texas Irrigation Expo, go to www.texasirrigationexpo.org.

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Photo identification

Pictured left to right: Billie Ann Martinez of Harlingen, Dr. Shad Nelson, and Ruben Saldana, Jr.