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On the cover: The Pettigrew Residence by Frank and Grossman Landscape Contractors, winner of the Residential Installation Sweepstakes Award in 2019.

Smart Yards are Smart for Your Business

By Robyn Hazen, content marketing specialist at Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply.

You've probably heard that today's smartphones are more advanced than the technology that put man on the moon. Considering how much technology is in the palm of your hand, the opportunities for your business are endless.

Updated tech has led to new advancements in landscaping and irrigation, including the introduction of the "smart yard." These smart yards provide instant information to homeowners and contractors. They're easy to use and your customers can save money on their water bills.

"This is the future," says Mitch Heiner, National Irrigation Product Manager at Ewing Irrigation and Landscape Supply. "It's the easiest way to save water. It's a plug and play way to save 30% to 50% on your water bill per year." Savings for your customers could mean business opportunities for you.

Keep these three things in mind when talking with customers about adding this new technology to their irrigation systems.

Products

Smart controllers are timers with sensors that allow users to remotely monitor irrigation systems through apps that can be downloaded to smartphones. By regulating water usage, these advanced products foster sustainability and save precious resources.

Smart controllers adjust to the ideal sprinkler run times depending on local weather conditions. Many can simply shut off if there's been a storm and there's no current need to irrigate.

The major players in smart controllers and high-tech monitoring are Hunter, Rain Bird, Toro and Rachio.

The Rachio 3 and Hunter Pro-C Hydrowise offer the most advanced features. Once you enter information such as landscape type and soil type into the wi-fi enabled smart controller, these units will do all the thinking for you.

These units will re-evaluate weather patterns and data throughout the day. For

example, the unit knows when the temperatures goes up and water may be evaporating. The smart controller then determines if it should schedule another irrigation cycle to maintain a healthy yard or hold off on watering. Homeowners will be happy to learn that most of these units work with smart home devices like Amazon Alexa.

The Rain Bird LNK acts more like a remote control than a stand-alone smart controller. This app-based product simply plugs into the accessory port of a handful of controllers and lets you configure the scheduling as you see fit.

Toro's SMRT-T Logic Internet Gateway allows users to remotely control all Toro irrigation controllers, eliminating the need to purchase and learn a new controller. It also provides the ability to remotely manage outdoor lighting or other features. It's simple plug and play operation allows the SMRT Logic to sync with the homeowner's router and connect to the internet using a proprietary 900 MHz radio signal that does not require network passwords.

Smart controllers also work with mois-

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ture sensors and flow meters. Flow meters can be wired up to any smart controller as long as it has the flow sensing capability.

Procedure

The install for smart controllers is the same as the install for a traditional controller. However, you will need access to the router on site, the router name and password in order to complete the set up.

Each brand features its own smartphone app allowing you to manage everything remotely from your phone. It's possible to override the schedule when necessary, but units will make their own adjustment based on the weather after the initial set up. In the event of a power outage, the unit resets itself when the power comes back on. The controller will know when the last cycle happened and resume where it left off.

Homeowners, especially those in areas where water costs might be high, find these controllers help save money on water bills. Smart controllers, like the Rachio 3 and Hunter Pro-HC with Hydrowise for commercial use are capable of working with 12, 16 or even 24 zones.

Process

One of the most useful features of smart controllers is the ability for both the homeowner and the contractor to have access to the information through the user-friendly smartphone app.

Rachio and Hunter provide detailed usage reports on their websites including how much water has been saved and how much water has been used year to date as well as insights on upcoming weather.

These features save you time and money – now, a scheduled trip to a home or business may be unnecessary. Over the course of weeks and months, that's multiple site visits that you don't need to make. You save on gas and more importantly on the time spent to review your customers' landscaping.

"If you don't have a smart controller now, you probably will," Mitch says. "The future is now. And it's a great return on investment – you could see a return in as soon as two years."

A Message from the President

Jeff Henninger, Delta Bluegrass Co.

What Will the Second Half of the Year Bring?



The longest day of the year, June 22, 2020, has now come and gone. What did you do with those 15 hours of daylight? Whether you are reading this before or after July Fourth, it is truly the midpoint of the year. I always look back on the past 6 months to see what the year has brought so far.

No matter where you live, communities are social distancing, facing coverings are becoming a common accessory, and businesses are opening with new standards. Traffic in the Bay Area has been mild as more people work from home. Sadly, we have seen canceled parades, concerts, festivals, and SFBA dinner meetings and the landscape awards program. I have seen more of my neighbors in the past 2 to 3 months than I did over the last 10 years. We have had 5 socially distanced get togethers. It's actually been kind of nice to slow down and take time to get to know my neighbors better.

The stock market saw a sharp decline in March. I watched all my gains from my stocks, IRA, and 401K take a nosedive. Should I worry or just look at the history of the stock market? Over the last 40 years we have seen the market tumble 5 times.

- 1980 Stagflation with a drop of -27%. The downturn lasted 20 months.
- 1987 Black Monday with drop of -33%. Lasted 3 months.
- 1990 The Gulf War with drop of -20%. Lasting 3 months.
- 2000 The tech bubble burst with drop -49%. The downturn lasted 31 months.
- 2007 Real estate goes bust with drop of -56%. Lasting 17 months.

The stock market corrects itself every few years. Should you adjust or make changes to your investment? Or just stay the course? If you do cost averaging over the last 40 years, you should see your investments

grow 8 to 12 percent per year.

Have you heard? Bay Area, state and local planning officials want to double the number of new housing units. The California Department of Housing and Community Development is calling for 441,000 new housing units to be built in the Bay Area in the next 10 years. The state has fallen well short of planned development over the last 10 years. Shortages in housing have pushed housing and apartment prices in the Bay Area to the highest in the nation. With all that new housing where are we going to put all the cars? It seems like new Fastrak lanes are going up all over the Bay Area.

My family and I are huge soccer fans with Liverpool being our club of choice. This year, Liverpool is celebrating its first Premier League title win outside the club's Anfield Stadium. After 30 year of trying the league crown is finally a reality. The clubs made it through about 2/3 of the premier league games before play was interrupted in March due to COVID-19. They resumed league play this past week, playing before empty stadiums.

I hope you are faring well as we begin to open up the economy again in the Bay Area. It has been a rough ride, but hopefully we can all adjust to the new normal and move forward successfully. Remember, the CLCA has many resources to help your business through these rough spots. Visit their website at www.clca.org for recorded webinars, updates on legislation and other information. If you have specific concerns, don't hesitate to call CLCA at (800) 448-2522 for guidance and assistance. Or call a local board member listed in the issue.

Letting money evaporate?

July is Smart Irrigation Month!

Let your clients know how your expert services can help them save money on their water bill.

Customize your message and deliver to your clients via print or email.

"A good track record with water management produces quantified results, which you can show to clients as proof of their benefits in doing business with you. Water savings is a trend that will impact landscape businesses more and more as time goes on."

— Flavio Velez, President
LandGraphics, San Diego
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clca.org/upsell-water-management

Weighted Average Compensation

Steven Cesare, Ph.D.

The Harvest Group, Landscape Business Consulting | harvestlandscapeconsulting.com

A business owner from Kentucky called me to discuss calculating compensation for an employee who performs two distinctly different jobs within the same workweek and how that would impact overtime pay. In this specific example, the employee worked 40 hours a week as a Foreman earning \$22.00/per hour from Monday through Friday. On Saturday, the employee performed shop responsibilities for 10 hours, at a rate of \$15.00/per hour.

The business owner was under the impression that the employee would receive straight time pay of \$880 (40 hours multiplied by \$22.00/per hour) and an additional \$225 (\$15.00/per hour multiplied by the overtime rate of 1.5, then multiplied by 10 hours) as overtime pay for the work performed on Saturday. By these calculations, the employee should receive \$1,105 (\$880 plus \$225) for his weekly pay.

His calculation was wrong.

The correct manner for determining this employee's weekly pay is based upon the weighted average formula. In most states, the standard weighted average formula for the situation above is as follows:

- 40 hours worked as a Foreman @ \$22.00/hour
- 10 hours worked as a Shop Employee @ \$15.00/hour
- 50 total hours worked in the same work week
- 40 (Foreman Hours Worked) X \$22.00 (Foreman Hourly Rate) = \$880
- 10 (Shop Employee Hours Worked) X \$15.00 (Shop Employee Hourly Rate) = \$150

With these figures, we can now calculate the pay as follows:

- 1.) \$880 + \$150 = \$1,030 (Regular Pay)
- 2.) \$1,030 divided by 50 (Total Hours Worked During the Workweek) = \$20.60
- 3.) \$20.60 X .5 (Overtime Rate since em-

ployee has already received straight time pay) = \$10.30

- 4.) \$10.30 X 10 (Overtime Hours Worked During that Workweek) = \$103.00 (Overtime Pay)
- 5.) \$1,030 + \$103.00 = \$1,133.00 (Total Weekly Pay)

Thus, the business owner would have underpaid this employee by \$28.00 (\$1,133 minus \$1,105) for the workweek in question. Within that context, the employee would generally have up to three years to file a lawsuit against the business owner for unpaid wages, with the possibility of additional penalties as determined by specific state and/or applicable federal law.

Please be reminded that employers should always ensure that their practices are consistent with respective state laws and that there are multiple variations of the weighted average formula depending upon unique circumstances (e.g., performing three jobs instead of two, receiving a non-discretionary bonus in addition to differential hourly pay rates, and compensation received as part of a piece rate system).

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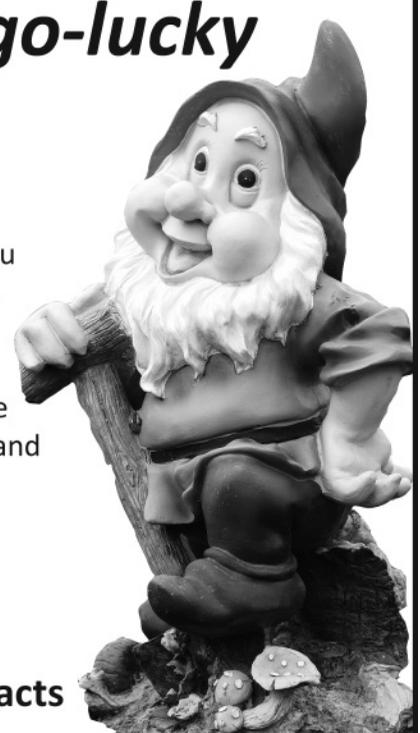
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CLCA Mission Statement

The California Landscape Contractors Association serves the interests of its members, promotes professionalism, and advances public awareness of the landscape industry.

The CLCA SFBA Chapter newsletter is published monthly. Copy and advertising deadlines are the 10th of the month preceding publication. Please send all copy, black & white photos, line art and ad materials to: Jerrie Beard & Associates, PO Box 7, Pollock Pines CA 95726. Emailed submissions are welcome at jsb@beardassociates.com. For information on advertising and rates, contact Jerrie Beard at (530) 621-1701.

Articles submitted are subject to approval and modification. Chapter or Editor are not liable for misprints or errors, and do not necessarily agree with opinions expressed in byline articles. Articles may be used by other CLCA chapter newsletters, giving proper credit to their source.

Water Management Certification Program

Why Become Certified

CLCA's Water Management Certification Program is helping industry professionals meet new market demands due to water restrictions and skyrocketing water prices.

A significant amount of California's urban water use is devoted to irrigating landscapes. Our state's population has increased to the point where demand is exceeding our existing water supplies — and there's no more water to make up the deficit. The demand on landscape contractors to provide more efficient water management is the highest it's ever been, and will continue growing for the foreseeable future.

To help landscape contractors and other green industry professionals meet this growing demand, CLCA created a Water Management Certification Program. This program is designed as a practical, profitable solution with a simple goal: to train water managers to provide customers with good to excellent landscape appearance using the right amount of water based on actual plant requirements.

Profiting From Water Management

For the contractors who are applying the principles right now on their job sites, the results are tangible (not theoretical). Some of the financial rewards you can expect as a CLCA-certified water manager include:

- Lower labor costs due to improved landscapes (faster to maintain per visit);
- Profits from irrigation system repairs, upgrades, and retrofits (a higher per-hour labor rate than landscape maintenance alone);
- Additional service charges for the water management itself (savvy clients would rather pay landscape contractors \$750 for saved water than \$1200 to their water districts for wasted water);
- Added value to your overall services, which results in satisfied clients who are more likely to retain your company for years to come.
- CLCA Certified Water Managers can also apply for a WaterSense partnership through the EPA WaterSense program. There are also business opportunities associated with becoming a WaterSense partner, including:
 - The program allows certified individuals to conduct irrigation audits on new landscape projects that fall under California's newly updated Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
 - It also allows Certified Water Managers, once they become WaterSense Partners, to do new home irrigation work under the recently released WaterSense Single Family New Home Specification.

For more information, visit <https://www.clca.org/certification-center/water-management-certification/about-the-program/>



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By Marin Vallalpando

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If you would like to help support our chapter by becoming a partner, please look over the Partners information at www.clcasfba.org/whoweare/#Partners or contact me, Marin Vallalpando at 408.586.9292 or email marin@zankerrecycling.com.

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